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Abstract

This thesis has aimed at researching pupils with higher learning potential in English as a foreign language (EFL) intermediate classes (grades 5 to 7) in Norwegian schools. Since 2015, the term *higher learning potential* (hereafter also HLP) has been employed to the group of pupils who are “high achieving, demonstrate specific talents or have the potential to achieve on the highest levels in one or more subjects” (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2016). The study was concerned with how pupils with HLP in Norwegian EFL intermediate classes (5-7) were accommodated for by their teachers, namely if and how their teachers adjusted their teaching for this group of pupils, and how their pupils experienced the EFL teaching.

The study was qualitative and the data was obtained from semi-structured interviews with four EFL teachers from different primary schools and three to four high achieving pupils in each of their classes. One of the schools was targeted through the researcher’s knowledge about this school’s awareness of pupils with HLP. The pupils, 13 in total, were interviewed in four group interviews. In addition, the pupils’ parents were interviewed through an online interview.

The study showed that although all the teachers acknowledged that their pupils with HLP needed adapted instruction, they varied in the degree to which they adapted their instruction to accommodate for them. The teachers expressed that factors such as lack of focus on these pupils from the administration, being alone with large classes, lack of teaching resources, and lack of opportunities to reflect on practices with colleagues, made the EFL adaption task difficult and challenging. The study showed that the majority of the pupils were mostly challenged in terms of more of the same work to do, and not in qualitatively different work. Several of the pupils had refrained from asking for more challenges because it resulted in more of the same work. The study also revealed that although the pupils were generally very motivated to engage with the English language outside of school, the majority of them perceived their EFL classes as little relevant, meaningful, or motivating.

The study revealed that the majority of the pupils did not explicitly know how to develop their English skills. Several of the pupils therefore, sometimes together with their parents, had to take intuitive steps to continue their L2 development. However, because some of the parents were not aware of their children’s high level of English skills, and did not

engage in their homework, the study revealed that some of the pupils were at risk of not being given support in their L2 development by either their teacher or their parents.

The main contribution of this thesis is that there has been little, if any, previous Norwegian research specifically targeting pupils with higher learning potential in Norwegian EFL classrooms. By including the pupils' voices in this study, in addition to that of the teachers and parents, the thesis has contributed by giving insight into these pupils' life worlds in EFL classes. Teachers and administrators may in future be better prepared to address the needs of the pupils in focus if the phenomenon of pupils with HLP is better understood, as this thesis has aimed to do. By including a target school in this study, the thesis has also provided insight into possible "best practices" that may be used to model the teaching of pupils with HLP in Norwegian EFL classes.

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1. Introduction

This thesis is a study of pupils with higher learning potential in English as a foreign language (EFL) intermediate classes (grades 5 to 7) in Norwegian schools. Since 2015, the term “higher learning potential” (hereafter also HLP) has been employed to the group of pupils who are “high achieving, demonstrate specific talents or have the potential to achieve on the highest levels in one or more subjects” (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2016). The term will be further elaborated on in section 3.1. This study is concerned with how pupils with HLP in Norwegian EFL intermediate classes (5-7) are accommodated for by their teachers, namely if and how their teachers adjust their teaching for this group of pupils, and how their pupils experience their EFL teaching. There is little, if any, previous Norwegian research conducted specifically targeting pupils with HLP in Norwegian EFL classrooms.

The study is qualitative and the data was obtained from interviews with four EFL teachers from different primary schools and three to four high achieving pupils in each of their classes. The pupils, 13 in total, were interviewed in four group interviews. In addition, the pupils’ parents were interviewed through an online questionnaire.

1.1 Background and relevance

The Norwegian English subject curriculum states that to master English is a necessity to be successful in a world where English is used as international interpersonal communication (The *LK06* English subject curriculum). Generally, Norwegian pupils’ English skills are considered high and Norway is ranked as number four out of 80 countries in the EF (“Education First”) English Proficiency Index (Education First, 2016¹). Norwegian pupils are arguably highly motivated to learn English due to high exposure to English. They are widely exposed to the English language, e.g. through films, music, the Internet, computer games, and television.

In a 2004, European study on 10th graders’ English language proficiency (Ibsen, 2004), those with the highest scores reported to have learned most of their English outside of school. Given their wide exposure to English outside school, this is hardly surprising. However, another interpretation of this finding could also be that those with the highest scores

¹ <https://www.ef.no/epi/>

were not learning and developing their English skills optimally in their EFL classes. Hellekjær (2016a:8) argues that Norwegian pupils' English skills are insufficient when more advanced English language is required in professional and educational settings. In fact, Hellekjær (2016) states that the Norwegian EFL education takes pupils' English skills for granted and that it fails to prepare them for higher education and society's future English proficiency demands.

Research shows that Norwegian schools in general fail to realize and utilize the potential of those who could achieve extraordinary results. For example, the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2012 showed that Norway had a lower number of pupils performing on the highest levels (levels 5 and 6) compared to other comparable countries (PISA 2012; Directorate of Education, 2016). Finland, the Netherlands and Germany had twice as many pupils performing on the two highest levels. The PISA-results indicate that many pupils did not achieve to their fullest potential in Norwegian schools. Supporting the PISA findings, a 2016 pupil survey of Norwegian pupils found that those who performed on the highest levels² were not sufficiently challenged and that they perceived school as irrelevant to their lives and future careers (Wendelborg and Caspersen, 2016).

In Norway, all pupils have the right to individually adapted instruction, as stated in the Education Act, Section 1-3. Individually adapted instruction means that instruction is to be adapted to the abilities and aptitudes of the individual pupil. This act is further elaborated on in the principles of the Norwegian national curriculum (*LK06*), which states: "All the pupils in their work with subjects shall be provided with challenges which they may reach and which they may master individually or together with others. This applies also to pupils with special challenges or special gifts and talents in different areas"³ (Directorate of Education, 2006). Although adapted instruction is an individual right, Norwegian egalitarian cultural and political traditions have led to schools focusing on providing adapted instruction mainly directed at struggling pupils (Børte et al., 2016; Directorate of Education, 2016; Imsen 2005:341). Together with this anti-elitist attitude, the belief that pupils with HLP are able to take care of their own learning has resulted in these pupils being left with little or no adapted instruction (Børte et al., 2016; Idsøe, 2014; Imsen, 2005; Skogen and Idsøe, 2011; Smedsrud and Skogen, 2016).

² Reporting to have grade 6 in minimum in the four subjects Norwegian, Mathematics, Social Science and Natural Science. The English subject was not included in the report because 100, 000 fewer pupils reported to have the highest grade in this subject.

³ My translation.

A feeling of not belonging and not finding relevance in the work at hand are both risk factors for withdrawal from academic work, which in turn could result in underachievement and low performance (Farrington, 2012). Pupils with HLP often suffer from boredom, loss of motivation and underachievement (Børte et al., 2016; Idsøe, 2014; Landis and Reschly, 2013; Smedsrud and Skogen, 2016). In fact, American scholars have estimated that 20% of high school drop-outs may be pupils with extraordinary potential for learning (Renzulli and Park, 2000). Although there are no corresponding statistics from a Norwegian context, this phenomenon has also been reported in Norway (Lunås, 2015).⁴

Following the poor 2012 PISA results, the Norwegian government appointed a commission in 2015, *Jøsendalutvalget*, to write a report on adapted instruction for pupils who achieve on the highest levels in Norwegian schools. The commission chose to employ the term *higher learning potential* to include both pupils who are actual high-achievers and those who do not perform at the highest levels, but who have the potential to do so. The report, *More to gain* (NOU, 2016:14, 2016:8), stated that “primary and secondary education and training does not provide pupils with higher learning potential the differentiated instruction that would make it possible for them to realize their learning potential”. Further, the report emphasized the need for varied teaching and differentiated instruction in Norwegian classrooms. It is also recommended that teachers used research-based knowledge and varied their teaching methods, e.g. through in-depth learning and enrichment (NOU, 2016:14, 2016:13).

The common practice in Norwegian EFL classrooms has been to largely base EFL teaching on the textbook (Drew and Sørheim, 2009; Hellekjær, 2007; Sandvik and Buland, 2013). Such a teaching approach may be problematic because it implies little variation in methodology and material. Thus, it provides fewer possibilities for differentiating EFL instruction to the abilities and aptitudes of diverse groups of pupils. Studies also show that Norwegian teachers need more knowledge and strategies for teaching pupils with HLP (Brevik and Gunnulfsen; Børte et al., 2016; Finsberg, 2015). Thus, there is a need for research on how these pupils can best be catered for in Norwegian EFL classes.

⁴ In a news article about adolescents with extraordinary potential for learning (Lunås, 2015), psychology student Maria Regine Johannesen describes that she left tear marks in her homework in primary school because she hated all the repetition. Although she was the best pupil in her class in primary school, she failed to develop good self-esteem and good working habits. Becoming extremely self-critical in high school, she ended up handing in a blank exam paper and dropped out. <https://p3.no/dokumentar/mensaungdommen/#brettspillkveld>

1.2 The present study and its aims

To the researcher's knowledge, no previous studies have been conducted on pupils with HLP in a Norwegian EFL context. This study therefore aims at gaining insight into whether and how EFL teachers adapt their instruction to accommodate for these pupils and, if so, how the pupils experience these practices. Haug (2006:51) argues that when studying adapted instruction, studying teachers' practices does not necessarily inform about the quality of the adaptation or how it is perceived and experienced by the pupils. By studying both the teachers and the pupils, one may be in a better situation to reflect on what practices are the most appropriate ones for this group of pupils. Such insight can provide teachers with more knowledge about and strategies for how to adapt their teaching to meet these pupils' educational needs. Further, the teachers' experiences in adapting their instruction for these pupils may give insight into what challenges and possibilities they face in their work with this group. The parents may further contribute with valuable information about the pupils' home practices with English and to what degree they perceive the pupils to be motivated for their EFL classes.

The term *higher learning potential* also includes pupils who do not achieve on a high level, but who nevertheless have the potential to do so. It may be difficult to know what causes low achievement, and thus pupils with HLP who are not high achievers are more difficult to identify. Therefore, the target pupils of this study are those who are actual high achievers. Their high performance does not necessarily mean they are taking out their full potential, since some pupils who achieve on the highest levels still underachieve. However, pupils with HLP who are high achievers are more easily identified than pupils with HLP who are not. In this study, the pupils in focus are referred to as *pupils with higher learning potential* when addressed as a group in general. However, because this term is relatively new, and since teachers might not know which pupils it refers to, this term was not applied in the study. Neither is the term *high achiever*, as this term is often associated with pupils who are motivated and achieve high results (Directorate of Education, 2015a). To stimulate the participating teachers to include pupils who were not necessarily a "typical" high achiever, the term *advanced learner* was applied. This term captures pupils who are high achievers, but also those who are more advanced English learners than their peers, but who do not necessarily appear motivated.

The target pupils of this study are pupils in years 5 to 7 (age 9 to 13), namely the intermediate level. This level represents an important stage in the school run. Becoming more

self-conscious, pupils of this age may increasingly judge themselves and others, which in many EFL intermediate classrooms results in reluctance to speak English (Munden, 2016). One reason for this may be that having status in the social hierarchy is so important that pretending not to seem bothered to do schoolwork may be a strategy for not being left out (Munden, 2016). There are also indications that many pupils at this level are not taught according to their potential: A pupil survey of 2010 showed that 25% of Norwegian 5th graders reported to “often” or “somewhat often” being insufficiently challenged in school. The numbers were similar also for 6th and 7th grade (Topland and Skaalvik, 2010). Munden (2016:15) argues that the intermediate stage is somewhat overlooked in teacher education. If so, this is worrying considering that Norwegian pupils’ motivation steadily decreases between year 5 and 10, reaching its lowest point in year 10 (Topland and Skaalvik, 2010). The intermediate years thus seem to be an important and crucial stage about which to gain more insight. The realization of these pupils’ high potential is important, on both a societal and individual level. On a societal level, it is important because there is a risk of losing valuable future competence (NOU 2016:14, 2016). On an individual level, it is important because all children should find their 10 years of obligatory school meaningful and relevant.

Grades are not given at the intermediate stage in Norwegian schools and identification of the high-achieving pupils for this study thus relies on the teachers’ knowledge of the performances and abilities of their pupils. In this study, the target pupils are those who would be likely to receive top grades (5 or 6) in the Norwegian lower secondary grade system.

Because of the common teaching practice in Norwegian EFL classrooms of largely relying on the textbook (Drew and Sørheim, 2009; Hellekjær, 2007; Sandvik and Buland, 2013), it appears of particular interest to investigate how this practice affects the pupils in focus and how the teachers approach the challenge of teaching these pupils in their mixed level EFL classrooms.

The research questions addressed in the thesis are thus:

1. Do the Norwegian intermediate EFL teachers adapt their instruction to accommodate for their pupils with higher learning potential?
2. If so, how do they adapt their instruction to accommodate for these pupils?
3. How do the pupils experience their EFL instruction?

1.3 Organization of the thesis

This thesis is organized into eight chapters. Chapter 2 considers the Norwegian EFL teaching context from the implementation of the Norwegian *LK06* curriculum in 2006.

The theoretical review in Chapter 3 is divided into five main sections that present theory on the characteristics of the pupils in focus, adapted instruction, relevant factors for second language development, recommended teaching strategies for pupils with HLP, and previous research on Norwegian adapted EFL instruction.

Chapter 4 presents the methodology applied in the current study and the reasons for applying a qualitative approach with interviews as the research tool. The chapter elaborates on the qualitative approach and further addresses the validity, reliability, and ethical aspects of the study.

Chapter 5 presents the data collected from the interviews with the teachers, pupils and parents. The summaries of the interviews are structured thematically according to the themes of focus in the interview guides.

Chapter 6 discusses the findings from the study in light of relevant literature presented in the thesis. The findings are structured according to the research questions. This chapter also addresses the limitations and implications of the study and presents the researcher's recommendations for adapted EFL teaching in relation to pupils with HLP.

Finally, Chapter 7 concludes the thesis and presents recommendations for further research.

2. English as a foreign language (EFL) in the Norwegian school

2.1 The LK06 curriculum

From the year they turn six, Norwegian pupils are enrolled in the Norwegian school system. Primary and lower secondary schooling is compulsory and divided into two main stages: primary school (grades 1-7) and lower secondary school (grades 8-10). The middle grades (1-7) are called “the intermediate level”.

The Norwegian curriculum is renewed approximately every tenth year. The current curriculum, *LK06*, was introduced in 2006 and replaced the previous curriculum, *L97*. *LK06* is comprised of the following elements: the core curriculum, the quality framework, distribution of teaching hours per subject, and subject curricula. In each subject curriculum, competence aims inform the teacher what it is expected that the pupils should learn in the subject. Competence aims are set for the end of years 2, 4, 7, 10 and 11⁵ of the primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary levels. In addition to *LK06* itself, there are also official guidelines available online for schools and teachers at the webpage for The Directorate for Education and Training (“Udir”⁶), with suggestions about how to work with the subject curriculum.⁷ These guidelines were, however, not introduced until 2013, and to what extent they are being used by Norwegian teachers is not known.

2.2 English subject curriculum

English was introduced as a school subject in 1939 and thus has long traditions in Norway. The onset age for EFL learning was lowered from grade 4 to grade 1 in 1997, following the international trend of lowering the age at which children start to learn a foreign language (Brewster and Ellis, 2012; Drew and Hasselgren, 2008). The age factor in learning a foreign language will be further discussed in section 3.2. Norwegian pupils thus meet English as a school subject from the very first year of formal schooling, and they continue to do so throughout their ten years of obligatory education.

⁵ Year 11 and 12 for vocational programs.

⁶ www.udir.no

⁷ www.udir.no/Lareplaner/Veiledninger-til-lareplaner

LK06 groups all the foreign languages together, while English is given a separate curriculum. This indicates the special status of English in the Norwegian educational system. English is also one of only three subjects⁸ in which pupils can be given a national written exam at the end of grade 10. The current total hours of English instruction in grades 1-7 is 366⁹, (138 hours for grades 1-4, and 228 hours for grades 5-7). To compare, this is more hours than science (328 in grades 1-7).

The English subject curriculum is divided into four main subject areas: “Language learning”, “Oral communication”, “Written communication”, and “Culture, society and literature”. The subject areas complement each other and are therefore to be considered as a whole. The language learning area focuses on the relevance of metacognition when learning a new language, such as pupils’ abilities to evaluate appropriateness of language or pupils’ abilities to identify their learning needs during language development. “Oral communication” and “Written communication” deal with receptive and productive skills and the ability to apply these in different situations and genres. The main subject area, “Culture, society and literature” focuses on the worldwide use of English and on pupils’ development of an understanding of the English-speaking world through work with cultural topics and through discussing literature.

The grouping together of the competence aims for all ten years of obligatory schooling into four stages (for grades 2, 4, 7 and 10) means that the pupils in 5th, 6th and 7th grade are working towards the same 27 English competence aims for all three years. It is not specified when the pupils should work with which aim, which underlines the importance of teachers planning their teaching within a three-year perspective to avoid pupils having to repeat aims they have already completed. In order to ensure progression in the subject, it would be beneficial for teachers to also know competence aims of levels above and under the level they are teaching. For instance, a pupil who in 7th grade demonstrates the need for more challenges could be allowed to work with the competence aims for grade 10. In general, the competence aims are ambitious and broad and arguably give room for working on many levels of proficiency among one group of pupils. Examples of competence aims belonging to the different EFL subject areas for grades 5-7 are:

⁸ The other two being Norwegian and mathematics.

⁹ In *L97* the total number of teaching hours for grades 1-7 was 328.

- identify some linguistic similarities and differences between English and one's native language (*Language learning*)
- express and give grounds for own opinions about familiar topics (*Oral communication*)
- understand the main content of texts one has chosen (*Written communication*)
- express oneself creatively inspired by different types of English literature from various sources (*Culture, society and literature*)

Schools are free to break competence aims down into more concrete learning aims for pupils to work on in the classroom. Hence, subject teachers are to a large degree free to make didactic choices in regards to contents, methods, and assessments (Mellegård and Pettersen, 2012). However, this freedom also comes with challenges to do with teachers' interpretations and implementation of the subject curricula across the teaching profession. In addition, developing local subject curricula has been reported to be time-consuming and demanding by teachers (Mellegård and Pettersen, 2016). The Norwegian EFL teachers' practices will be discussed in the following section.

2.3 EFL instruction in Norwegian schools

LK06 gave subject teachers much freedom in the planning and implementing of the curriculum (Mellegård and Pettersen, 2012). Although such autonomy may be welcomed by some teachers, it requires teachers who know their subjects well. In their study of primary and secondary teachers' experiences relating to implementing the *LK06* curriculum, Mellegård and Pettersen (2012:214) found that rather than interpreting the competence aims themselves, the teachers largely trusted that the textbooks would serve as a means to meet the competence aims. The strong tradition of textbook dependency in Norwegian EFL teaching has also been confirmed by other researchers (Drew and Sørheim, 2009; Hellekjær, 2007; Sandvik and Buland, 2013).

A Norwegian report targeting teaching practices in Norwegian schools (Sandvik and Buland, 2013), showed that most EFL lessons involve pupils listening to a text from the textbook, chorus reading of the text aloud, the answering of simple comprehension questions, and the translation and writing down of vocabulary. The report states: "Little feedback challenging the pupils' thinking was observed. (...) The pupils read the same texts at home and drill vocabulary for the 'end of the week'-test" (Sandvik and Buland, 2013:132, my translation).

In her study of reading at the primary level, Charboneau (2016) found that the majority of Norwegian primary school EFL teachers primarily used a textbook-based approach to their instruction. Pupils' translation of texts, repeated choral reading, and taking turns reading aloud were the approaches most frequently used. Charboneau also found that 50% of primary EFL teachers had no English books besides the textbook in their classrooms. Charboneau's study indicates that English is taught from rather traditional approaches, such as grammar-translation methods¹⁰.

In her study about teachers' adapted instruction approaches in Norwegian 10th grade EFL classes, Rønnestad (2015) found that teachers stay loyal to the textbook to the extent that they rush through the final pages in order to cover the whole book within the end of the school year. This practice could stem from a view, conscious or unconscious, that the textbook is the primary tool when teaching English and that it covers the curriculum in a satisfactory way. In fact, studies have shown that Norwegian teachers frequently base their teaching on the content of the textbook and apply learning aims that match the books (Directorate of Education, 2016).

The problem with this practice is not the use of textbooks *per se*, but that such a reliance on a textbook requires a book that can cater for individual pupils' educational needs even when they are part of very diverse groups of learners. In addition, teachers' textbook dependency might prevent them from using additional materials and in effect limit pupils' access to a wide range of reading materials. Hellekjær (2016b:70) challenges the notion that the textbook covers the curriculum and points out that *LK06* does not specifically mention which texts or topics the EFL teacher needs to teach. Hellekjær (2016b) therefore suggests that the EFL teacher put the textbook aside and instead offer the pupils a wide range of texts.

LK06 emphasizes the importance of pupils being provided with varied reading opportunities because reading a large quantity of varied English texts may "stimulate the joy of reading" and provide inspiration for the writing of texts (Directorate of Education, 2006b:2). Further, writing different English texts in different situations where writing is necessary may "stimulate the joy of writing" (Directorate of Education, 2006b:2). Varied

¹⁰ Originally, the grammar-translation method was used to teach classical languages, such as Latin and Greek. In its pure form, the method involves little or no spoken communication, but a focus on learning the rules of grammar and their application in translating passages from one language into another. As Flemmen, (2006:156) points out, one learns *about* the foreign language instead of actually *using* it. This method was dominant in Norwegian EFL classroom up to the 1960's, but is still being used today (Flemmen, 2006:156). However, as the aim of the English subject is to be able to use the English language for communication (Directorate of Education, 2006b), the grammar-translation method is dated and not appropriate, also considering how children learn languages (Flemmen, 2006:156).

reading opportunities may not only refer to a variety of texts, but also to the approach towards the reading of texts. Reading approaches are often divided into two approaches: *extensive* reading (ER), where the focus is the meaning of content, as opposed to *intensive* reading (IR), where the focus is on linguistic form (such as studying a short text for linguistic details or translating it line by line) (Day and Bamford, 1998:5). The IR approach usually involves reading texts that are designed for the teaching and learning of specific reading skills, it is often teacher-chosen and -directed, and it is typically associated with the type of reading pupils are involved in during textbook-related activities (Harmer 2015:314).

Although IR may sometimes be an appropriate approach, providing pupils with opportunities for ER is also important, as the latter supports pupils' acquisition of a large sight vocabulary (i.e. that words are automatically recognized). A large sight vocabulary is crucial for fluent reading, as is access to a large general vocabulary, which aids comprehension (Day and Bamford, 1998:16). In fact, Hellekjær (2007:26) argues that the lack of ER opportunities and the heavy reliance on IR in Norwegian EFL classrooms have resulted in little progress in Norwegian pupils' reading development and consequently led to poor reading results in higher education. Access to a wide range of reading materials to accommodate for various learner levels, interests and levels of motivation within a varied group of pupils therefore seems essential in the L2 classroom.

2.4 EFL teachers in Norwegian schools

The core curriculum states that “[a] teacher must know a subject well in order to teach it with skill and authority, and to be able to sate children’s thirst for knowledge and zest for action” (Directorate of Education, 2006c:20). This statement expresses the relationship between teachers’ competence and their abilities to cater for children’s desire to learn. However, as many as 43% of teachers teaching English in primary school do not have formal qualifications in English (Lagerstrøm et al., 2014). This does not necessarily imply that teachers without a formal qualification are not good English teachers. However, it specifies that teachers’ subject knowledge is significant for pupils’ learning, and that teachers who are confident in their subject are less restricted in their familiarity with and use of different instructional methods (White paper 28, 2015-2016:75). It is therefore something of a paradox that when the decision was made to teach English as a core subject to young learners, there was no immediate follow-up in teacher education to provide enough qualified teachers to teach these young

learners (Drew, 2009a:103; Flemmen, 2006:187). In addition, Lagerstrøm (2007) found that those who were qualified English teachers in compulsory school were mostly lower secondary teachers.

As of 2015, nine years after the implementation of *LK06*, primary school teachers are required to have a minimum of 30 credits in English and lower secondary teachers are required to have a minimum of 60 credits (Directorate of Education, 2015b). Although the effects of these requirements will be long in coming, they nevertheless indicate that English as a school subject has formally been given a higher status than previously.

3. THEORETICAL REVIEW

This chapter addresses topics related to pupils with higher learning potential. It specifically addresses issues associated with second language acquisition¹¹ for this group of pupils, as such issues are particularly relevant for the current research. Section 3.2 focuses on adapted instruction and differentiation. Section 3.3 covers relevant research on factors relating to second language development. Section 3.4 presents recommended teaching strategies for pupils with HLP. Finally, section 3.5 addresses previous research on Norwegian EFL differentiation strategies.

3.1 Pupils with higher learning potential

3.1.1 Gift or potential?

Internationally, there exists more than a hundred different terms to describe pupils that demonstrate a potential for high achievements in school (NOU 2016:14, 2016:20). Some of the terms used about this group of pupils include *gifted*, *talented*, *intelligent*, *high-achieving*, or *highly able*, to name a few. These terms all have in common that they describe pupils who have a higher learning potential than the average pupil and who demonstrate their skills. However, to acknowledge pupils with higher learning potential who do not demonstrate their skills, i.e. who underachieve, the field expresses the need for a term that includes both pupils with higher learning potential who are high achieving and pupils with higher learning potential who underachieve (Børte et al., 2016; Gagné, 2004; Skogen and Idsøe, 2011).

¹¹ This thesis refers to English taught in a Norwegian context. Traditionally, the term “English as a foreign language” (EFL) has been applied to the teaching of English in Norway, indicating that the language is primarily learned in a formal school context without contact with native English speakers. A distinction is made between EFL and ESL, as ESL refers to learning English as a *second* language, often referring to English learners with another mother tongue (L1) than English but who live in an English speaking community. Due to Norwegians’ wide exposure to English outside the classroom, it could be argued that English may be viewed more as a second language (L2) than a foreign one (Simensen, 2008:3). Moreover, *LK06* does not group English together with the other foreign languages, thus emphasizing the particular status of English in Norway. In line with Mitchell and Myles (2004:5-6) the term “second language” (L2) will in the current thesis refer to any language other than the mother tongue (L1). However, because “EFL” is commonly used in Norwegian formal educational settings, when referring to the formal Norwegian context of learning English, EFL will be applied, such as the “EFL classroom” or the “EFL teacher”.

Historically, *giftedness* has been understood as a genetic disposition that can be measured as intelligence quotient (IQ). Traditionally, pupils who demonstrate an IQ of 130 or more (100 being the average score in the population) have been defined as gifted. This threshold would mean that only 2-5% of the school population would be recognized as having higher learning potential (Silverman, 2009) and thus represents a narrow understanding of giftedness. A broader conception of potential is proposed by scholars such as Idsøe (2014), Freeman (1998), Gagné (2004) and Renzulli (1978).

Gagné (2004:120) defines “giftedness” as the possession of “untrained” natural abilities that places an individual among the top 10 % of age peers. Such abilities may relate to several domains, such as the intellectual, creative, social or physical ones. Gagné (2004) argues that potential (innate abilities) is not enough to develop a talent as such development is dependent on both internal factors (e.g. motivation and self-management) and external factors (e.g. influence of other people and type of educational activities). A similar understanding is proposed by Renzulli (1978), who understands giftedness as a combination of cognitive ability (the potential), creativity, and task effort. He suggests that 15-20% of pupils, referred to as the “talent pool”, have an above-average potential and should be approached through gifted education pedagogy, i.e. strategies that aim to foster talent development.

Recent Norwegian official documents¹² apply both a broad and a narrow understanding of the concept of giftedness and use the term “pupils with higher learning potential” (henceforth “pupils with HLP”) as an umbrella term to include both understandings. The term *potential* is employed instead of previously employed terms such as *evnerik* or *begavet* (which are Norwegian equivalents to *gifted*) to acknowledge the difference between giftedness, meaning something static and inherited, and potential, meaning a capacity that needs to be developed and fostered by its environment (NOU 2016:14, 2016:20). The term *pupils with higher learning potential* includes “the pupils who are high achieving, demonstrate specific talents or have the potential to achieve on the highest levels in one or more subjects” (NOU 2016:14, 2016:20). Thus, pupils who do not necessarily achieve on the highest levels but have the potential to do so are grouped together with their high-achieving peers. This broadened definition means that 10-15 % of the Norwegian school population may be regarded as having higher learning potential. Within this group is also a subgroup of 2-5 % that is referred to as having *extraordinary potential* (cf. the narrow understanding) and a subgroup of pupils referred to as *twice exceptional*, characterized by having higher learning

¹² Specifically, Meld. St. 21 (2016-2017); NOU 2016:4, 2016.

potential in combination with learning disadvantages, such as dyslexia (NOU 2016:14, 2016). The latter subgroup is not in focus of this study and will thus not be further examined. In accordance with current official Norwegian documents, the term *pupils with higher learning potential* is used broadly and this research does thus not differentiate between pupils' potentials on the background of scores on IQ tests or level of achievement on school assessments or tests.

3.1.2 Characteristics of pupils with HLP

Although pupils with HLP are a heterogeneous group of pupils, the government (Meld. St. 21, 2016-2017) and scholars (Smedsrud and Skogen, 2016; Idsøe, 2014) nevertheless agree on some core characteristics that apply to this group of pupils. These characteristics do not necessarily relate to these pupils' achievements in school as, within the broadened understanding of "higher learning potential", it is the personality traits that underpin these pupils' learning potential that are in focus. The focus on the personality traits of this group of pupils is supported by relevant theory (see for example Dai and Chen, 2013).

Pupils with HLP "learn more quickly and acquire more complex knowledge compared to their peers" (NOU 2016:14, 2016:8). They may have a higher learning potential in one or in several subjects (NOU 2016:14, 2016). Because they often have a strong working memory, they need room for rapid progression with few repetitions (NOU 2016:14, 2016:20; Idsøe 2014; Smedsrud and Skogen 2016). The pupils at hand are able to think abstractly at higher levels earlier than their peers, and they appear to be able to recognize complexity between concepts already at an early age (Dai and Chen, 2013:154; Idsøe, 2014). Their abstract and complex thinking skills make them interested in meaningful creative and problem-based tasks that allow them to utilize their prior knowledge (Idsøe 2014; Smedsrud and Skogen 2016). They have an inner drive for understanding the "how's" and the "why's" of the world and a strong focus on what they perceive as important or interesting. This inner drive often makes them intensively interested in developing their understanding of and knowledge about something and they might make extraordinary efforts to do so (Idsøe 2014:17). Despite this characteristic inner drive, pupils with higher learning potential might become unmotivated and reluctant to engage in tasks and activities if the tasks or activities do not interest or challenge them enough, or if the tasks and activities do not appear meaningful to them (NOU 2016:14, 2016:20; Skogen and Idsøe, 2011).

3.1.3 Identification

Idsøe (2014) argues that if the educational system managed to cater for the individual pupil in an adequate way through a rich, responsive and inclusive learning environment, there would be no need for identifying or labelling pupils with a higher learning potential. Further, the purpose of identifying pupils with HLP is not to label some pupils as more valuable than others, but to acknowledge and identify their educational needs. Understanding pupils' educational needs is a prerequisite for efficient adaption of instruction (Idsøe, 2014; Smedsrud and Skogen, 2016). In fact, failing to identify pupils with HLP may have severe consequences for the pupil, such as non-completion of education, underachievement, social stigmatization, bullying, sadness/depression, erroneous diagnoses or late identification (Børte et al., 2016; Landis and Reschly, 2013). In order to prevent such outcomes, it is recommended that the identification of pupils with HLP is done at an early age (Idsøe, 2014; Smedsrud and Skogen, 2016). It may also be easier to identify pupils with HLP at an early rather than at an older age as it is assumed that they spend at least their early formal schooling years performing at high levels. Thus, their potential and academic performance are more likely to correlate (Gagné, 2004; Landis and Reschly, 2013; Smedsrud and Skogen, 2016). The possibility of the achievements of pupils with HLP being affected by influences in the educational environment increases with age (Gagné 2004; Reis, 2003).

The identification process should focus on the pupils' potential rather than achievement (e.g. assessed by standardized tests) (Idsøe, 2014). Knowledge about characteristics of pupils with HLP may make it easier for the teacher to identify these pupils. In addition, parents may contribute with valuable information about their children (Idsøe, 2014). Observations and interviews with the pupils themselves are also recommended tools for identification (Idsøe 2014; Smedsrud and Skogen 2016; Landis and Reschly, 2013). It should be noted, however, that caution needs to be taken about labeling pupils with HLP as research show that pupils' perceptions of being labeled as "gifted" may be negative (Meadows and Neumann, 2014) and may provoke too high expectations from themselves and their environment (Freeman, 2005).

3.1.4 Pupils with higher potential for learning languages

As previously mentioned in section 3.1.2, pupils with HLP may have a higher learning potential in one or several subjects (NOU 2016:14, 2016). Pupils who have a higher learning

potential in their L1 are often referred to as having a higher learning potential in literacy (Idsøe, 2014). Among the characteristics of pupils with HLP in literacy are, for example, that they have high communication skills and often talk and write with an unusual creativity for their age (Idsøe, 2014). They may also have a “precocious language development”, e.g. advanced vocabulary and use of complex sentence structures at an early age (Glass, 2004:25). Their advanced cognitive skills, combined with their linguistic interest, frequently make them able to analyze texts critically and to grasp complex ideas and understand them on a deep level (Alber, Martin and Gammil, 2005; Idsøe, 2014). They have a strong linguistic awareness and show a particular interest for linguistic aspects, such as rhyme, intonation and grammar (Idsøe, 2014).

Little research has been conducted on pupils with higher potential in relation to L2 development. However, it appears likely that many traits of pupils with HLP in literacy (i.e. reading and writing) in general may be applied to educational L2 contexts. For example, their advanced verbal and higher order thinking skills may be utilized for linguistic comparisons between their L1 and L2, thus assisting rapid L2 development (Deveau, 2006). Pupils with HLP also show a more prominent use of metacognitive skills than their peers (Horvathova and Reid 2016:420), which is an important cognitive strategy for learning a foreign language (Harmer, 2015:80). In addition, it is argued that language aptitude¹³ might not be language specific but that it rather refers to a set of cognitive abilities that indicate the learner’s capacity to do well in any language (Alexiou, 2012:48). Hence, pupils with HLP in literacy may apply their traits to their learning of an L2 as well.

However, pupils with HLP in literacy are not necessarily able to transfer their L1 skills to their L2. Learning an L2 is a complex process where innate (nature) and environmental (nurture) factors interact with each other (Mitchell and Myles, 2004:15). For example, motivation is regarded to be a key component for achieving high levels of L2 proficiency (e.g. Dörnyei, 2005; Gardner, 2012; Ushioda, 2012). In their research review of what characterizes the excellent L2 learner, Dixon et al. (2012) report that besides L2 aptitude, motivation is the factor that appears to make the most important difference to learning outcome. The central

¹³ In L2 learning, the construct of “Language aptitude” is often used to refer to a specific language learning ability. According to Dörnyei (2005:43) there is a general agreement among scholars that language aptitude predicts the “rate of progress” the learner is likely to make in learning a new language.

position of motivation in the L2 learning process has implications for the EFL teacher because the pupils' motivation for learning an L2 may be affected by their attitudes towards the learning context (Gardner, 2012). Motivation will be further discussed in section 3.3.

Dixon et al. (2012) further report that other individual variables, such as L1 skills or L2 anxiety, may also play a role in the learning outcome of the L2 learner. The current thesis does not attempt to define Norwegian pupils with HLP in learning EFL or to pinpoint which factors are the most significant in contributing to the L2 development among pupils with HLP. Factors that may come into play during the L2 development of pupils with HLP and ways in which these factors may be addressed by the EFL teacher will be further considered in section 3.3.

3.2 Adapted instruction

3.2.1 The principle of adapted instruction

Adapted instruction as an educational principle aims to adapt the teaching “to the abilities and aptitudes of the individual pupil” (Ministry of Education and Research, 1998). Adapted instruction is in this thesis understood in a *wide* sense, meaning that the instruction is adapted to the individual pupil within the whole group (Bachman and Haug, 2006). An example of a wide approach could be giving the pupils the same task but opening for solving it on different levels of complexity. This wide understanding contrasts the *narrow* understanding of adapted instruction; the latter often involves, for example, each pupil having their own teaching plan (Bachman and Haug, 2006). According to the Report to the Norwegian Parliament no. 31 (Meld. St. 31 (2007-2008)), Norwegian teachers have traditionally interpreted the principle of adapted instruction as a demand to provide pupils with individual teaching plans and have them work with tasks individually. The report further states that adapted instruction does not imply more time spent working individually, but that learning occurs in a social setting where peers work together and aid each other's learning. Official Norwegian documents addressing adapted instruction thus appear to promote a wide understanding of the principle of adapted instruction.

This wide understanding of adapted instruction is supported by Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development (ZPD) theory. According to this model, learning occurs within

the learner's ZPD, defined as the difference between what the learner can do without help (the current level) and what he or she can do with help of a more capable other (the potential level). According to this theory, pupils need to be exposed to materials slightly above their current level and at the same time be given opportunities for interacting with capable others.

The principle of adapted instruction has long traditions in the Norwegian school system, yet "there is no recipe to adapted instruction" (Meld. St. 31 (2007-2008), 2008:74). Janssen and Lillejord (2009) suggest that political and official documents have expressed different understandings of the concept under each curriculum and that both the concept "adapted instruction" and ways of implementing such instruction often remain unclear to teachers and school leaders. At worst, this uncertainty could lead to schools taking a passive role and refraining from addressing the issue (Jensen and Lillejord, 2009:13). Indeed, providing adapted instruction is not an easy task for the teacher. To illustrate, a classroom may include pupils differing up to 4-5 years in skill levels (NOU 2016:14, 2016:28). Janssen and Lillejord (2009) nevertheless argue that the most recent political and official documents promote an understanding of adapted instruction as high-quality and varied whole-class teaching.

The Official Norwegian Report *More to gain* (NOU 2016:14, 2016) states that there is a long tradition in the Norwegian educational system for understanding the inclusive school as a manifestation of society's responsibility to aid pupils who struggle academically and socially. In the Norwegian egalitarian society, focusing on pupils with HLP has been considered elitist and in conflict with the principle of equality (Børte et al., 2016:6). However, it is important that no group of pupils is prioritized at the expense of others (Meld. St. 21 (2016-2017)). An inclusive school needs to include all pupils and to allow equal opportunities for all pupils to develop their potential. Yet, it is a common misperception that pupils with HLP manage on their own without support (Børte et al., 2016; NOU 2016:14, 2016). Although the Education Act 1-3 states that all pupils have the right to adapted instruction, it might therefore be unfortunate that the recent amendment specifies that particular focus should be on struggling pupils in subjects Norwegian, Sami and Mathematics in grades 1-4. The Report to the Norwegian Parliament no. 22 (Meld. St. 22 (2010-2011)) nevertheless clearly states that the principle of adapted instruction should not only include the struggling pupils but also those with a higher potential for learning, thus recognizing that pupils with HLP have the same needs for support as other groups of pupils.

3.2.2 Implementing adapted instruction through differentiation

Differentiation is a broad educational term that refers to the many approaches to the implementing of adapted instruction in the inclusive classroom. It refers to a teaching practice where the teacher adapts the curriculum, methods, activities and pupil work to the needs of the pupils (NOU 2016:14, 2016). Differentiation measures are commonly arranged into two categories: *organizational* and *pedagogical*. Organizational differentiation refers to structural measures, e.g. hetero-/homogenous grouping of pupils, curricular design or range of teaching resources (NOU 2016:14, 2016). Pedagogical differentiation refers to whole-class teaching that involves e.g. different materials, content, or curriculum compacting (Bailey et al. 2008; Idsøe, 2014; VanTassel-Baska and Wood, 2010).

International research on pupils with higher learning potential has generally led to the establishment of programs specifically aimed at those identified as “gifted” (Eyre, 2001:17; Tourón and Freeman, 2017). Similarly, the Norwegian narrow approach may have isolated pupils with HLP from their peers by practicing individual teaching plans, resulting in individual work. Adequate differentiation strategies would allow teachers to accommodate for pupils with HLP within the ordinary classroom. Moreover, when teachers’ plans include a focus on providing challenges for their most able pupils, teachers often choose to make such challenging tasks available to a wider group of children (Eyre, 2001:17). Thus, adapted instruction for pupils with HLP in the inclusive classroom may contribute to increased learning outcomes for all pupils (Eyre, 2001; Meld. St. 21, 2016-2017; VanTassel-Baska and Wood, 2010).

Further, an inclusive approach may prevent the risk of categorizing pupils into ‘fixed’ levels. By providing a heterogeneous group of pupils with several tasks on varying levels of challenge, pupils may move across levels of complexity, depending on their strengths and weaknesses. An inclusive approach involves more than simply giving advanced pupils extra sheets with grammar tasks if they finish their tasks before the others. It is more a way of thinking and planning the teaching and curriculum (Smedsrud and Skogen, 2016). In addition, Eyre (2001:18) argues that an approach such as described above may lead to pupils with higher learning potential “revealing themselves” because of a stimulating learning environment.

The differentiation strategies most researched in relation to pupils with HLP are *acceleration* and *enrichment* (Idsøe, 2014; Smedsrud and Skogen, 2016). These involve both organizational and pedagogical measures. It is recommended that both strategies are used in

an integrated way (Idsøe, 2014; VanTassel-Baska and Wood, 2010). These strategies will be further discussed in section 3.6.

3.2.3 Inadequate adaption of instruction and possible consequences

Underachievement is a phenomenon highly associated with pupils with HLP, both in Norway and in general (Reis, 2003; Smedsrud and Skogen, 2016). When a pupil underachieves, there is a discrepancy between the pupil's learning potential and the actual performance. There may be several reasons for underachievement, but lack of adequately adapted instruction is often considered a main factor (Idsøe, 2014; Landis and Reschly, 2013; Reis, 2003; Reis and Renzulli, 2010). Reis (2003) points out that pupils with HLP spend much time repeating content and practicing skills they already have in place, which causes them to slow down their learning pace and thus obstructs their development. Reis (2003:189) argues: "Many of these bright pupils learn at an early age that if they do their best in school, they will be rewarded with endless more pages of the same kind of practice materials". Hence, these pupils learn to expend minimum effort, which is a strategy that hinders learning and that creates a cycle of underachievement (Reis, 2003).

In general, if not provided with appropriate challenges, the pupil is not stimulated and activated to learn. As many pupils with HLP in their early years of schooling often do not have to work hard to achieve at high levels in one or more subjects, their strategies for overcoming obstacles in areas of their learning may not be properly developed (Bailey et al., 2012; Børte et al., 2016; George 2011). As argued by Bailey et al. (2012:42), because these pupils differ from their peers in part by their superior memory, this could mean that they "fail to develop a repertoire of conscious strategies". George (2011:95) argues that pupils with HLP often work at only partial capacity, yet still with the ability to succeed on school tasks and tests. This approach to learning may create difficulties because these pupils develop extremely poor learning habits that they may not be able to overcome when they are later sufficiently challenged.

The socio-emotional aspects of underachievement also need to be considered. Due to the cultural and political egalitarian traditions described in sub-section 3.2.1, Norwegian pupils with HLP may feel "different" or alienated because their intellect does not match with that of their peers. Many pupils with HLP may therefore try to hide their potential by adapting to their environment and underachieve in order to avoid being labelled as "smart" (Børte et

al., 2016:15). A premise for efficient differentiation is therefore a safe learning environment in which the pupils' differences are valued and accepted by both teachers and pupils (Tomlinson, 2014).

3.3 Relevant factors related to second language development

The aim of the present section is to examine five factors related to L2 acquisition that are considered relevant to the current study: 1) the age factor; 2) cognitive factors; 3) comprehensible input, interaction and output; 4) motivation; and 5) learner anxiety.

3.3.1 The age factor

Because this thesis focuses on pupils aged 9-13, it is relevant to address age as a factor in L2 learning. The participating pupils in this study started learning English at school at the age of six, following the global trend of lowering the onset age for introducing children to foreign languages (Brewster and Ellis, 2014; Drew and Hasselgren, 2008). The age factor in language learning has been widely considered in second language acquisition (SLA) literature (Singleton, 2003) and it has been subject to controversy. One of the controversies is associated with claims that there is a critical period between the age of two and the end of puberty, after which language learning will no longer be as efficient, i.e. the "critical period hypothesis" (Lenneberg, 1967, in Singleton, 2003:4). The field remains divided between those who believe that "younger is better" in language learning and those pointing to the advantages of the cognitive maturation of older language learners (Drew and Hasselgren, 2008:3).

Compared to older language learners, young language learners (YLLs) may have some specific advantages, for example enthusiasm and openness to learning new languages (Hasselgren, 2000). Their ease for acquiring their L1 has also been thought to be transferable to the learning of an L2 (Dixon et al., 2012, 2000; Krashen, 1982). Also, studies have shown that younger learners who receive substantial exposure to L2 generally attain higher levels of proficiency than those whose exposure starts in adolescence or adulthood (Singleton 2003).

Yet, children's potential advantage for acquiring an L2 may be prohibited when there is not enough exposure time and contact with the L2 to proceed in the same way as L1 learning (Munoz; 2006:34). In the Norwegian EFL classroom, pupils are exposed to one

teacher providing the input (usually not a native speaker) in very limited amounts of time. Indeed, by lowering the onset age for introducing English in 1997, Norwegian pupils were provided with more years of learning the new language. In addition, their total number of instruction hours were increased from 328 hours in the *L97* period to 366 hours in the *LK06* period. Still, it is questionable whether a few lessons of English per week will provide sufficient exposure time in the target language to create a learning situation similar to how children acquire their L1 (Munoz, 2006). Furthermore, studies have found that the learning outcome of Norwegian pupils' English instruction in their first year is minimal, especially if the language of instruction is Norwegian (Dahl, 2015). In other words, the efficiency of early English instruction depends on other factors than age and number of instruction hours alone. Other individual factors, such as motivation and cognitive abilities, may be more influential than onset age (Dörnyei, 2005; Munoz, 2006; Singleton, 2003), and will be discussed in the following section.

3.3.2 Cognitive factors

Characteristics applied to describe pupils with HLP in Norwegian official documents largely relate to these pupils' cognitive capacity. Pupils with HLP "learn more quickly and acquire more complex knowledge compared to their peers" (NOU 2016:14, 2016:8). It is therefore relevant to address the relationship between cognitive skills and the learning of an L2.

A cognitive construct involved in linguistic development is language aptitude. According to Dörnyei (2005), 50 years of research has provided evidence that next to motivation, language aptitude is the strongest predictor of foreign language success. In a three-year Greek study on cognitive skills and foreign language learning, Alexiou (2012) tested the language aptitude and cognitive skills of 191 children aged 5-9. The results showed that certain cognitive skills, such as memory components, analytic skills, inductive learning ability, and reasoning ability, were found to contribute to achievement in foreign language development. Alexiou (2012:58) argued that teaching strategies and curriculum development should be adopted to meet the different aptitudes in young learners.

Another cognitive component to consider is the working memory. The working memory holds and processes new information and stores it into the long-term memory. By retrieving information from the long-term memory, the working memory relates old and new information. The working memory, however, has limited processing capacity. For example, efficient reading relies on rapid, effortless and automatic recognition of the meaning of words

(a process called *lexical access*) (Day and Bamford 1997). The more rapid this process is, the more cognitive capacity will be left for true comprehension (Day and Bamford 1997:13; Hellekjær, 2007). Therefore, if it takes a reader too long to recognize the words in a sentence, there will not be enough time for the working memory to construct meaning and reading comprehension will be disrupted. These processes are similar in L1 and L2 reading (Day and Bamford 1997:16).

Because pupils with HLP often have a strong working memory (NOU, 2016:14, 2016; Idsøe 2014; Smedsrud and Skogen 2016), they will have a high capacity for processing new information, learn more quickly and have the cognitive capacity to acquire more complex knowledge than their age peers (NOU 2016:14, 2016). An implication of this is that they may need fewer repetitions before the information is stored in their long-term memory. Thus, they may need a more rapid progression than their age peers in order to stay motivated and on-task.

3.3.3 Comprehensible input, interaction and output

In his Monitor Model, Krashen (1982) proposed a distinction between language *acquisition* and language *learning*. Language acquisition is suggested to be a subconscious process similar of how children naturally acquire their L1 through informal communication focused on meaningful interaction. Language learning, on the other hand, is a conscious process and is more focused on the form of the language than on meaning. Krashen (1982) holds that L2 learning should mirror L1 acquisition as closely as possible; i.e. focus on meaning rather than on form. This claim implies that acquisition does not occur in instructional settings where language forms are drilled and learned as acquisition is provided mainly through *comprehensible input* (1982:21).

Comprehensible input (both oral and written) refers to language that belongs to the level slightly beyond the competence level of the learner. Krashen's input hypothesis is thus defined as $(I + 1)$, where (I) represents the learner's current competence level and $(+1)$ represents the language just beyond the learner's current level.¹⁴ According to Krashen's (1982) input hypothesis, L2 teachers should focus on providing meaningful input that is just beyond the competence levels of their pupils, both in terms of listening and reading skills.

Krashen (1982:30-32) further argues that a prerequisite for comprehensible input is a low-anxiety learning environment. According to his Affective Filter Hypothesis, the learner

¹⁴ Krashen's input hypothesis echoes Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development (see section 3.2.1).

needs to be in a relaxed state of mind to avoid the input being blocked by the affective filter. Learners with a low affective filter will have high motivation, self-confidence and a low level of anxiety. Learners with a high affective filter have low self-esteem and a high level of anxiety. Thus, a low affective filter is desirable in language development settings.

In accordance with Krashen, Long (1983), cited in Gass (2003:234), proposes that to make input comprehensible, learners also need the opportunity to negotiate meaning and to interact with others. Through such interaction, the nature of the input may become better-targeted to meet the learners' needs (Mitchell and Myles, 2004:160). This interactionist view is in line with the socio-cultural theories of Vygotsky (1978), in that it argues that learners construct linguistic meaning through interaction with more capable peers or the teacher. The metaphor of *scaffolding* was introduced by Bruner (1978) to capture the quality of this interaction (Mitchell and Myles, 2004:197). Scaffolding may, for example, involve the teacher providing hints and clues or asking pupils to rephrase questions (Foley and Thompson, 2003:118). Gass (2003:234) argues that Long's hypothesis and more recent research have led to a view on conversation not only serving as means of language practice, but also as a means of language learning.

Although acknowledging the role of comprehensible input, Swain (2000) argued already in 1985 that output also plays an important role in L2 acquisition. Swain (2000:99) argues that output pushes learners to process language more deeply and with more mental effort than input does. When producing language, learners need to create linguistic form and meaning and subsequently realize what they can or cannot do. Swain (2000:100) argues that when learners notice that they do not know how to express precisely the meaning they wish to convey, they notice a "hole" in their interlanguage¹⁵ and become motivated to fill it. According to Swain (2000:100), when learners take action to fill their linguistic hole, they often ask their peers or teacher, consult dictionaries, or pay attention to future relevant input. As a result, they may generate new linguistic knowledge.

The implications of an input, output and interactionist view on efficient L2 instruction are easily recognized. Pupils should therefore be provided with comprehensible input and opportunities to interact with each other to negotiate meanings and understandings of aspects of the L2. In the case of pupils with HLP, this would usually mean that they need opportunities to interact with level adequate peers or their teacher (strategies for implementing group work for pupils with HLP will further be discussed in section 3.4.4).

¹⁵ Interlanguage refers to the dynamic and independent linguistic system between a learner's L1 and L2 (Mitchell and Myles, 2004:39)

Next, the pupils should be encouraged to produce language so that they may stretch their interlanguage to meet communicative goals (Swain, 2000:99). Hellekjær (2016b:70) also emphasizes the relevance of opportunities for output. He describes Norwegian pupils as “input-full” due to their wide exposure to English outside school and argues that EFL teachers should build on their pupils’ high oral competence and teach them to use language more formally and varied both orally and in writing.

3.3.4 Motivation

Motivation may be defined as “moved to do something” (Ryan and Deci 2000:54). It is not given that pupils with HLP will maintain their motivation for learning throughout the school run. In fact, pupils with HLP are overrepresented among those at risk of loss of motivation and subsequent underachievement (Børte et al., 2016; Idsøe, 2014).

Motivation is considered a key component in the learning of an L2 (e.g. Dörnyei, 2005; Gardner, 2012; Ushioda, 2012). Because learning an L2 is cognitively and linguistically demanding, many learners will experience that motivation may ebb and flow through the L2 learning process (Ushioda 2012:79). Thus, the L2 teacher needs to be aware of this and address motivational issues if or when they arise. Self Determination Theory (SDT) (Ryan and Deci, 2000) provides a point of reference for the following explorations of how motivation affects pupils in general, and pupils with HLP in particular. STD has also been linked to L2 motivation by several scholars (see for example Lou et al., 2018; Noels et al., 2008; Dörnyei, 2005).

In SDT, motivation is divided into two main types: *intrinsic* and *extrinsic*. Intrinsic motivation refers to “doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable”, whereas extrinsic motivation, refers to “doing something because it leads to a separable outcome” (Ryan and Deci, 2000:55). Because intrinsic motivation is more likely than extrinsic motivation to lead to high-quality learning and creativity (Ryan and Deci, 2000:55), teachers’ knowledge of factors that may stimulate or undermine pupils’ intrinsic motivation appears important.

Intrinsic motivation

According to SDT, intrinsic motivation is catalyzed through the satisfaction of three interrelated psychological needs. These psychological needs are autonomy, relatedness and

competence, and although they are presented separately, it is important that they are addressed as a multifaceted whole.

The first psychological aspect to consider in the SDT is the need for *autonomy*, which refers to the feeling of something being personal, relevant, and voluntary. According to Ryan and Deci (2000), teachers who are autonomy-supportive are able to stimulate both intrinsic motivation and curiosity, and desire for challenges.

The second psychological aspect in this context is *relatedness*. The concept of relatedness refers to the need to feel connections with others. Ryan and Deci (2000) argue that pupils need to feel that their behavior is valued by someone they feel connected to, such as a peer group or a teacher. It is thus crucial for pupils to have a sense of belonging, or *relatedness*, to the persons or the group with which they share a goal. The feeling of being supported and cared for by teacher and peers is central for pupils' willingness to accept classroom values (Ryan and Deci, 2000:64). Dewaele (2009:636) argues that the progress of an L2 learner is linked to the chemistry that develops between the learner, his or her peers, and the teacher. Borg (2006:23), cited in Dewaele (2009:636) supports this when arguing that a crucial trait exhibited by effective language teachers is the ability to develop close relationships with their pupils.

Confirming the importance of relatedness, a Norwegian study by Frostad et al. (2014) found that lack of teacher support and the feeling of loneliness in the school context were strong predictors of later dropping out of upper secondary school. Pupils with HLP may have a feeling of being "different" or not belonging, as their intellect does not match with their peers (Børte et al., 2016; Idsøe, 2014). These pupils may thus be in danger of not developing a sense of relatedness in the educational environment. In addition, if being left to work on their own, the pupils in focus would be at risk of not developing a feeling of relatedness to either their peers or to their teacher. Providing opportunities for collaborations among the pupils can aid in promoting a feeling of relatedness (Katz and Assor, 2006).

The third psychological need in SDT is the concept of *competence*, which refers to the feeling of capability and efficiency. The pupil's need for competence may be provided through teacher behaviors, such as the teacher providing adequate feedback, adapting the instruction to match with the pupil's competence level, or presenting clear goals for the teaching. Teachers should therefore provide an initial assessment of their pupils so that they can set adequate and optimal tasks and goals (Hattie, 2009; Katz and Assor, 2006). Teacher feedback has been found to highly influence pupil achievement, both negatively and positively (Hattie, 2007:86). To be efficient, Hattie asserts that feedback needs to be

challenging and specific and leading towards a goal. He further argues that pupils are more likely to increase their effort when the effort leads to opportunities to work with more challenging tasks or higher quality experiences rather than opportunities of just doing “more” (Hattie, 2007:86).

One interesting finding from the aforementioned Norwegian pupil survey (Wendelborg and Caspersen, 2016) is that the high-achieving pupils felt they were given adequate support and feedback from the teacher. This finding thus differs from other research stating that the pupils with HLP are left to work on their own with little support (Børte et. al., 2016; NOU 2016:14, 2016). This discrepancy indicates that further research on what “teacher support” means is needed.

Extrinsic motivation

Not all tasks given to pupils in school will be inherently interesting and intrinsically motivating. A central issue for the teacher is thus how to motivate pupils to carry out extrinsically motivating activities despite these activities occasionally being less intrinsically motivating. Ryan and Deci (2000) argue that the feeling of autonomy may play a central role also with regards to extrinsic motivation.

Extrinsic motivation varies according to the degree to which it is autonomous (self-determined) or controlled. An example of an extrinsically *controlled* motivation may be a pupil doing homework because of wanting to receive praise or avoiding negative consequences (e.g., parental sanctions). This behavior would be in line with the behavioristic theories arguing that behaviors are motivated by punishment or reward (Skinner, 1953, in Woolfolk, 2015). According to STD, a controlled motive may lead the learner to achieve because of social pressure, the feeling of “ought to”, or the need to seem competent. However, Ryan and Cornell (1989) found that the more controlled the nature of pupils’ extrinsic motivation pupils is, the less interest, value or effort the pupils apply to the learning activity (in Ryan and Deci, 2000:63). In contrast, an extrinsically *autonomously* motivated pupil may choose to do a task because she or he believes it has instrumental and personal value for the learning (e.g., “I need to read this to understand this topic”). Consequently, extrinsically autonomously motivated pupils show greater enjoyment and more positive coping styles than those who do not have this kind of motivation in place (Ryan and Cornell, 1989, in Ryan and Deci, 2000). Both the above examples describe extrinsic motivation, but the latter involves a higher degree of autonomy.

According to STD, extrinsic autonomous motivation may eventually transform into intrinsic motivation (Ryan and Deci, 2000:62); hence autonomy is an aspect that should be taken into consideration when aiming for intrinsic motivation.

SDT in the EFL classroom

Several studies point to the benefits of implementing STD in educational contexts. A study of German 7th grade pupils' experiences of interest in three school subjects showed that pupil interest increased in lessons in which teachers were autonomy supportive and decreased in lessons in which teachers were controlling (Niemic and Ryan, 2009). A study by Assor, Kaplan and Roth (2002) showed that there was one particular aspect of autonomy that was regarded important in children's engagement in schoolwork. They found that teachers helping children understand the relevance of schoolwork for their personal interests and goals was a particularly important predictor of engagement in schoolwork. Further, Katz and Assor (2006) found that offering choice as a teaching practice was not automatically motivating for the pupils. For choice to be motivating it had to be "relevant to the pupils' interest and goals (autonomy support), not be too numerous or complex (competence support), and be congruent with the values of the pupils' culture (relatedness support)" (Katz and Assor, 2006:439).

In a Turkish study (Akcayoglu, 2015), 50 children aged between 10 and 14 identified as having an extraordinary potential for learning were asked to describe their foreign language experiences in school. The pupils expressed a want for learning authentic English and regarded the English they learned in school as irrelevant compared to the English they needed in their real lives. The pupils also did not find their school education effective and emphasized that it focused too much on grammar and writing. Additionally, the repetition and answering of easy comprehension questions felt meaningless.

The importance of autonomy is also advocated by Hyland (2003:91), who argues that what is the most important in terms of reading development is that texts stimulate and engage the reader. Hyland further argues that such "stimulus" texts are also the main stimulus for motivation to write. Hyland (2003:26) therefore advocates that pupils should be allowed free choice of reading material that makes it possible for them to follow their interests in reading. In fact, Krashen (2004:1) places Free Voluntary Reading (FVR) as a foundation of language instruction. FVR refers to reading for pleasure and excludes activities such as the pupil having to answer questions or do exercises that are aimed at the deliberate learning of a language.

Autonomy may also be promoted in vocabulary learning. Ruddel and Shearer (2002) argue that when pupils are included in the selection of words to study, their learning becomes

more personal and meaningful. Self-selection of vocabulary further promotes their appliance of metacognition while reading, and their awareness of words (Ruddel and Shearer, 2002).

To promote pupils' sense of autonomy, Ushioda (2012:82) argues that because language is a medium for self-expression and communication, L2 learners should be encouraged to view the second language as a means of self-expression and self-development. Further, learners need to be provided with a sense of continuity between what they learn and do in the classroom, on the one hand, and who they are and what they are interested in doing outside of the classroom, on the other hand. In other words, L2 learners need to feel the L2 learning relevant to their interests and lives. Thus, by promoting the pupils' feeling of autonomy, the EFL teacher may greatly enhance their motivation for developing their English.

3.3.5 Learner anxiety

As previously mentioned, according to Krashen's (1982) affective filter hypothesis, anxiety impedes acquisition and is thus an aspect that needs to be considered. Csikszentmihalyi et al., (1993:9) argue that when teachers' expectations of what they refer to as "talented children" are too high, it can result in learner anxiety. Supporting this claim, Børte et al. (2016) emphasize that pupils may become embarrassed if used as examples by their teachers or if making mistakes in the classroom. In her study of two Danish primary school pupils labelled as "smart" by their teachers and peers, Lundqvist (2017) found that such identity labels put the pupils at risk of being subjected to unnecessary pressure on their academic performance. Subsequent to such pressure, pupils with HLP may try to disguise their abilities because they do not want the attention it may result in (Børte et al., 2016:15).

Pupils' high self-expectations may also cause anxiety. The Turkish study by Akcayoglu (2015) found that even if the target pupils' English proficiency was beyond that of their peers, they set high standards for themselves and still found their performances insufficient. These high standards prevented them from participating in some activities due to fear of appearing unsuccessful. Akcayoglu (2015:648) concludes that teachers should be aware of these pupils' perfectionistic and sensitive nature in the L2 classroom. This is echoed by Deveau (2006), who points out that pupils with HLP might be reluctant to speak in the L2 classroom because their L2 competence does not always match their L1 competence. Dörnyei (2005) argues that pupils may learn to identify and replace such strategies of avoidance, for example by developing self-encouragement strategies. Arguably, pupils need opportunities to

develop the necessary skills to be able to do so. In addition to and in line with Krashen (1982), it appears important that teachers' put emphasis on meaning and not on form, and that they work to promote a low-anxiety classroom culture

3.4 Recommended strategies for adapted EFL teaching for pupils with HLP

As previously mentioned in section 3.2.2, there are two recommended differentiation strategies for teaching pupils with HLP: *acceleration* and *enrichment*. It is recommended that both strategies are used together and in an integrated way (Idsøe, 2014; VanTassel-Baska and Wood, 2010). However, a prerequisite for efficient differentiation is knowledge of the level of the pupils. Methods for assessing the levels of EFL pupils is presented in the following sub-sections.

3.4.1 Pre-assessment

Tomlinson (2014) argues that efficient differentiation requires some sort of pre-assessment and teachers viewing assessments as a diagnostic and continuous process.¹⁶ The importance of pre-assessing pupils is also underlined by Bell (2013), who argues that the first significant issue for a teacher of a mixed-level language class is to assess the needs and abilities of individual pupils: "We cannot simply teach to the middle of the group and hope that all pupils will take from our lessons exactly what they need". Bell (2013:88) suggests that such tools of pre-assessment should evaluate the pupils' level and aim to find out about their needs and interests.¹⁷

Information drawn from pre-assessments may inform the teacher about the level of proficiency and preferences of the readers. Although such pre-assessments will never be a perfect instrument, they may give the teacher a sense of the pupils' literacy skills and give information about the levels in the class.

¹⁶ Tomlinson argues that such pre-assessment data may, for example, be obtained from group discussions between the teacher and groups of pupils, journal entries, portfolio entries, exit cards, pre-tests, homework assignments, opinion or interest surveys, or teacher observations (Tomlinson, 2014:17).

¹⁷ Bell (2013) suggests that pupils could be given a one-page sheet with the task to write something about themselves in addition to some literacy tasks of increasing complexity (2013:88).

3.4.2 Acceleration

Acceleration refers to allowing pupils to move through the educational program at a faster rate (Smedsrud and Skogen, 2016:95). This may be done organizationally, for example through early entry at school or grade skipping, or pedagogically, for example through rapid progression of content or curriculum. Pedagogical acceleration necessarily involves enrichment. Enrichment strategies will be discussed in sub-section 3.6.2.

Acceleration is the strategy most often used in relation to pupils with HLP, and studies show that it can be an effective strategy with positive results on these pupils' cognitive development (Smedsrud and Skogen, 2016:95; VanTassel-Baska and Wood, 2010:347). However, research on the effects of acceleration is inconclusive. For example, Bailey et al. (2012) report that pupils with HLP who received selective provision in separate classes had greater declines in academic self-concept and motivation compared to pupils with HLP in mixed-ability classes. Those selected for provision were negatively affected by being separated from their peers (Bailey et al., 2012:40). There are therefore socio-emotional aspects to consider before separating individual pupils from their age peers as pupils with HLP do not necessarily integrate well socially and emotionally with older pupils or in homogenous constellations.

Acceleration may also be a challenge on the systematic level. A Danish example from an EFL context is provided by Nissen et al. (2011:97), who refer to a pupil in 7th grade who demonstrated significant abilities in English and who felt separated from her peers because she was always given individual materials to work with. She was then allowed to join 9th grade English classes and found this level appropriate. The school nevertheless lacked a plan for whether she should be allowed to complete the exam with her 9th grade peers or whether she should wait two years for her age peers to catch up with her. This example illustrates the importance of a long-term systematic plan in order for acceleration to be an efficient and appropriate differentiation strategy (Nissen et al., 2011; Smedsrud and Skogen, 2016). The Norwegian educational system is not organized for a wide use of organizational acceleration. However, Hilmer (2017) points out that in a Norwegian context, acceleration is most frequently practiced in mathematics and only rarely in language subjects.

Pedagogical acceleration involves rapid progression of content and curriculum. One such approach is curriculum compacting, which involves eliminating tasks that are repetitive and reproductive (Reis and Renzulli, 2006). In this way, time is freed to attend to different and more challenging work (Mönks and Ypenburg, 2002:66). This approach entails three

steps: 1) to define a goal of the instruction; 2) to assess what the pupils already master; and 3) to replace materials that pupils already master with more challenging work to make a more productive use of the pupils' time (Reis and Renzulli, 2010:3). Studies show that teachers who are trained in curriculum compacting may sometimes be able to eliminate as much as 70% of the content for their most advanced pupils without it negatively affecting pupils' learning outcome (Reis and Westberg, 1994). This indicates that without compacting the curriculum, some of these pupils would spend almost their entire school year not working effectively and productively. In fact, Hattie's (2009) research review on successful teachers showed that pupils in effective teachers' classrooms may be a year ahead in their academic development compared to pupils in classrooms of less effective teachers. Differences between effective or less effective teachers primarily relate to their attitudes and expectations of what to teach, how to teach it, and how rapidly to progress.

Although teachers may be able to compact the curriculum, and thus accelerate the teaching, they may still be unfamiliar with ways of designing appropriate replacement activities for the pupils (Idsøe, 2014; Reis and Purcell, 1993). Integrating acceleration strategies with *enrichment* strategies is nevertheless recommended (Idsøe, 2014; VanTassel-Baska and Wood, 2010).

3.4.3 Enrichment

Enrichment refers to themes and activities that go beyond the ordinary curriculum and whose purpose is to provide more depth and challenges within a topic, theme, or area of interest (Smedsrud and Skogen, 2016:73; NOU 2016:14, 2016). Such extra-curricular tasks should be based on pupils' interests and abilities and may be offered when pupils are finished with their ordinary schoolwork or when they have demonstrated mastery within an area of focus the class is working on. To be efficient, enrichment needs to be planned well in advance and not be practiced as an *ad hoc* approach (Smedsrud and Skogen, 2016:74).

Reis (2008) suggests that in the case of pupils with HLP, ordinary reading materials should be replaced with a range of more challenging books. They should also be provided with opportunities of reading more in-depth within the same topic and be allowed to engage in more complex conversations about their reading. This view is echoed by George (2011), who argues that pupils with HLP do not need *MOTS* ("more of the same"), but rather tasks that promote *HOTS* ("higher-order thinking skills"). A variety of material and learning aims that allow for more abstract and complex thinking are thus recommended. Problem solving, open

tasks and tasks that provide the use of metacognition are further suggested as approaches to enriching the curriculum (NOU 2016:14, 2016). Ways of implementing higher-order thinking in EFL instruction will be discussed in the following sub-section.

3.4.3.1 Providing for higher-order thinking

In the 1950s, Piaget (1954), cited in Woolfolk (2014), proposed that children go through four stages of cognitive development, where lower-order, concrete thinking eventually develops into higher-order, abstract thinking. According to Piaget, abstract thinking skills develop in the last stage, the “formal-operational stage” (usually from the age of 12). Brewster and Ellis (2002:31) argue that Piaget’s theories on the developmental stages may have led educators to underestimate the ability of primary aged pupils to reason and think abstractly. Instead of waiting for children to reach a certain age, children could be taught how to extend their powers of thinking towards more abstract reasoning from the earliest stages of schooling (Gipps, 1994:26). One tool for teaching higher-order thinking is Blooms’s taxonomy, which will be presented below.

Using Bloom’s taxonomy

Bloom’s taxonomy (1956) represents a classification of increasing cognitive complexity, from lower-order thinking towards higher-order thinking. Thus, this taxonomy may be used as an educational tool to create adequate challenges, or zones of development, for all pupils (Eyre, 2001; George, 2011; Holderness, 2001; Nissen et al., 2011).

In Bloom’s taxonomy, the three lower-order thinking skills are *remember*, *understand* and *apply*. The three higher-order thinking skills are *analyze*, *synthesize* and *evaluate*.¹⁸ To remember involves being able to e.g. describe, recall and identify. To understand involves being able to describe with own words, explain and compare. To apply involves being able to organize and identify and see solutions. To synthesize involves being able to see new solutions, and verify arguments and answers. To evaluate involves being able to predict, make judgements, and reason. Holderness (2001:48) provides an example of how Bloom’s taxonomy may be applied to the teaching of English. It should be noted that the example below relates to primary school children from an L1 perspective. However, it illustrates the purposes of using this taxonomy in a language classroom.

¹⁸ It should be noted that the original taxonomy of 1956 was revised by Krathwohl in 2001 (Krathwohl, 2002). However, it is the original taxonomy that is referred to here.

Table 1: Bloom’s taxonomy of Thinking Skills applied to English (from Holderness, 2001:48)

Level of thinking	Example
Knowledge	What’s the difference between a metaphor and a simile?
Comprehension	Read this poem and underline the metaphors. Explain the effect of each one.
Application	Make up metaphors to describe an animal of your own choice.
Analysis	Read some more poems in an anthology. Find some (5? 10?) more metaphors and explain why the poet used each one.
Synthesis	Write a definition of a metaphor. Try to write a short story using metaphors to replace every noun.
Evaluation	In which ways are metaphors useful? List all the reasons why the world would be a poorer place without metaphors.

Nissen et al. (2011:85) argue that although it is common to differentiate within the three lower-order thinking skills, it is less common to differentiate within the three higher-order skills. However, it is the three higher-order thinking skills teachers should aim at when teaching pupils with HLP (George, 2011:84; Nissen et al., 2011).

Higher-order thinking skills may be developed and taught (Eyre, 2001). Holderness (2001:49) argues that the development of talented readers’ capacity to read critically and apply higher-order thinking skills will not be sufficiently catered for through simply increasing the number or range of books. Rather, these readers need opportunities for sharing their readings with able peers and adults through authentic literary discussions (Holderness, 2001:49), which would correlate with their “zones of development”. Further, being provided with a range of written high-quality texts, and helped to become aware of the differences between narrative and non-narrative forms, may promote writing development (Holderness, 2001:54).¹⁹

The art of questioning

George (2011:71) argues that children’s thinking may be stretched by teachers changing their approach to the way in which they ask questions. Instead of asking questions that require

¹⁹ E.g. to restructure a text into a different form, e.g. a diary entry, a chart, or a job advert (Holderness, 2001:52). Other recommended strategies for challenging pupils in writing are to analyze and copy the style of writing of their favorite writer or to write cross-curricular texts (Idsøe, 2014; VanTassel-Baska and Wood, 2010).

pupils to *know*, the teacher should aim at asking questions that require them to *find out*. Open-ended questions call for several solutions and thus demand that pupils think on a higher level (George, 2011:74). Such questions would require the reader to go deeper into the text and apply higher-order thinking skills, such as analysis, reasoning, and evaluation. Such an approach to asking pupils questions is supported by Holderness (2001:52), who points out that although many pupils with HLP will be able to read books that are aimed at children who are 3-7 years older than themselves, it is not necessarily the text itself that should be in focus, but the way it is used. For example, even picture books with little text may serve as a rich and complex language experience if the teacher provides questions that challenge thought and discussion (Holderness, 2001).

Solving problems

According to Nissen et al. (2011:85), lower-order thinking resembles deductive learning, which is often characterized by reproduction, recalling, and imitation of knowledge. Reading comprehension questions from the textbook or answering questions related to knowledge of the content are examples of deductive learning. Higher-order thinking resembles inductive learning, where learners investigate authentic problems and need to find out which knowledge, methods and tools are needed to solve them (Nissen et al., 2011).

Tasks that require pupils to solve problems might provide opportunities for higher-order thinking in the EFL classroom. Such problem-based tasks require a meaningful context that requires pupils to personalize language and use it in independent and creative ways (Brewster and Ellis 2002:50). Such tasks also promote pupil independence through pupils having to make choices. They have a clear outcome and they provide opportunities to develop interaction and fluency (Brewster and Ellis, 2002:51-52).²⁰

Because problems may need to be approached from multiple angles, problem-based tasks may provide opportunities for learning across topics and subjects. Such cross-curricular learning is an aim in the ongoing revision of the *LK06* curriculum²¹, expressed in the Report to the Parliament no. 28 (Meld. St. 28 (2015-2016)). It states that the many competence aims of *LK06* have led to pupils developing surface knowledge on the expense of in-depth learning. Consequently, the revised *LK06* curriculum will have fewer competence aims and an

²⁰ E.g. Pupils may be asked to make and play a board game, write and perform a simple play, write a new version of a story that has been used in class or investigate a topic and present it to the class (Brewster and Ellis 2002:51-52)

²¹ The revised LK06 curriculum will be implemented in 2020. (<https://www.udir.no/laring-og-trivsel/lareplanverket/fagfornyelsen/hva-skjer-nar-i-fornyelsen-av-fagene/>)

emphasis on themes that may be integrated in all subjects. Working with themes across subjects requires pupils to understand phenomena across domains of knowledge. Through reading, reflecting, writing and discussing issues, the pupils may come to appreciate powerful ideas (VanTassel-Baska and Wood, 2010:349). Studies have shown that such a curriculum design leads to a high learning outcome for pupils with HLP, but that it also motivates a broader group of learners (VanTassel-Baska and Wood, 2010:354).

3.4.4 Differentiation through grouping of pupils

Vygotsky (1978) places social interaction as a prerequisite for learning to occur. Interaction is also emphasized as a means for L2 development. Like all pupils, pupils with HLP need scaffolding during their linguistic development and thus need opportunities to interact with adequate sparring partners (Idsøe, 2014; Smedsrud and Skogen, 2016). Homogeneous groups where pupils with HLP work together may thus create a productive situation for learning for these pupils (Bailey et al., 2012; Idsøe, 2014). Idsøe (2014) holds that pupils with HLP will benefit the most academically from being grouped with *de facto* adequate peers, regardless of age or grade. Sometimes it may therefore be appropriate to organize a group of the highest-level pupils across classrooms or even across levels. The Official Norwegian Report *More to gain* (NOU 2016:14, 2016) nevertheless warns against making homogenous level groups a static practice, as the level of the pupils should be regarded as dynamic and variable across subjects, topics and themes.

In addition, level grouping may not necessarily result in performance. Although pupils with HLP who have worked in homogenous groups may outperform pupils with HLP who have worked in heterogeneous groups, the types of social interaction that take place within the groups appear to be a higher predictor of performance than the abilities of the pupils (Bailey et al., 2012). Pupils should therefore be allowed to work with a variety of peers, carefully grouped according to the aim of the learning activity, the pupils' ability to cooperate, their abilities and interests, or the complexity of the task at hand (Idsøe 2014; Smutney, 2000).

Teachers may be tempted to strategically place high-achieving pupils together with struggling pupils with the aim that the high-achieving pupils will mentor the struggling learners (Idsøe, 2014:46). However, such a practice should take into consideration the needs of all the pupils in the group. It is also worth noticing that pupils with HLP differ in regards to their abilities to explain or collaborate with peers, as is the case with all pupils. Some pupils

with HLP may dominate the task and discussions because they want to move on, while others may collaborate fully with their peers (Bailey et al., 2012:42).

3.5 Previous research on Norwegian EFL differentiation practices

As previously mentioned, there are to this researcher's knowledge no previous studies specifically focusing on Norwegian pupils with HLP in an EFL context. However, a few Norwegian studies have been conducted regarding the practice of adapted instruction and EFL. According to Idsøe (2014), a learning environment that meets the needs of all learners would mean that pupils with HLP would not have to be addressed as a specific group. Therefore, it seems relevant to address how Norwegian EFL teachers adapt their instruction to meet the needs of their learners in mixed-level classes.

In her teacher's guide book, *Engelsk på mellomtrinnet (English at the intermediate level²²)*, Munden (2014:17) argues that the conversation below she had with two pupils aged 13 after an EFL lesson illustrates the current situation for high-achieving pupils in Norwegian EFL classes:

Me: What did you learn in this English lesson?
Girl: I think maybe this word was new to me. (She looked down at the textbook and pointed at a word.)
Me: That one word? That is what you learnt today?
Girl: Yes, I'm sorry.
Me: Don't be sorry! I got the impression that you know lots of English words?
Girl: Yes, I read a lot of English. I've just finished *Lord of the Rings*.
Me: Really! In English?
Girl: Yes (and she looked down apologetically again)
Then I turned to the boy.
Me: What did you learn in this English lesson?
Boy: I don't think I learned anything, actually.
Me: Why was that, do you think?
Boy: The topic doesn't really interest me.
Me: So what interests you?
Boy: I like to read about World War 2.
Me: In English?
Boy: In English and in Norwegian, it doesn't matter.

Munden (2014:17) explains that the teacher of these pupils referred to them as "dream pupils" because they were quiet, clever and did well on English tests. However, Munden (2014)

²² My translation.

expresses that she was left wondering why these pupils had to spend time in this classroom at all and whether they were actually learning anything in their EFL classes at school.

In her study about adapted instruction in Norwegian 10th grade EFL classes, Rønnestad (2015) found that although most pupils in her study reported to be motivated in their EFL classes, the less motivated pupils tended to be the more able pupils. She concluded that the more able pupils had little or no influence on how their English lessons were adapted and that they were not challenged sufficiently, despite expressing a wish for more challenging instruction.

Furthermore, according to Hodgson et al. (2012:188), Norwegian primary school teachers only to a small extent give their pupils rich and open tasks that open for them to wonder, understand, discuss, discover and explore connections. Instead, topics are dealt with in separate units and on a surface level with little room for the deeper structures of learning. In the same report, teachers also voice a concern that pupils with HLP are not appropriately accommodated for. On the basis of the above issues, it seems reasonable to infer that in many Norwegian EFL classrooms, neither the struggling nor the high-achieving learners are provided with adequately adapted instruction.

A rather discouraging picture of Norwegian EFL instruction is painted by Flemmen's observational study on adapted instruction in Norwegian EFL elementary classes (grade 1-4) (2006:77). Flemmen concludes that the observations of the EFL instruction left her with the impression of many boring, uninspired, wasted and directly unproductive encounters with English. She argues (2006:186²³): "And it is when observing children at an age when their desire for learning is at its greatest being totally disinterested or obviously suffering from boredom that one has to ask how much 'damage' is done to them in relation to English specifically and in relation to foreign language learning in general". Lastly, Flemmen places the responsibility for the poor EFL instruction on the national government for not providing enough qualified teachers to teach the subject and further for not initiating adequate training for in-service teachers (2006:187).

²³ My translation

4. Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology applied in this study, chosen with the aim of answering the research questions:

1. Do the Norwegian intermediate EFL teachers adapt their instruction to accommodate for their pupils with higher learning potential?
2. If so, how do they adapt their instruction to accommodate for these pupils?
3. How do the pupils experience their EFL instruction?

First, section 4.2 describes the theoretical orientation of qualitative research. Section 4.3 outlines the design of the actual study and explains the choice of method (interviews). Section 4.4 provides a description of the structure and content of the interviews. The process of data collection is described in section 4.5, while section 4.6 describes the data analysis methods. The validity and reliability of the research are considered in section 4.7. Finally, in section 4.8 ethical considerations are addressed.

4.2 Qualitative data collection

This study seeks to answer questions with reference to teachers', pupils' and parents' experiences and views relating to EFL teaching. Morse and Richards (2002:27) argue that if the purpose of research is to understand a little known area or to understand people and phenomena "deeply and in detail", a qualitative approach is the most adequate one. As opposed to a quantitative approach that focuses on collecting numerical data and statistics, qualitative research is concerned with describing, understanding, and interpreting the processes and phenomena of human lives (Dörnyei, 2007:126). This study thus has a *phenomenological* approach; it has an interest in understanding phenomena from the respondents' own perspectives and experiences, their "life world" (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009:26).

4.2.1 Interviews

Qualitative interviews were chosen for this study, as the qualitative research interview seeks to understand the world from the interviewee's point of view and to interpret the meaning of their views and experiences (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009:1). Thus, this method allowed the researcher to seek to understand the views, attitudes and experiences of the pupils, teachers and parents from their point of view. The interview situation usually allows for greater depth than any other method of collecting research data (Borg and Gall, 1989:446), and may provide insight into participants' opinions and feelings. This human interaction is what makes such research data collection possible. However, it also makes the research subject to bias. These considerations will be further addressed in section 4.6.

Although there are different types of research interviews, the main types are conducted one-to-one. These can further be divided, based on the degree of structure, into unstructured, semi-structured, and structured interviews (Dörnyei, 2007:134). For this study, three different types of interviews were used: semi-structured one-to-one interviews with the teachers, semi-structured group interviews with the pupils, and structured online interviews with the parents.

Semi-structured interviews with the teachers and pupils were considered appropriate for this study. Semi-structured interviews are conducted using an interview guide (see Appendix 1 and 2) that gives structure to the interview and ensures the aimed topics of conversation take place, while also giving room for additional questions to arise during the interview. This method leaves the interviewer and interviewee with a fair degree of freedom in terms of elaborating on certain issues or questions that may arise during the interview (Dörnyei, 2007:136).

The online parent interviews followed a structured interview guide (see Appendix 3). A structured interview guide contains a list of controlled questions and, as opposed to semi-structured interviews, the structured interview has no flexibility with regards to follow-up questions during the interview. An advantage with such interviews, according to Dörnyei, (2007:136), is that they ensure that the interview covers all intended topics and is thus comparable across different respondents.

There are, however, methodological considerations to take when conducting qualitative interviews. These will be discussed in the following subsection.

4.2.2 Methodological considerations

Borg and Gall (1989:448-449) list three sources of error that may occur in research interviews. First, the respondent may have predispositions about the research. Examples of such are if the respondent is suspicious of the research and therefore wants to present himself/herself in a favorable way, or withholds information. This is especially important to be aware of when interviewing children, as children may want to answer in a manner they think is “correct” in an attempt to please the interviewer (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009:146).

Secondly, the researcher may also have predispositions. Examples of such are if the researcher allows her or his own opinions or expectations to influence the interpretation of what is being said (Borg and Gall, 1989:448-449). Previous research showing that Norwegian pupils with HLP do not thrive in school (e.g. Wendelborg and Caspersen, 2016) could for example lead the researcher into a predisposition that teachers are not competent or willing to address their practices with regards to their pupils with HLP. Borg and Gall (1984:449) argue that it is important for the interviewer to be able to relate to the respondent in a positive fashion to avoid such predispositions. The researcher in this study is also a teacher and thus sympathizes with the many challenges teachers face in mixed-ability classrooms.

The third source of error relates to procedures used in conducting the study. Examples of such could be the participants lacking information, inappropriate length of the interview, or presence of other people during the interview. These considerations will be further discussed in section 4.8, when discussing ethical considerations.

There are also some drawbacks of online interviewing. Considering this form of interviewing is not face-to-face, it could make it more difficult to build the necessary trust with the interviewee. However, as Kvale and Brinkmann (2009:148) point out, online interviews may make it easier for informants to be personal and open than in conventional interviews. This requires, however, that the interview is clear and appears meaningful to the interviewee (i.e. parent). It also requires that the interviewee (i.e. parent) is able to express him/herself well in the written form (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009:149).

4.3 Data collection

4.3.1 Participants

Four primary schools, one targeted and three randomly selected, from the county of Rogaland participated in the current study. To reduce the risk of a biased sample (Borg and Gall, 1984:445), a larger sample would have provided more data and would thus have been preferable. However, in addition to the target school, several random schools were contacted, yet only three teachers accepted the invitation to participate. In addition, due to the time limitations and the scope of this study, a sample of four schools was considered appropriate. Moreover, a qualitative study does not aim to generate as much data as possible, but rather to obtain high qualitative data that can produce valuable results (Dörnyei, 2007:125).

The target school was targeted from information the researcher had about this school's focus on accommodating for pupils with HLP. Furthermore, the aim was to include random schools from different regions within the county to ensure that both urban and rural schools were represented. However, all four schools are from urban areas in the county, though from different municipalities. The headmasters were initially approached by e-mail or telephone. Once they had consented, they passed on the invitation to their English teachers in either grade 5, 6 or 7 (see Appendix 4). Four English teachers (three female and one male), from four different primary schools accepted the invitation.

The teacher sample includes one teacher from grade 5, one from grade 6 and two teachers from grade 7. The sample of teachers was a *convenience* sample (Dörnyei, 2007), which was appropriate because pupils with HLP are expected to be found in any school. In addition, such sampling usually indicates "willing participants", which usually produces rich data (Dörnyei, 2007:129).

After having received the teachers' contact information from the administrations, the four teachers were contacted by telephone or e-mail and asked to select 3-4 of their most advanced learners for participation in pupil group interviews. The pupils were to be selected from the same grade, but could be selected from different classes. It was important that the composition of the pupil group interviews was within-group homogeneous, as homogeneous samples provide a better dynamic within the groups (Dörnyei, 2007:144). It was intergroup heterogeneous, with individual groups for each of the grades 5 and 6 and two groups for grade 7. Individual groups for each grade were chosen because the material used for the individual grades, such as the textbooks, might differ in complexity and quality when it came to accommodating for the pupils in focus. The degree of freedom and access to digital resources could also possibly be different from grade 5 to grade 7. By interviewing the pupils in individual groups for each grade, it was also possible to yield data about each grade, which is important considering the reports on the decrease of motivation following the intermediate

years (Topland and Skaalvik, 2010). Last but not least, to make sure no pupil(s) dominated the group and to avoid “groupthinking” (Dörnyei, 2007:128), it was important to avoid possible power and dominance from older pupils over younger ones.

The pupils were thus a *typical* sampling (Dörnyei, 2007:128), as they had to fill a profile of typical features and attributes set by the researcher. The teachers were asked to base their selection of pupils on their academic performances and level. Such pupils could in principle be native English speakers, for instance those talking English at home with their parents. It could also be partly native English speakers who had lived in an English speaking country. However, this study seeks to find out about learners who show a high ability in learning English as a foreign language, and thus no native or partly native English speakers were involved in the study. The teachers were also informed that the selection criteria could include pupils with the need for greater challenges than their peers. When having a grading system, such as in lower secondary school, the selection of pupils could be a rather straightforward process. The teachers would know that the pupils with the highest grades would be the targeted pupils. However, the researcher was confident that the teachers would be able to select the pupils most appropriate for participation. It should be noted that the researcher deliberately refrained from using the term “pupils with higher learning potential” in the information to the teachers, pupils or parents. This was due to the concern that this relatively new and probably unknown term could cause misunderstandings and make the teachers uncertain about which pupils to select. Therefore, the more commonly used terms “advanced” or “strong” learners were used both in the information and during the interviews. This discrepancy of terms is not expected to have influenced the data in this study.

Finally, the parents were invited to participate in an online interview and they accepted this invitation by adding their email address on the consent form they were given by the teachers (see Appendix 5).

4.3.2 Interview guides

The teacher, pupil and parent-interviews all followed three different interview guides which were designed in advance (see Appendix 1, 2 and 3). The teacher interview guide was designed in both an English (see Appendix 1a) and Norwegian (see Appendix 1b) version to provide the teachers with the option to choose in which language they wanted to be interviewed. The pupil and parent interview guides were designed in Norwegian (see

Appendix 2b and 3b).²⁴ All interview guides were piloted to ensure that all the questions were clear and would be able to yield the information needed to answer the research questions. Piloting the interview also made it possible to estimate the time frame needed for the actual interviews. The teacher interview was piloted once with an EFL primary school teacher. The pupil interview was piloted twice, the first time with a 5th and a 6th grader, the second time with a 7th grader. The parent interview was piloted once with a parent of one of the pupils interviewed in the pilot interview. As a result of the piloting, changes were made to the interview guides, such as the wording and order of questions. In addition, one question in the pupil interview appeared somewhat challenging to the pupils: *Has your feeling towards English at school changed since you started English classes in 1st grade?* This question aimed at finding out whether the pupils could recall their first encounter with English in 1st grade and whether their attitudes to learning English in school had changed over the years. This question was added due to a conversation the researcher had as a teacher with a 2nd grade pupil who found English to be the worst subject at school because it was too easy. However, the pupils showed some difficulties in remembering their English classes in 1st grade and so this question was removed from the interview guide.

Initially, the interview guides were categorized. However, it proved somewhat difficult to include the same categories in all three interview guides, as there were different aspects that seemed more relevant for some interviews than others. However, they all focused on the same subtopics: *characteristics of the pupils at hand, adapted EFL instruction, motivation, support, and wishes*. The teacher interview guide (see Appendix 1) also included a section about the teacher's background and education to gain a clearer picture of how the teachers perceived their own confidence and qualifications as English teachers.

The teacher interview guide included 38 questions. The majority of the questions were focused on the teachers' understanding of the concept of adapted instruction, the school's policy on the pupils in focus, and the teachers' EFL adaption practices in relation to these pupils. It was important to find out how the teachers identified and assessed their pupils with HLP, what materials, tasks and methods they used to improve these pupils' English skills, and what they did to motivate their pupils with HLP. As described in the Self Determination Theory of Ryan and Deci (2000) in section 3.3.4, motivation is closely related to the feeling of *competence, autonomy and relatedness*. Questions that could elicit information about to what degree the teachers considered e.g. feedback (competence), self-choice of materials

²⁴ English translated versions are included in Appendix 2a (pupils) and Appendix 3a (parents).

(autonomy) and peer collaboration (relatedness) were also included in the teacher interview guide. It was also important to learn what the teachers thought would help in order to accommodate for the pupils with HLP. Teachers need to make many compromises within a school system that has many limitations in terms of time and resources. Arguably, the teachers would probably know where the challenges lie.

The pupil interview guide included 31 questions (See Appendix 2). The interview guide aimed at eliciting the pupils' practices with English outside school, their experiences with and attitudes towards the materials, tasks and adapted EFL teaching, and their overall opinions about the effectiveness of the EFL teaching. For the sake of better understanding their motivation, it was also important to elicit the pupils' own suggestions as to how they would prefer to learn English at school. For instance, if there was a strong discrepancy between the current EFL practices and the pupils' self-expressed needs and wishes, it would be interesting to see how this affected their motivation in their EFL classes.

The parent interview guide included 16 questions (see Appendix 3). The questions were focused on to what degree the parents supported their children's English language development, how they perceived their children's EFL teaching and homework, and to what degree they felt their children were challenged and motivated in their EFL classes.

4.3.3 Conducting the teacher interviews

The teacher interviews were conducted at the teachers' schools. This was practical since the teachers suggested the interviews should take place within the teaching hours. All the interviews lasted approximately 60 minutes. The teachers were invited to choose whether they wanted to be interviewed in English or Norwegian. This option was provided to ensure that they would be as comfortable in the interview setting as possible. The teachers from School 1 and School 4 chose to be interviewed in English and the other two in Norwegian. The interviews conducted in Norwegian thus had to be translated into English, which indicates a risk of compromising the data because of translation issues. All longer translated quotes from the teachers in School 2 and 3 are included in Appendix 7 in their Norwegian original form.

The teacher interviewee from School 1 was not the teacher of the interviewed pupils, although she was a teacher at the pupils' year level. When asked why she did not choose some of her own pupils, she responded that she was not sure if she had any advanced learners in her class. She had therefore asked her colleague to select some pupils from her two classes. That

the teacher interviewee was not the teacher of the interviewed pupils could be problematic for the reliability of the data. For example, the degree to which the pupils are supported or motivated by their teacher would arguably be dependent on and influenced by individual factors, such as the quality of the pupils' relationship with the teacher or the teacher's personality. However, the teacher explained that she and her colleague planned all lessons together and followed the same procedure and progression. Moreover, the pupils in both classes had the same homework, tasks and tests. It is therefore reasonable to assume that it was still possible to obtain reliable data about the adapted EFL teaching practice and how it affected the pupils.

4.3.4 Conducting the pupil group interviews

Group interviews are, as the name suggests, interviews in a group format. Such interviews are suitable for children as it is less intimidating to be interviewed together with peers than in individual interviews (Cohen et al., 2000:287). Here, the research data is collected from the responses of the participants as they think together, brainstorm, and inspire each other (Dörnyei, 2007:136). Consequently, such interviews have a potential to yield a relatively large amount of research data in a relatively short time. This is an economical way of collecting data and was therefore convenient given the time frame of the study. It is, however, important when interviewing children, to have some structure to keep the conversation on topic and relevant, as children might easily become distracted (Cohen et al., 2000:290). A semi-structured interview guide was therefore applied to the pupil group interviews (see Appendix 2).

The pupil interviews lasted between 45 and 60 minutes and were conducted in a group room in the school without disturbance from others. Although the pupils had been given information in writing about the interview via their teachers, one could not presuppose that they had read this information or knew what it meant. The pupils were therefore re-informed orally about the confidentiality issues before each interview. The pupil interviews were conducted in the pupils' mother tongue, Norwegian, to ensure that they could express themselves freely and without any language barriers. By interviewing the pupils before the teacher, their responses could serve as background information for the teacher interviews.

4.3.5 Conducting the online parent interviews

Online interviews were convenient for this study as this method gave the researcher the opportunity to interview parents without having to be physically present. Considering the time limitations and the scope of the study, this was an advantage. This method also provides data where the written text is the medium of expression and is easily available for analysis.

The parents were approached by e-mail, through which they received a link to an online interview site, *Surveyxact*.²⁵ Here, the data were saved and secured with password protection. The e-mail was sent to the parents after the pupil interviews to ensure that the parents would not discuss the questions with their children before the pupil interviews and thus affect the pupils' answers. One possible risk of such interaction could be that the pupils would be influenced by their parents. This could affect the pupils' responses during the interviews, as they might answer in line with what they think their parents would want them to answer.

4.4 Analyzing the data and presentation of results

It was not possible to transcribe all the interviews within the time frame of this thesis. However, the audio recorded interviews were reviewed several times with the intent to listen for emerging and interesting themes in the data material. While listening to the audio recordings, summaries were written for each interview. The audio recordings provided the possibility to play and pause so that the summaries of the interviews could be written as accurately as possible. The researcher's comments from the field notes were further added to the processing of interview data. To make it easier to compare the different interviews, the summaries were printed out and later maculated. Emergent topics and quotes across the interviews were then coded and added to categories, such as *autonomy*, *the understanding of adapted instruction*, and *materials*. The coding of the data made it easier to compare and find differences across the interviews. The parent online interviews were, in their written and structured form, already ready for analysis. They were printed out and compared both within and across the schools.

²⁵ *Surveyxact* is a secure and personal program connected to the University of Stavanger for such data collection.

As a result of processing the data, the interviews will be presented in the form of summaries and arranged thematically according to the questions in the interview guides. Interesting quotes from the interviews have been included in the presentation of the results where appropriate.

4.5 Reliability and validity

Reliability and validity are central concepts in research. *Reliability* refers to the consistency and trustworthiness in research findings and whether these findings are replicable in other settings (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009:246). *Validity* refers to correctness, “quality of craftsmanship”, and whether the study measures what it set out to measure. Validity applies not only to the data collection, but to the whole research process (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009:248-249).

There are two types of validity: *internal* validity and *external* validity (Nunan, 1992:15). Internal validity refers to how interpretations are related to the methods, analysis, and instruments used in the study. The data collection method in this study was interviews. As described in section 4.3.1, interviews are subject to bias. Further, it is not possible to know the degree to which the participants answered the questions honestly or whether they misunderstood or forgot something. Such factors represent a threat to internal validity. However, the choice of approaching the research question from three perspectives, namely the pupils, teachers and parents, enabled the findings to be checked for correspondence and thus increased the internal validity of the research.

External validity refers to the extent to which the sample and results can be generalized to the population (Nunan, 1992:15). The current study is based on the responses of four teachers, thirteen pupils, and thirteen parents. This is too small a sample to be representative for the population, which means that the results of this study cannot be generalized. However, taken into consideration that this is a qualitative study, the number of respondents for the interviews was considered large enough to provide a degree of insight into teachers’ and pupils’ practices and experiences in Norwegian EFL intermediate classes in relation to the given topic. The pupil sample included both boys and girls from different grades (5, 6 and 7) and the teachers were from different schools and had different educational backgrounds and teaching experiences. Collecting data from both teachers, pupils and parents, called a *triangulation* strategy (Maxwell, 2009:245), reduces the risk of bias as data from

several sources is obtained, thus reducing the weight given to any particular individual set of data. These factors and considerations strengthened the validity of the study.

The reliability of the study was approached in several ways. The interview guides for the teachers and pupils were conducted after studying interview guides used for similar Norwegian studies on adapted education in EFL classes (Rønnestad, 2015; Weka, 2009). In addition, the interview guides were piloted by the researcher. There are also reliability concerns to be aware of in interview situations with children. Children may easily be influenced and led by questions posed by adults (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009:146). The questions therefore aimed at being age-appropriate, clear, and thoughtfully designed in order not to influence the children's honest opinions. Moreover, the children and parent interviews were conducted in Norwegian in order to avoid misunderstandings and language barriers, and to allow the respondents to express themselves freely and accurately. To increase the transparency of the study, all longer translated quotes are included in their Norwegian original form in Appendix 7.

4.6 Ethical considerations

Because qualitative interviews research people's personal statements and make them public, ethical considerations affect the whole research process (Dale and Brinkmann, 2009:62). Dale and Brinkmann (2009:63) argue that the purpose of a study should consider whether it will improve the situation of the individuals in focus. It could be argued that it is unethical to focus research on pupils who are performing well in school and not on those who struggle. However, considering research and reports showing that high-achieving Norwegian pupils do not thrive in school and perceive school as little relevant to their lives and future careers (Wendelborg and Caspersen, 2016), it seemed important to try to improve their situation in school.

Dale and Brinkmann (2009:63) further argue that the ethical issues of the design of a study involve three considerations. Firstly, they involve obtaining the participants' informed consent; secondly, securing confidentiality; and thirdly, considering possible consequences of the study for the participants. The researcher obtained informed consent from both the teachers (see Appendix 4), parents and pupils. The teachers were given an informed consent form to pass on to the pupils and their parents (see Appendix 5). The signed forms were then collected by the teachers and handed to the researcher. The informed consent form included

information about the purpose and procedure of the study. The procedure aimed at protecting confidentiality was further described, for example that the personal information was treated with discretion and that all the names were anonymized. The participants were informed that the researcher was the only one with access to the collected data and that all collected data would be deleted at the end of the project. The participants were also informed about the possibility to withdraw from the project at any time. This information was written and explained in a simpler way to the pupils to ensure they understood what their consent to participate meant. The confidentiality issues were further restated orally before each interview.

Since the study anonymizes participants, all the participants are referred to by pseudonyms in the thesis. In their e-mail, the parents were given a code that represented their child. Hence, it would be possible for the researcher to identify which child was being described, which would open for the cross-checking of the pupils' responses against their parents'. The choice of using a code instead of the children's names was made to avoid personal data being connected to any names. The interviews were not connected to the parents' e-mail or IP addresses and so the connection between the code and the parents was only visible to the researcher. All the data collected, namely the interview recordings, field notes and computer interviews, have been kept confidential and for the researcher's use only. The study was also reported to and approved by the Social Science Data Services (NSD) (see Appendix 6).

Considering the third ethical issue proposed by Dale and Brinkmann (2009), it could be argued that a focus on being an advanced pupil could give negative consequences for the participating pupils. It is possible that being singled out because one demonstrates high abilities could result in a negative focus from both teachers and peers. In addition, the pupils were selected by the teachers before being given the possibility to consent to the participation. It was therefore underlined to the teachers that the pupils' confidentiality was provided for by the researcher and that it was important that the pupils were interviewed in a room where no one could interrupt or hear what they said. Knowledge and awareness of these pupils is necessary for the sake of improving their situation in school, and thus the potential benefits of the knowledge gained could arguably defend the potential risk of harm. In addition, the pupils were asked in the interviews how they felt about being selected for the study. The pupils all responded positively to this, which was also confirmed by the parents.

5. RESULTS

5.1. Introduction

The present chapter presents the findings of the research. The chapter is divided into four sections; each presenting the findings from one of the four schools. Each section is subdivided into three sections that present the data collected from the teacher, pupil, and parent interviews. All of the participants are anonymized and the names of the pupils and teachers are thus pseudonyms. The schools will be referred to as School 1, School 2, School 3 and School 4. The parents will be referred to as P1, P2, P3, and so on.

5.2. School 1

5.2.1 School 1 teacher interview: Nora, 6th grade teacher

Nora had been an English teacher for eight years and had 90 credits in English from higher education. She expressed that her education made her feel well prepared to teach English. She had taught her current pupils for two years and they had two 45-minute English lessons a week. She planned all her English lessons with her colleague, and they followed the same procedures and progression plans for each week.

Characteristics of the pupils

When asked about how she recognizes her advanced learners (ALs), Nora explained that these learners may demonstrate strengths in different skills. For example, some might not talk so much, but have perfect spelling. Mostly, however, she would recognize them by their oral skills and the way they often adapt to, for example, an American or British accent. They also have a better understanding of words and are expected to demonstrate a larger vocabulary and more thoroughness in their written work.

The understanding of adapted teaching

Nora felt there was a common understanding of adapted teaching at her school because of the common practice of dividing homework into three levels. However, she could not recall the administration or teachers having collectively addressed the ALs specifically, except for in a meeting the previous year when they had discussed the 5th graders' National Test results.²⁶ Nora explained that from these tests one could recognize that there were three levels of pupils. She felt, however, that the level 3 learners (highest level) were not given much attention compared to the other pupils and stated that the struggling learners were the main focus of attention most of the time at her school.

Nora emphasized that ideally there should be three levels regarding the adaption of teaching in English, but that they practised two levels. Some years ago, she had accommodated for some pupils that were on a "higher-higher level" by giving them additional adapted tasks. However, compared to previous classes, the current pupils' level was not that high. She explained: "We only have two levels, and the second level is challenging enough for them".

Nora assessed the levels of the pupils mainly from their oral skills and would notice pupils who spoke with a large vocabulary, appropriate intonation, or little or no accent. She would also ask the pupils to write something about themselves and assess the level of their texts. Conversations with the pupils also informed Nora about their out-of-school practices with English. She had never spoken to the parents about the pupils' levels or out-of-school English language practices.

Adapted EFL instruction

Nora used the textbook *Quest* (Bade et al., 2014b), and was content with this book.²⁷ *Quest* has two levels: yellow (most advanced) and blue (less advanced). Nora tried to follow a set of the same procedures for each lesson. This included preparing the pupils for the week's homework, usually by playing audio recordings of the yellow and blue texts to be read for homework. Second, she would explain difficult words. Third, the pupils were encouraged to talk through a classroom conversation. Lastly, the pupils would work with grammar relating

²⁶ National Tests aim at diagnosing the level of reading, mathematics and English in all Norwegian pupils in the beginning of 5th, 8th and 9th grade. The results are meant to provide the school system with a tool for adapted education and quality development. <https://www.udir.no/eksamen-og-prover/prover/nasjonale-prover/om-nasjonale-prover/>

²⁷ The school had changed English course books from *Stairs* (Thorson and Unnerud, 2006a) to *Quest* (Bade et al., 2014a) two years ago. Nora was not content with *Stairs* and liked *Quest* better because it offered better texts and tasks.

to the weekly learning objective.²⁸ Every week, the pupils were tested in the reading, translation and vocabulary of the homework text. In a whole class setting, each pupil would read three or four sentences from texts of their respective levels. In addition to the textbook, the teachers copied sheets with grammar tasks from dated workbooks.

Nora explained that adapting teaching for the ALs usually involved different and more challenging tasks: “They get a sheet of paper with a lot of tasks. So, if they finish that, they will get one that’s even more challenging and then one a lot more challenging”. Pupils who finished their tasks early would be given more challenging tasks “on a higher level”. If a pupil finished such extra tasks, she would give this pupil an English book to read. She was not sure if this was also the practice of her colleague. She explained: “This is usually not what happens. Usually there is enough work for the whole lesson. I’ve experienced that one or two times, that one kid was done with everything and then I just gave him a book to read”.

Regarding the ALs’ development of their reading skills, Nora mainly relied on the yellow level in the textbook. In addition, she had suggested to the pupils that they borrow English books from the school library.²⁹ She knew her colleague sometimes copied extra texts with additional tasks for the ALs. The ALs’ development in writing was mainly fostered through written feedback on their written homework, usually tasks from the workbook. Their written work was corrected in more detail than that of the other pupils. The pupils would also sometimes correct their own work.

Although many of the pupils spoke English with their parents at home, Nora explained that they were very shy. Occasionally, she therefore asked the pupils to “take two minutes” and talk together in groups. She would then ask them individually, by number, to talk: “We take rounds so everyone should speak. So, I try to make them, sort of, come out of their shell”. To prevent such speaking activities from becoming stressful and too difficult for shy learners, she made sure that it was already agreed upon what to talk about and what to say. To foster their listening development, Nora played audios from texts on both levels every week. When discussing homework practices, Nora expressed some external pressure that influenced her: “We’ve been told time and time again to give them easy homework because (...) the parents and the teachers want the kids (...) when they get home, they’re not supposed to (...) want help or anything”. She explained that homework was supposed to be repetition of what

²⁸ The class was currently working on linking words.

²⁹ The pupils had access to the school library once a week, but not in the English lessons.

had been done at school. Nevertheless, she emphasized that the yellow homework level was difficult for the current pupils.

Motivation

Nora explained that the ALs were motivated by their out-of-school encounters with English through social media, games, movies, and TV-series. She believed the pupils became motivated to investigate new words by the lack of subtitles in what they watched online. To make her teaching motivating and interesting, Nora would sometimes use movie clips for classroom discussion or grammar tasks. When making additional hand-outs with tasks for the ALs, she added colors and images to make them look appealing. She emphasized the importance of finding challenges and tasks that were slightly beyond the current level of the pupils in order to prevent demotivation.

Nora would also make it known to the ALs that their tasks were more challenging than those of the other pupils. To avoid restricting the ALs, all the pupils were sometimes asked to write stories: “For instance, write a story about this and this and this and then we see how they express themselves”. She explained that the ALs usually worked “really fast” and she emphasized to the pupils that they needed to work in this way: “They can’t get to the next point if they don’t finish a test or a task or a sheet of paper they’ve been given”.

Nora did not think that she had ever given her pupils the possibility to choose their own materials or tasks to work with: “It’s more the other way around, where I’ve tried to find out what they like and then I bring that (...), but it hasn’t been them, sort of doing it themselves. I think that’s more my fault, though, because I haven’t really opened up for that”. When asked if the pupils were given opportunities to give her feedback on her teaching, Nora explained that the pupils had a weekly test across subjects (not in the English lessons) where there was a last section for pupils to comment. Nora had told her pupils to include her if they had comments about the English subject. When asked if the ALs were ever included in making their own learning goals, Nora said that she had not done that so far and that goals were usually set by the teachers.

Wishes

Nora explained that “a dream scenario would be a bank of a selection of tasks and things that were already made for them, stored somewhere in the classroom where they could just go and work (...) sort of without being stopped”. She further explained that numbered tasks or books, such as graded readers, would make the pupils aware of which level they were working on,

which in turn could motivate them to reach for the next level: “Something that they can actually see and (...) they know if I’m done with this task, I can go and get a sheet of paper from here or a book from there, I think that would help”. Access to computers, to be used for grammar repetition tasks, reading assignments or “just something that repeats what we’ve done in a different way would also be helpful”. She missed access to English games, both digital ones and board games.

5.2.2 School 1 pupil interview, 6th grade: Tina, Jasmin and Oliver

Profile of the pupils

The pupils engaged with the English language at home on a daily basis through YouTube, online games, and movies. They deliberately watched English movies with English subtitles. The pupils rarely read English books, but read English through games and webpages. Oliver explained that learning English at home was not always a conscious choice, but because he was surrounded by the English language, English just “fell into his head”. The pupils wanted to become better at pronunciation and fluency. Oliver added that he wanted to be better at grammar, for example personal pronouns. When asked if they worked with this at school, he responded: “Yes, very much”. Reading and listening skills were the skills most practiced at home. Writing was the skill least practiced at home by all of the pupils. Together with speaking, this was considered the most difficult skill. When encountering new words, the pupils tried to guess the meaning from the context. Sometimes, for example when watching YouTube videos, they would pause and search for the word on *Google Translate*. They would also ask their parents for the meaning of difficult or interesting words.

Adapted EFL instruction

When asked about the level of difficulty of English in the English lessons, the pupils expressed that it was easy. They explained that the teacher would usually start a lesson by explaining a topic (sometimes up to 20 minutes) and thereafter set the pupils to work with tasks in the workbook. Often, when noticing that a topic was easy, the pupils would disconnect and start daydreaming, scribble in their books, or begin working with the tasks.

The pupils did not perceive the yellow level of the book as challenging. They described the texts in the textbook as “easy”. Sometimes they consulted the list of vocabulary if there were new and unfamiliar words. Often the words were synonyms of words they already knew. The pupils explained that the blue and yellow levels were not very different.

The main difference was that the yellow level involved more tasks and more writing and thus could be quite time consuming.

Homework usually involved tasks from the book and vocabulary to be memorized. Sometimes they were given written assignments to write a story. Questions relating to comprehension of the text, called “After reading”, were regarded as particularly easy. The pupils were also given sheets with grammar tasks.³⁰

The pupils expressed some frustration over the many tasks they were given and their overall work load. Tina explained: “She gives *more* homework instead of more *difficult* homework”. The pupils thus refrained from asking the teacher for more challenges. They worried that it could result in more tasks to do because they felt they already had enough work.

Motivation (Relevance, autonomy and relatedness)

The pupils gave their best effort at school and did not want to be “sloppy”. However, they felt that the tasks they were given did not provide opportunities to demonstrate their actual level of English proficiency, such as their large vocabulary and their rapidness in understanding the texts and learning new words.

The pupils further considered the topics in the English lessons to be of little or no relevance to their lives. Regarding the textbook, texts with fun facts or excerpts from books they had already read in Norwegian were perceived as fun to read. Other than these, they did not find the texts interesting. Jasmin expressed that: “It’s a bit difficult to explain why (...), but the texts are just not that fun”.

The topics in the book were reflected in the written tasks. The pupils perceived these tasks as boring and uninteresting. Tina commented: “However, that is something everyone has to live with”. The pupils also perceived lack of relevance as a problem in terms of the vocabulary. Oliver explained: “It is the kind of words that you don’t often use”. The pupils commented that the words were mostly related to the texts and not necessarily useful elsewhere.

When asked if they discussed topics in class that interested them or made them curious, the pupils responded negatively. They explained that it was the teacher who found tasks and topics to be discussed. The pupils could not suggest materials of their own choice. If

³⁰ Oliver spoke of a recent homework incident where a difficult grammar task had made him and his father have to look up a grammar rule for when to use *our* and *ours*. When asked how he felt about this challenge, he said he did not like it, because he felt it took too much of his spare time.

they could have done so, the pupils believed it would have been challenging to include the other pupils, as they might have chosen materials on too high levels of difficulty.

When asked to describe how they felt about learning English at school, the pupils expressed that they were bored. Tina explained: “We do much of the same. Reading and tasks, reading and tasks in a lot of the lessons”. They did not look forward to the English lessons and sometimes even dreaded them. They refrained from expressing their negative feelings towards the EFL lessons to their teacher because they did not want to hurt her feelings.

The pupils were concerned about addressing their own needs at the expense of their peers. They would have preferred the teacher to only speak English in class, but realized that this would be problematic for the other pupils. Tina elaborated: “I think it would make me more engaged (...), but then there are other pupils who don’t know English that well”. Being a high achiever did not have any particularly high status in their class. Tina was not sure if the other pupils knew her level in English. Usually she would not tell anybody if she had full scores on tests because she was afraid it could upset the pupils who struggled. She also did not want to come across as someone who “bragged”. Oliver took less consideration of others and had never tried to talk less proficiently on purpose in order to match the level of the other pupils: “Because then you will eventually become worse”.

The pupils seldom engaged in group work, although when they did, the groups were organized on the basis of the pupils who sat close to each other in the classroom. They would like to work with level-peers because that would make it possible to work with more challenging tasks and write more. They also emphasized the importance of being allowed to work with topics of interest. When asked if they sometimes spoke English in groups, the pupils explained that they sometimes had speaking games. Although they liked the fact that games added variety to the lessons, they were not sure how much learning these activities resulted in.³¹

The pupils expressed that they were anxious about making mistakes in the classroom. When asked how they felt if they said something wrong in English, Tina and Jasmin simultaneously used the word “embarrassed”. Tina explained that “Sometimes it is an easy word, but I can’t remember how it is pronounced and then it becomes all quiet and the teacher

³¹ The pupils gave an example of a game where each pupil had been named a preposition and were to find the pupil with the antonym, e.g. matching *up* and *down*. The pupils explained that when the words were that easy, they did not learn anything.

has to help me but I don't actually feel that I need help"³². Jasmin described how if she made mistakes that were basic, such as forgetting easy words, some "rude boys" would make comments such as "Oh, didn't you know that word?". Oliver did not usually feel stressed, but would sometimes feel some pressure from himself that he needed to keep on performing at a high level. Tina explained that the teacher comforted the pupils and had emphasized that it was acceptable to make mistakes: "But I don't think that is how most of us think".

Support from teacher

The pupils did not know how to develop their English. Tina explained: "I haven't really gotten any tips from my teacher, but my dad usually helps me with what I need to do to become better (...) He might say 'ok, now we're only to speak English'"³³. Oliver commented that feedback was usually provided in the teacher-parent-pupil conferences³⁴, but that even if he knew *what* to improve, he did not always know *how*. Jasmin did not know what or how to improve her English. Moreover, positive feedback from the teacher needed to feel personal and specific to be motivating.

None of the pupils in focus felt motivated by the weekly learning objectives, which were described as "easy". The pupils were hesitant when asked if they believed the teacher knew their actual knowledge of English. Oliver explained: "We're not supposed to talk about ourselves". He added that their actual knowledge of English could not be revealed through reading texts out loud because these were not challenging. They had never told the teachers that the texts were too easy. Oliver elaborated: "I haven't said it out aloud, but I've thought it". Tina had not told her teacher because it could hurt the feelings of the struggling pupils. Working with other texts than the rest of the class could also be problematic because the tests they had were related to the textbook.

Wishes

The pupils suggested that to read books, watch and discuss movies, or play English digital games would be motivating ways to learn English. Further, English was best learned when topics were enjoyable, interesting and relevant to them. In addition, the need for challenges was emphasized.

³² Translated in Appendix 7, School 1, quote no. 32.

³³ Translated in Appendix 7, School 1, quote no. 33.

³⁴ Usually teacher-parent conferences take place twice a year.

To improve their writing, they would like to write stories also in school, not just for homework since their parents were not always at home to help them. Oliver explained that to write about topics of interest was important because “then you become much more inspired to write”. Interviewing interesting people would also be a motivating task.

More freedom in choosing topics and tasks of interest would make learning English more enjoyable and motivating. This would have long-term effects. Oliver concluded: “It may in fact change your whole thinking about English (...) [When] you are allowed to be good, when you look forward to [the English lessons] it makes you want to pay more attention (...) because now I will learn something new”³⁵. Lana explained that more freedom would make her want to work harder and enjoy English more. Tina explained: “If the teacher chooses something easy or boring, you don’t really want to work with it”.

The pupils expressed some relief about having shared their thoughts with someone. Tina expressed that “It was good to let it out” and that it felt good to be honest.

5.2.3 School 1 parent online interviews (P1: Tina, P2: Jasmin, P3: Oliver)

The parents confirmed their children’s English language out-of-school practices and that they engaged in their children’s English development through buying and reading English books and talking English with them. P3 had always read many Norwegian books to Oliver, but had not engaged in his English development beyond the English he learnt at school.

The parents perceived the level and challenges their children were given in their English classes as somewhat satisfying. They suggested that English should be implemented more across subjects through tasks, activities and games, and that the pupils should be allowed to work with peers on similar levels. Because Oliver read many Norwegian books, P3 had thought that reading English books would be a way to provide a different challenge.

Regarding the challenges their children were given in their English homework, P1 stated that homework was generally not very challenging or stimulating for Tina. P2 stated that Jasmin engaged with homework alone. P3 thought Oliver’s homework was sufficiently challenging and sometimes had to help him with the meaning and pronunciation of words in the homework text. None of the parents had addressed lack of appropriate challenges for their child to the teacher.

³⁵ Translated in Appendix 7, School 1, quote no. 35.

The parents related that their children did well in many subjects. However, P3 was not aware, before participating in this study, that in addition to Norwegian and mathematics, Oliver was a high achiever also in English. Because Oliver seemed to learn “effortlessly”, the focus at home had been more on social abilities. P3 was nevertheless somewhat concerned with the learning environment and the pressure Oliver felt because he was clever.

The children were described as conscientious about their schoolwork. P3 explained that Oliver showed responsibility about what he was asked to do, but was not motivated beyond what was required. However, he had “an ease for learning” and showed a high interest for learning new English words. P1 described Tina as motivated to work with English at home, but not if school-related. The parents suggested that their children would be motivated if English at school would be used more practically rather than memorizing vocabulary. Further, the teaching should be more relevant and include media the pupils were already using, such as movies. To become pen-pals with English-speaking pupils or connect with the International school in the city were other suggestions. The parents commented that their children had appreciated being interviewed.

5.3. School 2

5.3.1. School 2 teacher interview: Nina, 7th grade teacher

Nina had taught English for nine years and had 60 credits in English from higher education. She did not feel her education was relevant for her teaching and thus her teaching was more a result of experience and trying out different teaching strategies. Nina taught all classes in grade 7 and had taught the current pupils for two years. The classes had two English lessons of 45 minutes per week.

Characteristics of the pupils

Nina explained that although advanced learners (ALs) were often advanced in several subjects, those who excelled in English often had a particular love of the language. The ALs often wanted to discuss and converse orally, but could also make their own sentences and understand a good deal of grammar without necessarily having conscious knowledge of grammar rules. Nina also looked for rapidness in their grasping of new concepts and the quality of the pupils’ homework. Although the ALs had advanced oral skills, Nina felt they

sometimes forgot grammatical rules when speaking fast, e.g. plural -s or the correct verb form, so she believed they needed some practice with grammatical details.

Adapted EFL instruction

Discussions on how to adapt the instruction were regularly on the agenda in teacher staff meetings. Nina explained: “Sometimes we are given tasks that we are to try out in the classes and then to come back and share with the rest of the collegium. How it worked, how it didn’t work. Tips and advice to each other, sort of”. Nina nevertheless felt that adapted instruction was difficult because of the little time she had for each of the 25-30 pupils:

The more conscious you are, the more challenging it is. Because then you know that if you divide the minutes and pupils and that, you know how little you actually have left for each single child. And then you just wish there was so much more.³⁶

As regards adaptation, she would plan her teaching according to three levels. Much time would be spent on the struggling pupils, while the mid-level ones often managed well with less support. She also emphasized the importance of adapting her instruction for the stronger pupils as she felt the Norwegian school system traditionally had not been good at accommodating for them. Although she had access to several assessment tests, Nina felt she would be better able to assess the pupils by getting to know them in class and through their homework. She would frequently ask the ALs for feedback on the level of difficulty of texts they read, and she used this feedback to adjust her adaptation. Within four to five weeks, she usually knew the level of her pupils. When the pupils entered the intermediate stage (grades 5-7), the elementary teachers (grades 1-4) informed the intermediate teachers about the levels of the pupils. This information added to Nina’s assessment of the pupils’ levels of proficiency, although she emphasized that she tried to look at the pupils with new eyes. She would try to get to know her pupils by allowing them to select topics of interest, e.g. to choose their favorite song and present it to the class, or to write about a hobby or interest. In addition to this strategy for assessing the pupils, allowing for pupils to choose topics served as a way of making the lessons fun and interesting for them. Parents were not used as informants about the pupils’ out-of-school practices with English.

Because she varied her teaching so much, Nina hesitated to describe a typical EFL lesson. In each lesson, she aimed at involving the pupils in oral communication, whether in

³⁶ Translated in appendix 7, School 2, quote 36.

pairs, groups, or class discussions. She added that the ALs in particular enjoyed oral discussions: “They explain excessively. And extensively”. Nina used the textbook *Explore* (Edwards et al., 2017), and was satisfied with it. She had only used it for a few months because the school had recently changed coursebooks.³⁷ *Explore* is divided into three levels and Nina thought the texts were interesting and relevant for the age group: “They enjoy reading them. Usually when they read they always find a text that is exciting”. However, she rarely used only the textbook, but was constantly searching for teaching material online to add to her own resource library. The school also had many additional English resources.

Nina would frequently use her ALs to aid her teaching. She would ask them to explain concepts to the class and thought their explanations added some variety to her teacher explanations.³⁸ When wanting the class to engage in oral speaking activities, she would strategically place the ALs in heterogeneous groups to inspire the other pupils to talk. She noted that she usually had a feeling of the appropriate level of the ALs due to her experiences over the years. Sometimes she would rely on the levels in the textbook, but because Nina did not use the textbook that often, she often levelled the tasks herself. When asked how she approached making tasks with different levels, Nina explained that she differentiated the types of questions she gave the pupils. Whereas the low-level pupils needed to search and find answers in the text, “[f]or the stronger pupils it is more the find-the-answers-yourself-questions. They can’t go straight to the text and copy and use that, but they have to use their own words and thoughts and really understand the text to be able to answer”. For the mid-level pupils, Nina used a combination of both approaches.

Concerning the ALs’ reading development, Nina explained that she had encouraged all her pupils to choose English books for their Norwegian silent reading lessons, which the ALs had done. She expressed some frustrations about not having enough time to practice silent reading in the English lessons and that, being a core subject, English should have more subject hours. Nina felt the ALs were very confident regarding speaking and that they did not mind making mistakes. She saw herself more as a resource to them if they needed help, e.g. suggesting words if they could not remember them. When working with listening skills, Nina would sometimes organize the class in two groups; one would work outside of the classroom and one would stay in the classroom with her. She would read a text and ask the group to note

³⁷ The school had this year exchanged English coursebooks from *Stairs* (Thorson and Unnerud, 2006b) to *Explore*. Nina had not liked *Stairs* and explained that the texts in *Stairs* were boring and appeared to be written by adults who did not know what appealed to twelve-year-olds.

³⁸ Nina explained that the ALs enjoyed being given the task to write examples of the week’s strong verbs on the blackboard in different forms during recess before the English lesson.

down the essence of the content and finish off with a text-related quiz. She organized the two groups according to the levels of the pupils and made sure the ALs would be placed in the same group. She read a more advanced text to this group. Regarding helping the ALs develop their vocabulary, Nina explained that she tried to adapt the difficulty and quantity of the words to be memorized for homework. The ALs had both more words and more difficult words to memorize, usually from the text they were to read. During recent weeks, however, the homework had been to memorize strong verbs. Each week the pupils were tested in the verb forms and the ALs were expected to be able to make sentences using the verbs in their correct form.

Nina described the ALs as eager and that they asked what to do next when finishing a task before the others. She would then offer an additional task or provide extra questions that required them to think more and in a more complex way: “It’s more those find-for-yourself-questions (...) that they have to produce the questions and words themselves; they can’t take an easy way out”. Sometimes she would also ask them to help the other pupils and explained that the ALs liked this and that they learned something from doing it.

Nina relied on the three levels of the textbook when giving homework; the ALs working on the highest level. She regarded English textbooks to be an aid for adapting the teaching since they were often divided into levels. However, the texts needed to be interesting and she would therefore not rely only on the textbook. Illustrating this, boring texts in the previous textbook *Stairs* had often led her to copy texts from different books and to make booklets with texts for all of the pupils.

Motivation

When asked what Nina thought motivated the ALs for learning English, she talked about some perspectives on her own teaching:

I try to teach English in a bit... new way, should I say? The kind of normal... the way I remember I was taught English and what many teachers here do is that we sit in class, read a text together, and then there is a vocabulary test, and then you do some grammar tasks. And that is what happens all year around (...) and that quickly becomes boring. First of all, it becomes boring for the strong pupils, but it also becomes dreadfully boring for the pupils who don’t like English - they don’t become motivated. So I try to vary my teaching very much, as much as I can.³⁹

³⁹ Translated in Appendix 7, School 2, quote 39.

Moreover, Nina believed that the parents were important with regard to how they encouraged the pupils to use English when abroad, or to watch English movies without subtitles. She further thought the ALs were motivated from gaming, music, or chatting with foreign friends. When asked what she thought could be demotivating for the ALs, Nina believed boring lessons that restricted the pupils' potential would be demotivating. She exemplified: "If I spend time trying to get everybody along and they have to sit and wait (...). Clearly, I think that will be boring for them".

Nina expected more of her ALs than of the other pupils:

Often, if we are to work with (...) something (...) that everyone can work on at their [individual] level, I do expect that some may be able to produce five sentences. So, if one of *these* pupils [the ALs] comes and hands in, I say: 'No, you know this, you can do more, you can go deeper into it and here are some small mistakes and you can make slightly longer sentences, you don't have to use the same adjective several times.' And they know I expect this of them.⁴⁰

She did not believe that the pupils felt pressure due to being high achievers, but that they found it fun to be part of an advanced group. This also gave them the self-confidence some of them did not necessarily have in social settings: "This becomes something they're good at (...). English becomes like: 'Yes, I know this. This lesson, now I know that I'm good', kind of".

Nina was very open to the idea of her pupils suggesting materials and methods to work with in her classes: "The most important thing is just to get a lot of English input". Usually, it was her ALs who suggested and initiated materials and activities for the class to engage in, such as performing skits or playing bingo. The prior week, some pupils had rehearsed a rap they had found in the textbook and asked to perform it to the class.⁴¹ Nina tried to be flexible to their wishes and what they perceived as important.

Nina would frequently give her pupils both oral and written feedback and she adjusted her feedback to pupils' individual levels. She also frequently asked the pupils for feedback on her teaching. Often, after a lesson, she would ask the whole class to evaluate whether anything was unclear or how the lesson worked and whether it was fun. During our conversation, she reflected upon the possibility of making the pupils answer these questions anonymously and in writing. While the ALs were not included in setting their own learning goals, Nina

⁴⁰ Translated in Appendix 7, School 2, quote 40.

⁴¹ The pupils had found a rap about football in the textbook and because they had liked it, they had rehearsed it in their spare time. This was not homework, but initiated by the pupils.

emphasized that the learning objectives were general and broad. The lesson goals were more specific, such as working with *some* or *any*. When asked if such lesson goals could already have been achieved by some of the ALs, Nina answered that she had often experienced being wrong in assuming the ALs' prior knowledge. However, if they demonstrated achievement, they would be allowed to skip easy tasks and go directly to tasks that matched their level of proficiency.

Wishes

Nina did not hesitate when asked what would help her to accommodate for her ALs:

More adults in the classroom. Simple as that. Adapted instruction is not difficult in theory, but when you come to the classroom with thirty individuals having thirty individual mornings. Sometimes some things just swallow you, then half of the lesson disappeared.⁴²

5.3.2 School 2 pupil interview, 7th grade: Sarah, Martin, Filip and Lisa

Profile of the pupils

The pupils were all highly engaged with English at home through using YouTube, reading books, watching English TV programs, and gaming. Sara listened to English radio channels in the shower, while the others sang and listened to English music. The pupils all preferred to watch English movies without Norwegian subtitles because the Norwegian translation often contained many mistakes and thus was “annoying”.⁴³ The pupils often talked and thought English to themselves and Sarah explained that: “If I’m having a bad day, to get away from this world, I speak English to myself (...) I think in English about everything and everything changes”. Filip watched the BBC and English science programs with his father and, to communicate more efficiently, they spoke English to each other. The pupils preferred reading English over Norwegian and Sarah explained: “When I read it in English, I feel it seems more real, that it is what *they* [the English authors] mean. But when I read in Norwegian, I feel that it is just something someone has translated in their own way, even if it says completely the same”. The other pupils agreed with Sarah on this.

⁴² Translated in Appendix 7, School 2, quote 42.

⁴³ Filip and Lisa described the Norwegian translation as “annoying” because it was often translated word by word and not by meaning.

Regarding their English development, the pupils wanted to be able to speak more fluently. Martin expressed some frustration over mistakes he made when tested on his knowledge of strong verbs at school: “Inside my head, when I write sentences, it comes by itself, but when I actually am to *think* about the verb, I always forget it. And then I might make many mistakes”. Sarah added: “When I am to write the sentences, it just comes naturally (...). But when you are to write the verbs, it is all of a sudden ‘how do I write it’ (...) because then I think so much on the verb isolated and not how to write it”. Lisa felt that even if she knew the verbs by heart, she would often be stressed on the tests because she was “thinking very much about getting it right”. Filip had made a strategy to make sentences with the verbs in his head to find the correct verb form and felt the tests were not actually very difficult. The pupils used all skills at home and could not say whether some skills were used more or less. When encountering difficult words, the context helped them understand the meaning. Shorter texts, such as those read in school, were perceived as easy, while longer books with many descriptions were more challenging. Both Sarah and Lisa read English extensively in their spare time and had done so since 5th grade.

Adapted EFL instruction

The pupils could not describe a typical EFL lesson. Sarah explained: “I think we’re lucky to have [Nina] because we do so many different things, so (...) there is no typical English lesson because we have so much variation”. The pupils were content with the EFL instruction at school. They appreciated that both the texts and the tasks they were given were adapted for different levels. Filip explained that “[Nina] expects differently” and that “she wants us to practice more because when you’re very good, you can’t do the easy [thing] you’re used to doing, you have to make it more challenging each time”.

In contrast to their previous textbook *Stairs*, which was childish and “wasn’t challenging”, *Explore* offered serious and interesting factual texts about football or famous people, such as Nelson Mandela or Stephen Hawkins. The pupils described these texts as the kind “you learn something from” and as “more advanced”. Although *Explore* offered three levels, Martin wished there had been a fourth. Nevertheless, they did not feel the teaching had been focused on levels and they were usually given several texts to choose from and with which to work. Moreover, the pupils considered the level of difficulty of the texts as less important than how interesting they were. Lisa explained: “If they are interesting (...), it doesn’t really matter that much if it is difficult or not because then you want to read it anyway because it is interesting. You want to learn something from it”.

Since the beginning of the school year, the pupils' homework had been to memorize strong verbs, which they found too easy and somewhat boring. However, Sarah sympathized with her teacher: "[Nina] has to teach us those verbs. She doesn't have a choice in that". The pupils saw the verbs as something they had to go through, but had not spent much time on them when doing their homework lately. Filip noted: "She gives the same homework to everybody, and then she expects a bit more from us at school". In 6th grade, they had been given vocabulary to memorize for homework. However, new vocabulary was now worked with when reading new texts in the classroom. During or after reading, they were to note down new and unfamiliar words on their computers. On three or four occasions, they had been given additional homework tasks. The pupils conversed about a recent task, where they were to write an argumentative text about a topic of their choice:

Sarah: That was fun.

Martin: Yes.

I: Was that fun?

All: Yes.

Martin: *Very*.

Filip: Make your own debate about a subject.

I: Why was that fun?

Sarah: Because you could talk about your opinions.

Lisa: You could kind of choose and then you could write what *you* thought and what other people thought (...).^{44 45}

Motivation (relevance, autonomy and relatedness)

When asked if they gave their best effort in English at school, the pupils collectively confirmed this. Filip elaborated: "If you're good, it's no fun to choose step 1 just because you want to pretend to be less good at school and just want less to do. That's just silly. You have to use what you're good at".

When asked to describe how they felt about the English lessons, the pupils quickly answered "fun", "exciting", "I learn something new". Martin said: 'I look forward to the English lessons.' The pupils further explained that their motivation for English had changed very much after having Nina as a teacher since 6th grade. They considered themselves lucky to have her and described her as personal, kind, interested and creative, someone who gave them

⁴⁴ Translated in Appendix 7, School 2, quote 44.

⁴⁵ Lisa's text was called *Do we need homework?*, Martin's *Should we be allowed to have cell phones at school?* and Sarah's *Should it be possible for rich people to become president of the USA?* Filip had been sick and had thus not done the task.

much choice in terms of texts and tasks. In 5th grade, they had had “less freedom” and when discussing the practices in 5th grade, the following conversation occurred:

Filip: Everybody had to read the same text.

I: How was that, then?

Lisa: Everybody had to read step 2.

Filip: For those who weren't that good, they spent perhaps 15 minutes reading the text, while the really good ones could read it in three minutes.

Lisa: And then we got to [hear] you have to read it once more because you might not have grasped everything, kind of.⁴⁶

The pupils could not remember being allowed to choose material to work with in their current EFL lessons, but emphasized that they were offered many choices when it came to reading materials and tasks. They explained that the repetitive practice of only doing many tasks from a workbook would make them dread their English classes and make the learning feel “forced” instead of “voluntary”. Filip felt motivated by being offered choice and variety: “Instead of sitting and looking around and being tardy with the tasks, you actually want to do them”. The other pupils agreed with Filip’s description and Martin considered that English, in this regard, differed from other subjects, in which he seemed less motivated.

The pupils felt the topics discussed in class were interesting, although Martin added that it depended on the topic. However, they believed their interest was also a result of their general interest and competence in English. Filip explained: “That is one of the reasons why you become motivated, the fact that you *know*, and then you want the next step. But if you’re not that good, you often don’t have the motivation to become that much better”. The pupils were not sure if the school thought their out-of-school English practices were important, but emphasized that they were important to themselves. Although they thought these practices would be good methods for learning English at school, they felt that it would be difficult to adapt certain materials, for example movies, to include all the pupils because of their different levels and preferences.

At the beginning of the year, the pupils had been given a folder with all the strong verbs they were to learn that year and the learning goal for each week had been to memorize some verbs from the list. When asked whether such goals motivated them, they all responded positively. Filip commented: “Then you have something to beat”. Sarah added that it depended on what the goal was: “If the goal is to learn to say *car*, for example, then I’m like - I don’t even bother (...). But if we would have had a goal that was a bit difficult, that I had to

⁴⁶ Translated in Appendix 7, School 2, quote 46.

think (...) yeah, *challenging*, then it's like, it's just so much fun. (...). Something challenging in the English subject is just *so* much fun”.

The pupils considered mistakes as something from which they learned. Sarah thought it would be worse to make mistakes in a subject where she had less confidence. Lisa added that Nina did not make a big fuss about mistakes made in the classroom and that she corrected them in a gentle way. The pupils did not think their teacher expected them not to make mistakes, although they thought she expected more from them than of the other pupils. They thought perhaps some of their peers expected them not to make mistakes, but having spent seven years with them, they knew their peers well and did not mind this. The pupils were often placed in homogeneous groups, but could also often choose with whom to work. Although homogeneous groups were preferable, Martin pointed out that level did not always matter: “Even if they are not as good as you, it can be fun to work with them too”.

Support from the teacher

The pupils believed their teacher knew their out-of-school practices with English from conversing with them and through teacher-parent conferences. They further believed she knew their actual knowledge of English and they often told her if the tasks or texts were too easy. Filip explained: “We just say, ‘[Nina], this was really easy, do you have something more difficult for us?’”. The pupils received feedback on how to improve their English and Nina paid attention to their development through assessing how they spoke, wrote and read. Sarah felt their teacher cared about her pupils and explained: “For example, if I say ‘I can't do this’, she says, ‘But that we'll figure out, sweetie’”. The other pupils laughed at Sarah's parody and agreed with the description.

Wishes

The pupils would like to work with English research projects. Filip explained that when researching online for his Norwegian subject assignments, he would often deliberately choose only English sites to enhance his English skills. Sarah related that she would like to do research projects, such as this current study: “To make texts and do research (...) and do it in English (...) because it is just much more fun in English because that is something you want to improve”. Gaining new insight and learning English simultaneously was considered motivational and beneficial. Furthermore, being provided with appropriate challenges was important. Being allowed to read longer texts would spark interest and curiosity. Filip elaborated: “Instead of reading a text in four minutes, you may spend half an hour on it

because it's long and [has] difficult words and is more interesting to read (...). If it's a fun text, you read it thoroughly and think about the text. If you read a story you think: 'Hm, what if it was like *this* they meant it to be like?'" The pupils all expressed excitement about being interviewed.

5.3.3 School 2 parent online interviews (P4: Sara, P5: Martin, P6: Filip, P7: Lisa)

The parents confirmed their children's high engagement with English at home. They provided literature, helped with homework, spoke English with their children, and encouraged them to communicate when abroad. The parents perceived the level and challenges of the tasks their children were given in their English classes as somewhat satisfying. P7 had the impression that the teaching was more adapted now than before. However, both P4 and P6 felt their children were given too few challenges in their English classes. P5 had the impression that the teaching was accommodated to meet Martin's skills, but acknowledged not being familiar with the curriculum. Regarding homework, P4, P6 and P7 felt their children had too little homework and P7 thus felt it was difficult to keep track of what was going on in English classes at school. P5 had not paid much attention to the English subject because Martin had become good "all by himself". However, P5 had recently realized that his son needed help with strong verbs and had therefore decided to "pay more attention" to his grammar.

All the parents considered the positive feedback from the English teacher motivating for their child. P6 noted that positive feedback gave Filip "a sense of achievement, despite not being sufficiently challenged". P4 explained that Sarah had received positive feedback on her oral skills. Both P4 and P7 considered positive feedback to motivate their children to "become even better".

The parents did not believe their children gave more effort to the English subject than other subjects. P4 and P7 explained that although their respective daughters, Sarah and Lisa, were very motivated to learning English, they were unsure if this resulted in a high effort in school. Regarding efforts given to learning English at home, P4, P6 and P7 described their children as motivated and always seeking opportunities to develop in English. About Lisa, P7 related: "She asks when there are terms she doesn't understand, discusses alternative meanings, and thus keeps on developing".

The children were described as generally motivated across subjects. However, P5 differed from the others and described that Martin, although being able to achieve a good deal if he wanted to, "unfortunately does not see the point in school". Because gaming was a key

motivation to develop in English for Martin, P5 suggested that gaming-related topics could perhaps motivate him to give his best effort in English classes. The other parents suggested their children would be motivated by giving presentations, writing letters to newspapers, and engaging in debates about interesting topics. Reading books and analyzing song lyrics were also suggested as motivational.

The parents had not addressed lack of appropriate challenges for their child to the teacher, except for P7, who had done this some years ago, although to a different teacher. The parents commented that their children had enjoyed being interviewed and that being selected for participating in the study had made their children proud and motivated.

5.4 School 3

5.4.1 School 3 teacher interview: Robert, 5th grade teacher

Robert was in his fourth year as an English teacher. Having a Master's degree in English, he felt competent to teach English at the intermediate level. However, teaching this age group meant that he did not get to use all his competence, such as discussing literature and literary aspects on a deep level. He had taught his current 27 pupils since the beginning of the school year and they had two English lessons of 60 minutes per week. He planned all his teaching with a colleague and they followed the same procedures and progression plans each week. They alternated making teaching plans and learning objectives for each other.

Characteristics of the pupils

Robert explained that the ALs were orally engaged and had a large vocabulary, also in their written work. Further, they quickly applied new grammar rules to their language use. Robert summed up:

So, you see it in the sense that they have a good language ear, they're very motivated, they understand why English is important, and they are strong both in writing and orally. (...) and the strong [pupils] often have an inner motivation to achieve even better.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Translated in Appendix 7, School 2, quote 47.

Some years ago, in a 7th grade class he had taught, a girl on a level “way above average” had asked to be given extra homework, such as writing book reviews or extra reading tasks. Robert noted: “So my impression is that the most motivated pupils want to have even more English. What they are given for homework is not enough”.

The understanding of adapted instruction

Adapted instruction was mostly discussed and practiced at the school in connection with differentiating the pupils’ homework. Robert reckoned that adapted instruction was not widely practiced in terms of the teaching: “I feel that we’re sort of (...) planning *one* teaching approach for everyone, both the weak, those in the middle and the strong (...) but adapt the homework”. However, homework was usually adapted only for the struggling pupils, such as allowing them to read fewer pages and work with fewer tasks. The other pupils were given the same homework. Robert missed more professional didactic discussions in teacher meetings. He could only recall the strong pupils being mentioned collectively when discussing the results of the National Tests, but that the administration focused the discussion on how to improve the low-level pupils’ results.

Robert explained that although he was very aware that he had pupils on different levels, he directed his teaching “to the middle” because he did not want to leave anyone behind. He admittedly noted: “That indicates the strong [pupils] don’t get any new challenges, besides new texts and new glossary”. He elaborated:

There are so many things you as a teacher in the everyday life of school must do before you can give the strong ones a challenge. So unfortunately, I feel it’s not prioritized. That you have things on the to-do list that you need to do before you have the surplus to sort of start focusing on the strong ones... So, the times I have very clearly given the strong ones extra challenges is if they have asked for it, or the parents have asked for it (...), but besides that it has been very little.⁴⁸

Robert assessed the level of his pupils from their oral activity and their homework. He thought the ALs for the most engaged with English orally in their spare time through talking English with international neighbors.⁴⁹ From teacher-parent conferences, he knew the ALs’ parents challenged their children to use English at home and provided books for them.

⁴⁸ Translated in Appendix 7, School 2, quote 48.

⁴⁹ Robert explained that there were many non-Norwegian families in the area due to oil-related occupations.

Adapted EFL instruction

Robert followed the same procedure for each of the two English lessons. The first lesson always included presentation of the learning objectives⁵⁰ and preparing the pupils for their English homework. He played an audio-recording of the text to be read and translated it afterwards. The pupils would then start practicing writing the six words to be memorized for the glossary test each week and would work with tasks. Sometimes they worked on grammatical aspects. Occasionally, the pupils rehearsed textbook dialogues and read them aloud to the class. In the second lesson, the pupils handed in their written homework. One by one, each pupil read some lines from the homework text aloud. Robert noted: “Some find it boring, most handle it”. While the pupils worked on tasks, such as gap-fill tasks⁵¹, Robert would approach each of the pupils and assess their homework.

Robert used the textbook *Quest* (Bade et al., 2014a). Although he liked the fact that it was new and offered both literature and language tasks, *Quest* was not ideal for the strong pupils: “The texts are very easy (...), few critical texts, few short stories – English texts that can really challenge you”. He further believed the reading comprehension questions in the textbook were very easy for the ALs. Although the textbook offered texts on different levels, Robert felt they were mostly differentiated in terms of length, not content and complexity. To challenge the pupils sufficiently, he would therefore need to find extra materials and tasks, which he had not done due to lack of time and resources. If they finished their tasks before the other pupils, the ALs would usually be allowed to have a look at the rest of the chapter in the textbook or read their Norwegian library books.

Regarding the ALs’ reading skills, Robert explained that he would give them feedback on pronunciation during whole class reading or when reading dialogues in groups. He felt he had not been able to focus on developing the ALs’ writing skills and that their development would rely on homework tasks. Although their listening input would mainly come from the audio CD, he would sometimes read the text himself and “try to provide them with good input when I read”. Sometimes they would sing songs. On rare occasions, they would watch a movie with English subtitles. When discussing the ALs’ vocabulary, Robert explained that they always achieved full scores on vocabulary tests and thus demonstrated a need for more

⁵⁰ In the current week, the weekly learning goal was: “To be able to tell about one time you were sick and to use relevant vocabulary”. Relevant vocabulary included words such as *illness*.

⁵¹ Gap-fill exercises require the pupils to replace words missing from a text, often chosen to practice a specific language point.

challenges. While reflecting on his practice, Robert wondered whether he should perhaps extend the ALs' homework from six words to ten or more to memorize a week.

Motivation (relevance, autonomy and relatedness)

Robert believed the ALs were motivated to learn English from factors of both an internal nature (“that they understand why they should learn English”) and an external nature (“to do well on tests (...) wanting to do well in school”). However, when asked about his experiences of motivating the ALs, Robert expressed some degree of guilt:

What is often difficult is that they don't express (...). There are none here in fifth grade who sort of very clearly have expressed that 'I want more English...', although they probably think it. So I am completely sure that the strong pupils, they probably want more, more challenges. But in my practice, it rarely happens that they get these challenges they want. So (...) they're following the ordinary teaching and doing the homework, but there's nothing beyond that, unfortunately.⁵²

Robert further believed not being given opportunities to develop would be demotivating for the pupils. “So I imagine the strong ones miss the challenges, both in the lessons and when they come home”.

Robert expected the ALs' written work to display more advanced vocabulary and terms than that of the other pupils. He had never told them this, but felt the pupils knew this “implicitly”. He found it somewhat difficult to give specific feedback to the ALs: “Because [with the weakest] it is so much easier to point out in detail what to work on”. Feedback to the ALs thus was often more general, e.g. “Pay close attention when we go through verbs”.

Robert never grouped the pupils according to levels and thus the ALs did not work with other level peers. His intention when grouping the pupils was to allow the low-level pupils to “stretch towards someone” and he further explained this by the school having an emphasis of including the struggling pupils. Regarding their autonomy, the pupils had never been given the option to choose their own materials or tasks. However, Robert considered the pupils to have some freedom when having access to the computer room and searching online for information.

When asked if the pupils could give him feedback on his teaching, Robert explained that the pupils wrote logs every week, but not in their English subject. In the teacher-parent-pupil conferences, all the pupils had been asked which two subjects they liked the most. Few

⁵² Translated in Appendix 7, School 2, quote 52.

had mentioned English. Since there had not been much feedback from the pupils, Robert assumed that “they are mainly very content”. He further felt the pupils’ feedback usually needed to be initiated by the pupils themselves, such as in the case of the girl from 7th grade some years ago. In terms of setting their own learning goals, the pupils were included in evaluating the goals the teacher set for them in the teacher-parent conferences.

Wishes

Robert wished he had access to more resources for the ALs:

As for now I don’t have any good solution to how to challenge them in the classes and when it comes to homework. So the only thing I can imagine is to invent something myself. Find a text that is one level up. (...). Because it’s so easy to adapt the homework for the weakest by giving them less (...). But for the strong, I don’t have any good solutions. But I think this closely relates to time. I personally feel that, I realize that these pupils are there and I sort of feel bad for not challenging them enough, both in terms of homework and in the classes. But at the same time, it comes down to the fact that it requires a lot to find new material for them beyond the textbook.⁵³

Robert wished he had access to books, equipment and teaching materials suitable for the ALs. He also wished the administration would allocate time, such as a planning day or in teacher staff meetings, to discuss didactic and practical strategies for teaching the strong pupils. He felt there lacked a common understanding for how to accommodate for these pupils in general, but specifically in the English subject, and expressed frustrations over the lack of professional guidance in this regard.

5.4.2 School 3 pupil interview, 5th grade: Ingrid, Noah, Ella

Profile of the pupils

The pupils’ English input at home came from reading English books, gaming, YouTube, and speaking English with their parents and English-speaking family friends. Ella humorously explained that her parents sometimes spoke English to hinder her and her little sister from understanding what was being said. This had made her very motivated to learn English and now their parents had to use German because she understood everything. Noah spoke a good deal of English with his mother, who had lived some years in England. Ingrid read thick

⁵³ Translated in Appendix 7, School 2, quote 53.

books in English, such as Percy Jackson⁵⁴. The pupils wanted to become better in writing and to gain more advanced vocabularies. Writing was also the least practiced skill at home, while speaking English was the skill practiced the most and mainly with their parents. Ingrid had a friend from Romania with whom she talked regularly on Skype. To remember difficult words, Ella and Ingrid made use of mnemonic⁵⁵ strategies, such as a phonemic pronunciation of *because* (/bikaose/). When encountering unfamiliar words, Ella would use clues from the context and “suddenly I understand words I don’t really know”. When writing, Ingrid used a strategy of trying out a word she felt “sounds most logical”, and was usually right. Ingrid further described Norwegian as “weird” and felt English to be a necessity to be able to talk with people from other countries.

Adapted EFL instruction

When asked to describe a typical EFL lesson, the following exchange took place:

Ingrid: It’s a bit boring, or, it’s kind of fun, but I don’t feel I get to use my English enough.

I: In what way?

Ingrid: Because it’s kind of, there are many words I already know and all the words we read and such. So it’s kind of boring.

I: How about you two? (*looking at Ella and Noah)

Ella: We work with writing in booklets and such, with *a* and *an*, and I know this very well already, so it’s kind of just sitting there and writing something you already know. So, I finish the pages very quickly.⁵⁶

Ella further explained that the booklets were very thick, so she did not always finish them. When she did, she often helped her learning partner. Noah described the booklets as “easy”.

The pupils perceived the texts in the textbook as “ok”. They knew there were more difficult texts further back in the textbook, but thought it would be “unfair” to the other pupils if they were to read these. They therefore all read the same texts. Ella explained that she sometimes skimmed through texts in the textbook when she had finished her homework. She described the most difficult texts: “They are long, but they look very interesting”. She nevertheless thought it would be difficult to go through homework in class if they read something different from the others.

⁵⁴ Percy Jackson is a book series in the fantasy genre, written by Rick Riordan. According to the author’s webpage, it is designed for readers between ages 9-14. <http://rickriordan.com/2009/06/does-age-appropriateness-still-have-meaning/>

⁵⁵ i.e. learning techniques that aid remembering

⁵⁶ Translated in Appendix 7, School 2, quote 56.

When asked about the level of the workbook tasks, they responded:

Ella: It's kind of *a* and *an* and such.

Ingrid: It's easy. I think it's a bit childish.

I: Why is that?

Ingrid: Because it's stuff I already know. And it kind of sucks to do it over again.

Ella: Well, you ought to repeat, but it *is* kind of fun to try new things, too.

Noah: But I think it depends on the task. But it's still childish. It depends on what is in the text and such.⁵⁷

Besides grammar tasks, some tasks were questions related to the text. Ingrid explained: "Last time we had it, I thought it was so boring that I wrote a text about it. It said we were to write a sentence or two, and then I thought it was really boring because I wanted to include all the details. So, I wrote a text about it instead". Ella had also extended the tasks to write more. Noah had not because he did not want more work than was asked of him. Regarding homework, the pupils felt that the difficulty of the vocabulary depended on the content of the texts. Ingrid rarely met new words and felt she did not have a choice but to write down words she already knew.

Motivation (relevance, autonomy and relatedness)

The pupils expressed that they gave their best effort at school and participated in the lessons by raising their hands when knowing the correct answer. None of the pupils answered when asked if the topics discussed in the EFL classes were interesting. After a while, Ingrid responded: "Sometimes". The textbook texts were considered irrelevant and childish. Although Noah was interested in football, he did not like the football texts because they were "too childlike":

Noah: First-grader-ish. When (*name of the teacher) puts on the CD, I can't listen to the voice. It's horrible.

I: Why is that?

Noah: The voice is stupid.

Ella: Just as if it's a first grader reading.

I: Talks childishly?

Noah: And slowly.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Translated in Appendix 7, School 2, quote 57.

⁵⁸ Translated in Appendix 7, School 2, quote 58.

The pupils further explained that the texts did not feel authentic. Also, because the voices on the audio CD were annoying, they preferred it when the teacher read the texts out loud. The tasks reflected the texts and were perceived as uninteresting and irrelevant. While the pupils could not choose materials to work with, Ella noted that it would be fun if they could choose books of interest to work with: “because then you could choose your own topic”.

When asked to describe how they felt about English at school, the pupils expressed they were bored. Ingrid felt the lessons were about things she already knew. Ella thought they spent too much time writing and too little speaking. She was afraid this would prevent her from developing orally. Ingrid added: “Most of what I know, I’ve learned outside of school”. She further worried about not developing in school: “What I do at home is maybe stuff one does in 7th grade. And then I don’t feel I get to use it. And then I’m afraid I will forget it. So, that when I reach 7th grade, I won’t know it anymore”.

The pupils rarely worked in groups. When not working individually, the pupils usually worked with their learning partner. Ella explained that they never talked English in groups and that talking English with their learning partner meant talking about the homework text. When asked what it would be like to work with others on their level, Ella and Ingrid explained:

Ella: That would’ve been fun. Because sometimes you need to stop and explain to the others. If it’s on the same level, it may become easier (...). There are too many explanations sometimes.

Ingrid: And then you could talk about some other things. Because if you talk with the others, you say things they don’t know and then they ask, and such. Sometimes I don’t know the Norwegian words for things.⁵⁹

Ella and Ingrid further explained that they usually adapted to their peers by allowing them to talk first and by excluding difficult words and use “such words we have learnt at school”.

Noah did not adapt his speech, but was somewhat frustrated with his learning partner copying his work when they were working with the booklets.

The pupils did not worry if they made mistakes in class, although Ingrid would become irritated with herself if she did. They did not believe the teacher expected more of them since they did the same tasks as the other pupils. Although some pupils in their class had fewer tasks because they struggled with English, the pupils found it unlikely that they would have the teaching adapted to their level since this was never practiced. Regarding expectations

⁵⁹ Translated in Appendix 7, School 2, quote 59.

from their peers, Ella thought her learning partner was happy to work with her since she could answer many questions and provide correct answers. Ingrid explained that her peers were unaware of her high level and had been surprised that she was to participate in the current study.

Support from the teacher

The pupils did not know how to develop further in English. Ella added that they were usually informed in teacher-parent-pupil conferences, but that she had forgotten what had been said. She had nevertheless made her own personal goal: to develop in writing. Although she usually did not notice the weekly learning objective on the week plan, her parents sometimes tested her at home and made her discuss it in English to challenge her. In the teacher-parent-pupil conference, the pupils had received praise for their high results on the National Tests. Ella explained that prior to this conference, she had not received any praise at school, only from her parents. Ingrid noted that she did not necessarily like to be praised often, but “rather need to hear that it’s good, but you can work with this and that. I like that”.

The pupils thought the teacher knew their knowledge of English from their National Test results. However, Ella noted that they never talked for a long time in front of the class, and thus they did not get to display their knowledge. When asked if they had informed their teacher about the level of English being too easy, Ingrid responded that she was afraid of being rejected by the teacher and of peers listening in on the conversation. The pupils had recently had a reading project in their Norwegian classes, where they had been levelled into three groups. Ella noted: “It would have been fun to do that in English too (...). It was fun because we were given some more difficult texts”. However, they were not sure whether this would be possible in their English lessons because their Norwegian subject teacher had explained that level grouping was normally not acceptable and that it was used only for that project.

Wishes

The pupils wished they had access to more exciting texts, texts that were not childish. They wished they could talk more, expressed as such by Ella: “Instead of just saying one sentence, that we can tell a whole story”. Making PowerPoint presentations on texts or topics they had studied was also suggested. Other suggestions were writing book reviews, watching movies, and making the classroom into a café where they would only talk English to each other. When

asked how it would be to learn English like this, Ingrid responded: “That would’ve been educational. What we do now I know already, so it’s not educational at all”.

5.4.3 School 3 parent online interviews (P8: Noah, P9: Ella, P10: Ingrid)

The parents confirmed their children’s out-of-school engagement with English. They were personally engaged in their children’s English development to various degrees. P8 would frequently borrow English books from the library and read to Noah. Both P8 and P9 talked English with their children. P10 was interested in English, but had not been particularly engaged in Ingrid’s homework.

Regarding the level and challenges provided to the children in their English classes, P8 and P10 felt that their children had too few challenges at school. P10 explained about Ingrid: “She could probably have had more challenges in most subjects at school. Learning seems to come easy to her”. P8 noted that Noah not being challenged was “perhaps related to the resource situation”. P9 responded that the teacher had provided adaptation for Ella, but did not explain in what way.

When asked if they considered their children were given appropriate challenges in their English homework, P9 responded “Yes”. Although Noah had high abilities, P8 did not find giving him more challenging homework particularly important because of his English stimuli at home. P10 explained that Ingrid had said she wished she had different homework tasks because her current homework was “childish”. Regarding feedback from the English teacher, P8 and P9 responded that the teacher had given their children positive feedback, which motivated them to learn more. P10 explained that Ingrid did not receive much feedback from her teacher. P8 had recently addressed the lack of challenges to Noah’s teacher and reckoned it would take some time before any changes were made. P9 had not and explained that “[t]he teacher has discovered this and adapted”. P10 had not been conscious about Ingrid being above average in English until the teacher-parent-pupil conference some weeks ago.

The parents described their children as conscientious about schoolwork and wanting to gain good results. Regarding their children’s motivation and efforts in English classes, P9 described Ella as motivated and making sufficient effort. Ella also “learns quickly”. P8 explained Noah’s motivation to be periodic and did not perceive him to be making his best effort. P9 further explained that Noah perceived the English curriculum as boring: “There’s not much that catches your interest there”. P10’s response about Ingrid was: “She probably does what she’s told to do”.

The parents believed their children would be motivated by receiving challenges and more interesting and exciting texts, for example about sports or song lyrics. To talk about and discuss topics of interest was also emphasized. To be allowed to work with bigger projects and in groups would also be motivating. The parents commented that their children had enjoyed being interviewed and that they had felt proud to be selected for participation.

5.5 School 4

5.5.1 School 4 teacher interview: Beth, 7th grade teacher

Beth had been an English teacher for 11 years and had 90 credits of English from higher education. Her last 30 credits came from a municipality-sponsored teacher training course taken two years ago. She felt her education had given her knowledge about the subject, but that the university lecturers “don’t prepare you for being a teacher”. She thus missed a more didactic focus in her education. Having lived ten years in English speaking countries, she nevertheless felt “relaxed about speaking English”. She was the only English subject teacher at the 7th year level and had taught her two English classes for one and a half years. They had two 45-minute English lessons a week.

Characteristics of the pupils

When asked why she had mentioned in her email that she was not sure whether she had any ALs, Beth explained:

No, because I wouldn’t say they are advanced from my perspective. Because they are not fluent enough. They have a hard time expressing their opinions in English. They know what to say, but they can’t structure their sentences. And that may be because they didn’t learn it from year one. I don’t know how the other teachers did. And then, they’re kind of afraid of speaking English. I don’t know why.

She nevertheless would identify ALs from their writing because “that’s where you see they are a bit more advanced. Then they’ve learned to have a structure, to write a text, there’s no spelling mistakes. So, they know the words by heart”.

The understanding of adapted instruction

Beth explained that the concept of adapted instruction was of special concern at the school. The school had an emphasis on including struggling pupils within the inclusive classroom and to minimize the use of special education. Beth explained: “As a group of teachers, we know which one is struggling in which subject. And that’s where we usually help them”. When asked how she understood adapted instruction, Beth responded: “If it were up to me, I would speak only English all the time. But because there are some learners that are not as fluent, I speak Norwegian too. And I have to”. She further explained that her teaching was mostly adapted to the struggling learners because she had found the general level of the pupils low, both in her current classes, but also in her teaching practice during the teacher training course two years ago.

Beth reported that the ALs were sometimes referred to collectively in teacher staff meetings. However, because English was a “subject on the side”, Beth felt most of the discussions related to mathematics and Norwegian. However, her English teacher colleagues would occasionally discuss pupils they needed advice on how to teach: “But it’s not that much (...) because as I said to you before, I don’t think they are really that advanced. But maybe if we had started differently from year one, I think they would’ve been more advanced”. She thought the level of teaching in the elementary grades was not always concurrent with the demands of the intermediate grades and that part of the problem could be that the elementary pupils did not speak enough English. Further, the many struggling pupils were a challenge: “And if you’re *one* teacher, you can’t help them. And the weaker ones just fall more and more behind. So, that’s one of the problems with the Norwegian school, because if there’s someone who (...) takes it fast, and excels, they are kinda held back because you can’t help everybody”.

When asked how she assessed the pupils’ pre-knowledge, Beth responded: “I do some vocabulary tests, but I don’t believe too much in that. Because they read, just memorize it and then they’ve forgotten it again”. She thus emphasized the tests being linked to something the pupils had read. She usually gave the pupils scores on the tests: “Then maybe the best would be 40 and then I can see if they have 20 or 30. That would be okay. If they have five: ‘Okay, they haven’t done their homework or didn’t read or...didn’t follow the class’”. She planned to have a look at the National Tests for 8th grade to be able to prepare the pupils for the requirements awaiting in 8th grade.

Beth was aware of her pupils’ out-of-school English language practices and believed some of the boys benefitted orally from gaming with people from other countries. She also knew that some of the parents were highly engaged in their children’s English development

through helping with homework, discussing English words, and giving feedback. She nevertheless noted: “But it’s hard for them, because the children won’t listen to their parents”.

Adapted EFL instruction

Beth tried to include work with all skills in her EFL lessons and emphasized that she varied her teaching all the time. She usually started each lesson by playing a song while the pupils found their books and got ready for class. Sometimes the pupils were grouped in different stations and engaged in for example playing games, reading shorter books, or discussions. She was not content with the textbook *Stairs* (Thorson and Unnerud, 2006b) and thus did not use it often. Instead, she used many online resources and provided the pupils with copies of different texts and tasks. She also made use of resources her children had acquired when going to school abroad. The pupils would also occasionally log on to *Readtheory*⁶⁰ to read texts adapted to their individual levels. She nevertheless usually had pupils working on the same activity:

Usually in class, I have the same thing going for all of them. Because I think it’s easier for everybody that we’re doing the same thing. But you can see that the advanced ones are listening more, always finishing ahead, and try to do something else. They don’t just sit there and wait (...). So either they ask me, or I just hand them something. But it’s always gonna be the same thing.

Pupils who finished their tasks early were sometimes asked to help peers or to revise their work by consulting a dictionary. Sometimes she provided the ALs with copies of longer and more difficult texts with related questions: “More or less like Readtheory, just on paper”. When asked how she chose the levels of these texts, Beth explained: “These are 7th graders, but compared to American or English standards they would be about [year] 4 or 5, so then the advanced would get maybe a [year] 6”. Beth further explained her adaption practices regarding the ALs:

Sometimes I encourage them to speak more. Sometimes I give them more homework, you know a bit more than what the others have. And then they read more. So they get more challenged about reading. And then also translating a bit more - so they have to, you know, try to keep it up.

⁶⁰ An online library of “reading comprehension content” adapted to each reader’s individual ability level: <https://readtheory.org>

Beth emphasized the importance of reading to all her pupils, and thought Readtheory aided her in “just to get enough reading in”. The ALs read and translated longer sections of texts from the homework than the other pupils. Reading aloud was further emphasized: “I get all the pupils to read aloud in class and then I comment on the fluency, intonation and see if they are familiar with, you know the sounds. So, then each student gets feedback on their reading”. Beth expected her pupils to practice the homework text at home: “I tell them they are supposed to read three times, and over and over and maybe aloud to their parents. But I don’t think they do that much”.

Regarding the ALs’ writing development, Beth related: “I don’t teach them from A to B how to write. I just say, this is – they know it from Norwegian – a beginning, you have a middle and you have the end. And then I give them starters”. Since the pupils did not like to write, she had emphasized writing activities to persuade them to write as much as possible. When asked what kinds of topics the pupils got to write about, Beth explained it could be different topics, but that she tried to follow the seasons and topics covered across subjects.⁶¹ To encourage oral development, Beth challenged all the pupils to speak English in class. She illustrated how the pupils had needed to become adjusted to this practice: “[Pupil:] ‘I didn’t raise my hand.’ And I said: ‘No, but you’re supposed to know it anyway.’ So, that was a bit frightening for some of the pupils. Because they didn’t know when I was gonna ask”. The pupils would also read and explain texts to each other in pairs and Beth felt that this was “not that frightening, because it’s just the two of them”. She sometimes also included oral activities and games in station work. The pupils’ listening development was mainly fostered by teacher talk and songs or videos played in the classroom.⁶² The pupils all got the same vocabulary test but the ALs “would use less time, and they will usually get it correct. But the others might not get finished, they haven’t done the homework, or they don’t understand. So that’s how you see the difference”.

Beth varied what type of homework she gave the pupils, but always included some grammar. In written work, she expected the pupils to hand in “a minimum of half a page, the advanced learners one page.”

Motivation

⁶¹ Recently the topic had been “Halloween and witches”. She had used online Halloween texts suitable for American/English year 3 or 4.

Beth thought the fact that the participating pupils were mainly boys was because they played online games with people from around the world and thus learned more English. She further thought their need to communicate online motivated them to pay attention in class. When asked what could demotivate the ALs, Beth thought repetitive lessons with a good deal of grammar and writing would be demotivating for them: “Because if you do the same over and over, there’s no variation. And to learn a language, I think you need variation”.

Regarding the expectations towards her ALs, Beth emphasized that she expected much of all her pupils. Because level one in *Stairs* was “just not acceptable” and too easy for the pupils to progress, no one was allowed to use level one: “There’s no level one in our class”. She expected more of the ALs in terms of their written work: “Because they should have longer texts. You know, if I say five sentences, at least they should have eight or nine. So, I expect *more*”.

The pupils were never given the possibility to choose their own materials or tasks to work with. Beth explained:

No. Because they are (...) these two classes need a lot of structure. (...). That’s our experience (...) that if you give them too much freedom, they will not do it or they will do something else or they will do the minimum that’s required. So, if you have like a standard set and tell them what to do, the advanced learners will always do more. Like in maths, the pupils who are advanced learners in maths, they just automatically do more.

When asked if pupils were allowed to choose a book to read, Beth responded they could do that, but that she did not think the ALs read books. She knew their parents encouraged them to read English books, but concluded: “The pupils are lazy. And it’s not before they come to year 8 and discover there’s gonna be grades (...). That’s when they see that they have to do something”.

Beth tried to be specific when giving written or oral feedback to all her pupils, e.g. by commenting on sentence structures, what was good, and what to change. She further encouraged the pupils to evaluate the lessons by giving her a thumb up or thumb down. She felt they expressed their opinions, both if it was too easy or too difficult. The pupils had participated in writing down their own learning goals in the teacher-parent-pupil conference, e.g. “To talk more English”, “To understand more English” or “I want to learn more about verbs”.

Wishes

When asked about what would help her to accommodate for her ALs, Beth responded: “Mostly it would be time”. She felt the administration often set the agenda when having teacher meetings: “We don’t have enough time to work together, to talk about the pupils’ strengths and weaknesses”. She thus wanted more freedom and time to discuss different methods with colleagues.

5.5.2 School 4 pupil interview, 7th grade: Jacob, Liam and Thomas

Profile of the pupils

The pupils engaged with the English language to varying degrees outside of school. Their main source of English came from watching English movies and TV series. Thomas avoided Norwegian subtitles because he wanted to develop in English. Liam frequently watched YouTube football channels without Norwegian subtitles. None of them had problems understanding what was being said. The boys engaged to some extent in gaming. The pupils wanted to become more fluent, both in oral and written language. Jacob explained: “Talk more proper, kind of. Without stopping”. Thomas wanted to move to California when he grew up because it seemed nice to live there. All the pupils believed the skill most frequently used outside of school was listening. They perceived writing and speaking to be the most difficult. When encountering difficult words, they used strategies such as to re-read the passage, context clues, or using *Google Translate*. Liam explained that when writing, he would “try out what seems most logical”. To remember how to write difficult words, the pupils made rules of thumb, e.g. the pronunciation of /f/ is frequently “ph” in written English. The pupils felt they spent more time using English at home than Norwegian. Liam noted: “Except when I talk, of course”.

Adapted EFL instruction

When asked to describe a typical EFL lesson, Jacob responded: “Writing. A lot of writing”. Each lesson started with an audio or video of a song as they made themselves ready for class. Sometimes the songs were a bit “strange” and “childish”, other times they were modern pop songs. Thomas nevertheless felt the songs provided “a better start to the lesson”. After the song, they would usually read or write something. The pupils explained that they mainly worked from the textbook or paper copies provided by the teacher. The level 3 texts and vocabulary in the textbook were perceived as not easy. The pupils further felt the content of the textbook texts was not relevant and explained that texts such as “dogs being thrown out of

a car” were “not very realistic”. They rarely worked with tasks from the workbook and explained that they mainly wrote sentences provided for them by the teachers. They found this easy and boring. However, if they worked on the same tasks as their peers and found them too easy, the teacher allowed them to skip the easy tasks and continue onto more difficult ones. The pupils appreciated this practice and contrasted it to their English lessons in 5th grade, prior to having Beth as a teacher:

Jacob: Then everybody was on the same level.

Thomas: No one really learned anything.

Liam: It was kind of just the same for everybody.

Jacob: No, we didn't get any challenges from it.

I: So with [Beth] you are given more challenges?

All: Yes.

Thomas: And that's good.

I: Does this mean you like English more now than before, then?

All: Yes.

Liam: A lot more.

I: Why?

Jacob: Because now we get more difficult [stuff]. And when you are given more difficult [stuff], more challenges, you become more motivated. You tell yourself that 'I can do this' because you push yourself to do it.⁶³

The pupils would often read texts from the textbook for homework, but work on tasks provided for them on handouts. They found the vocabulary to be memorized for the tests as easy.

Motivation (Relevance, autonomy and relatedness)

Although they collectively responded positively to giving their best effort at school, the pupils often did not practice for the vocabulary tests. Thomas had gotten two mistakes on the vocabulary test the same day:

Thomas: I had all correct but two.

I: What do you think about those two mistakes?

Thomas: One was difficult and the other one was a careless mistake.

I: Had you practiced?

Thomas: No.

I: How much would you have had to practice to get it all correct?

⁶³ Translated in Appendix 7, School 2, quote 63.

Thomas: Looked through it twice.

I: Why didn't you?

Thomas: I forgot about it (...). But I usually get a lot of it right without practicing.⁶⁴

The pupils described their English lessons as “educational”, “useful” and “easy”. However, they missed topics that were of more relevance and interest. They could not recall having discussed a topic they had found interesting and that had made them. Furthermore, they were not allowed to choose literature themselves, but explained that Beth brought books to class to be read at the stations⁶⁵. These books were, however, considered irrelevant. When asked why, the boys explained:

Thomas: They have uninteresting information.

Jacob: Yes.

I: The content?

All: Yes.

I: In what way?

Jacob: Dragons.

Liam: Dragons and dinosaurs and such.

I: What would you like to read about, then?

Liam: Sports, more *real* stuff.

Thomas: Library books.⁶⁶

The pupils further explained they were not given opportunities to write about topics of interest. They felt that, although their 5th grade English lessons had been too easy, they had then had more freedom in terms of writing topics. Jacob explained: “Before, we got to write about what we liked to do, but now, you kind of get a hand-out where you have to fill in words that are missing and such”. The pupils felt much of their writing was related to grammar hand-outs and they missed being allowed to write about topics of their own choice. Thomas thought this would affect his motivation to write: “[Because] then you kind of want to write more because you feel people are interested in what you write”. Jacob added: “And you feel involved in it”. To learn English through topics of interest was a recurring theme during the interview and considered by the pupils important for their motivation:

Liam: It would've made it more fun.

Jacob: Entertaining.

⁶⁴ Translated in Appendix 7, School 2, quote 64.

⁶⁵ Beth explained that she used station work to vary her teaching. The pupils worked in groups with instructional materials and rotated to a different station at a given time.

⁶⁶ Translated in Appendix 7, School 2, quote 66.

Liam: And it would've made me do more.
T and J: Yes.
Thomas: It would've kind of made me engage more in it.
I: Would it?
Liam: Yes.
Jacob: Become more motivated.⁶⁷

The pupils engaged in speaking activities when working at the stations. They enjoyed being allowed to speak. Sometimes they were allowed to work with high-level-peers. Jacob related: "When we work together on the same level, everybody can show that they're good". They further felt that they learned much more from working together with level-peers, such as in relation to pronunciation of difficult words. When working in heterogeneous groups, they felt they needed to spend much time explaining words to their peers. Liam could not concentrate well and explained that he often pretended to read poorly because of demotivation or to prevent his peers feeling bad: "It's that empathy". In addition, he felt it was difficult to be grouped with peers who did not want to work effectively, but rather sabotage. He would sometimes try to encourage the group to stay on task, but felt his peers did not care. Sometimes he would thus join in with his peers because it was not very popular to be "the one sitting all alone and working". He explained that this happened quite often in his class.

The pupils believed their out-of-school English practices gave them a larger and more advanced vocabulary. They also believed their fluency and flow were a result of all their English input at home. Being confident about pronunciation helped Jacob if he was nervous when reading homework texts aloud in class. Thomas thought it was "unpleasant" to feel insecure, but did not mind making mistakes. They further did not believe their teacher or peers expected them not to make any mistakes.

Support from teacher

The pupils felt confident that their teacher knew their actual knowledge of English. They felt free to tell her if a task was too easy and appreciated being given more difficult tasks.⁶⁸ They did not, however, think their teacher knew their interests. Thomas noted: "She perhaps should know, because then she may make more fun lessons".

The pupils did not know how to develop their English. Thomas speculated if he perhaps needed to read more difficult texts while Liam concluded: "She doesn't really say

⁶⁷ Translated in Appendix 7, School 2, quote 67.

⁶⁸ Although not participating in this study, it is worth noticing that the girl interviewee had not told her teacher that tasks were too easy because she was afraid this would hurt her peers' feelings.

anything about that (...). She really only gives tasks". The pupils were not motivated by weekly learning objectives and felt them to be repetitive and easy. Liam explained: "It's much the same over again". Thomas added: "It's kind of things we know".

Wishes

The pupils all wished the English lessons could include topics that were relevant and interesting. They further wished they would be allowed to write about topics of their own choice, as illustrated by Thomas' response: "If you could write a text about really anything you wanted, that would've been fun. Call it a kind of free lesson, where you could just write about what you wanted to in English". When asked what it would mean to learn English in such a way, the following conversation occurred:

Jacob: It would've motivated me much more.

Thomas: A lot more motivational.

I: Why is that?

Jacob: Because when you're given something you're interested in, it's much more motivating. As with sports, if you're interested in it, and you know people who are also interested in it, you become much more motivated to keep on doing it.

I: What do you do if you're motivated in English?

Thomas: Then I don't want to stop, kind of.

Jacob: Yeah.

Liam: You just want to continue until you're finished.

Thomas: Kind of tell everything.⁶⁹

The pupils also wanted to work more in groups. Because his peers did not always want to work, however, Liam emphasized the importance of a good learning environment. The pupils felt it was somewhat burdensome to be a high achiever. Thomas explained: "Because people expect quite a bit of you. And that is both good and bad".

5.5.3 School 4 parent online interview (P11: Thomas, P12: Liam, P13: Jacob)

The parents confirmed their children's out-of-school English language practices and that they engaged in their children's English development mainly through helping with homework, talking English, and explaining difficult words. P12 often discussed with Liam that to be prepared for the future, having good English skills was important. P12 did not feel very confident about her own English skills and thus felt Liam should keep on developing his.

⁶⁹ Translated in Appendix 7, School 2, quote 69.

Regarding the level and challenges given to their children in the English lessons and homework, P11 had the impression of Thomas being appropriately challenged in both the lessons and homework. P11 had never addressed lack of appropriate challenges for Thomas to the teacher. P12 believed Liam could definitely be given more challenges and that he would enjoy this. About homework, P12 responded: “No. His homework is quickly done and never difficult, so it could preferably be more challenging.” To provide more challenges for Liam, P12 had asked the teacher to suggest books for him to read. P13 responded that Jacob expressed he was not given enough challenges, either in lessons or homework. P13 had not addressed the lack of appropriate challenges to the teacher, but expressed that Jacob had done so himself.

The parents all felt their children were given positive feedback from the teachers. P11 explained that Thomas actively participated in class and thus received positive feedback. P12 described how Liam received positive feedback on his vocabulary and oral language. The parents believed their children gave their best efforts in the English lessons. However, P11 did not perceive Thomas as particularly motivated, but that his “generally good understanding of language” helped him to develop his English skills. P11 and P12 further believed their children did as they were told and that they participated in class, but that they were not particularly motivated in the English lessons or in school in general.

The parents thought their children would be motivated by learning English through topics of interest. P11 responded about Thomas: “There are probably other topics that would interest him more and that would make him to want to put a bigger effort into learning about topics he is interested in”. P11 suggested topics such as gaming, scooters, and films would motivate Thomas. P12 explained that Liam wanted to be a professional football player and thus topics about football and other sports would make him engage more. P13 responded that Jacob would be motivated by writing stories about his own interests. The parents commented that their children had enjoyed being interviewed for the study and that they had felt proud about having been selected.

6. Discussion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of the present research in relation to the following research questions addressed in the thesis:

1. Do the Norwegian intermediate EFL teachers adapt their instruction to accommodate for their pupils with higher learning potential?
2. If so, how do they adapt their instruction to accommodate for these pupils?
3. How do the pupils experience their EFL instruction?

Research questions 1 and 2 relate to the teachers and research question 3 to the pupils. There will inevitably be overlapping in the discussion of the questions as they are interrelated to a certain degree. For example, question 3 addresses the pupils' perceptions and perspectives on the topics discussed in questions 1 and 2. Section 6.2 discusses whether the teachers adapt their EFL instruction to accommodate for their pupils with higher learning potential (HLP) and their understanding of the concept of adapted instruction. Section 6.3 addresses the teachers' adaption practices in relation to their pupils with HLP. In section 6.4 the target pupils' experiences of EFL instruction is discussed. Section 6.5 discusses the limitations of the current research. Finally, section 6.6 addresses the implications of the research and recommendations for the teaching of EFL and further research.

6.2 Do the teachers adapt their EFL instruction to accommodate for their pupils with higher learning potential?

6.2.1 The understanding of adapted instruction

Although none of the teachers explicitly explained the concept of adapted instruction, they all acknowledged that their pupils were different in terms of levels and that adapted instruction concerned how to approach this challenge. Their understanding of the concept nevertheless varied between them and different teachers emphasized different aspects of adapted

instruction. Nina explained that adapted instruction related to adapting teaching to all the pupils and that the Norwegian school had traditionally failed to include the advanced learners in this regard. She therefore planned her teaching according to three levels. Although Nora believed teaching ideally should be adapted on three levels, she believed her EFL practice of providing two levels was appropriately challenging for the pupils. This dissonance may stem from the fact that the textbook she used only differentiated on two levels and thus set the premise for her differentiation practices. This will be further discussed in section 6.3.1.

Beth did not explain how she understood adapted instruction, but seemed to relate it mainly to the struggling pupils. When discussing adapted instruction with her colleagues, they rarely discussed the ALs. She thus did not seem to think that her ALs needed any special adaption beyond their mid-level peers. She also pointed to the dilemma of being only one teacher and observing the struggling pupils falling behind, leaving the ALs to cope on their own because she could not help everybody. The implication of this statement seems to be that the struggling pupils were her main priority when thinking about adapted instruction. Her dilemma also illustrates the fact that adapted instruction may sometimes become an ethical challenge for the teacher. Which pupils should be prioritized in such a situation? It is understandable that the teacher finds it challenging to know how to spend time and resources when observing both struggling pupils falling behind and advanced learners not receiving the support they need. However, it seems important to avoid focusing on one group of pupils at the expense of others and rather find practices to adjust teaching so that all pupils are given opportunities to learn and to develop (White paper 21, 2016-2017). The Education Act 1-3 clearly states that all pupils have the right to adapted instruction. It might be unfortunate that the recent amendment specifies that particular focus should be on struggling pupils in the subjects Norwegian, Sami and Mathematics in grades 1-4. Developing relevant competence on how to differentiate to the benefit of all pupils is thus necessary and may aid the teacher in how to approach such dilemmas (Eyre, 2001; George, 2011; NOU 2016:14, 2016; Tomlinson, 2014).

It appeared that adapted instruction related to a feeling of guilt for some of the teachers. Robert explained that he felt unhappy about not adapting his teaching for his ALs and that he realized they probably wanted to be challenged more. He felt that he did not have a solution for how he could adapt his EFL teaching for them and that he had neither the time nor the resources to find other materials to accommodate for them. Being unsure about how to implement adapted instruction may lead to a teacher doing nothing (Jenssen and Lillejord, 2010), and Robert seemed to have reached a compromise with himself by teaching “to the

middle”. However, such a practice arguably does not accommodate for either the struggling pupils or the pupils with HLP. Nina explained how she often thought about her pupils when she came home from work. She wanted to accommodate for all her pupils, but wished she had much more time to help each one of them. There seemed to be a strong feeling among the teachers that lack of time and resources were the main obstacles to adapting their teaching in accordance with what they believed their pupils needed.

6.2.2 The school’s policy

Arguably, the focus and direction set by the school administration will influence the teaching practices of teachers. In addition, the school administration may be an important support for teachers in their work with adapted instruction. For example, although all the teachers in the sample were qualified to teach English, most of them expressed that their education did not prepare them well enough as EFL teachers. They felt they had had to build their own practice from experience and collegial conversations. Most of the teachers also felt there was little focus on ALs and that they received little support from their leaders when it came to adapting the teaching for the ALs. In fact, neither Robert nor Nora could remember the ALs ever having been collectively addressed, except for once when discussing the results of the National Tests. Rather than focusing on how to adapt instruction to all groups of pupils, it was the group of struggling pupils that was in focus. Beth explained that the school had a particular focus on including the struggling pupils in the ordinary classroom and to minimize the use of special education.

The way in which the schools’ policies affected the teachers’ teaching practices may, for example, be exemplified by Robert’s principle of not level-grouping the pupils because of the school’s emphasis on the struggling pupils. His intention when grouping the pupils was to assist the struggling pupils and allow them to work with more capable peers. Further, Nora had been told by her colleagues that homework should not be difficult for the pupils, but rather a repetition of what the pupils had worked with at school. Hence, she did not feel she was able to challenge her ALs in their homework. These examples illustrate how the schools’ policies influenced the teachers’ understanding and practice of adapted instruction.

The target school differed significantly from the other schools in this regard. Nina explained that adapted instruction was regularly on the agenda in teacher staff meetings and that the teachers both discussed and agreed to try out new teaching methods in their classes. By evaluating the teaching methods and giving each other tips and advice, these teachers were

likely to create a collegial environment that could foster the development of an effective differentiation practice to the benefit of both teachers and pupils. Further, by sharing the responsibility for developing such a practice, the teachers were not left to invent practices and materials on their own.

6.2.3 Identification and assessment of the advanced learners

Whether teachers see the need for adjusting the adapted instruction or not will necessarily be influenced by how they identify and assess their pupils with HLP. For instance, what do they expect their pupils with HLP to be able to demonstrate or achieve to qualify for advanced adapted instruction beyond their peers? Some of the teachers seemed to have rather high expectations of their advanced learners. In fact, prior to the interview, Beth expressed in an e-mail that she did not think she had any ALs. In the interview, she said she did not perceive any of her current pupils as advanced because they were not fluent enough and because they had a hard time explaining their opinions in English. She also said they were afraid of speaking English in class. She further expected her ALs to structure their writing well and to make no spelling mistakes. They were also expected to demonstrate a certain behavior: to listen attentively, to always finish ahead of others, and to not just sit and wait. Nora expected her ALs to finish their tasks thoroughly, efficiently, and fast. Her ALs could not be given new challenges if they did not finish what they had been given. She did not believe their level was high enough for them to receive any adaption beyond the textbook, and that the most advanced level in the book was adequate for them. Robert expected his ALs to approach him and explicitly ask to be given more advanced work. He further described the ALs as motivated and strong both in writing and orally.

It seems reasonable to infer that some of the teachers had rather high expectations of the ALs. Firstly, the ALs were expected to be orally engaged and to be able to express their opinions. As discussed in section 3.3.4, pupils with HLP may be reluctant to engage orally in their L2 because they set high standards for themselves and do not want to appear unsuccessful (Akçayoglu, 2015; Deveau, 2006). Further, they may feel that the teacher and their peers have specific expectations of them and they may therefore be embarrassed if they make mistakes in the classroom (Børte et al., 2016). They may thus disguise their abilities because they do not want the negative attention it may result in (Børte et al., 2016:15). Nora explained that even her English native speakers were shy and reluctant to speak in the classroom. Both Beth and Nora explained that they put some pressure on their pupils to make

them speak English in whole-class settings. For some of Beth's pupils, this caused anxiety. The pupils from Nora's school responded that they were embarrassed if they made mistakes in the classroom and that they would sometimes receive negative comments from their peers because they were expected to know easy words. It thus seems somewhat questionable in principle to exclude pupils from being regarded as ALs because of their lack of oral engagement or ability to express their opinions without considering the aspect of learner anxiety.

The perception of the ALs as being effective and working fast also needs to be addressed. Robert's pupils, the youngest ones in the pupil sample, were expected to explicitly ask their teacher for more challenges. Expecting these pupils to take such an initiative is arguably placing too much responsibility on them for their own development. In addition, a lack of pupil requests for more challenges does not necessarily indicate that the teaching is adapted appropriately for them. As previously mentioned, pupils with HLP may disguise their abilities because they do not want the attention it may result in (Børte et al., 2016:15).

Beth further explained that she used vocabulary tests to assess her pupils and that her ALs would spend less time on them and usually get them all correct. Such tests are often lists of decontextualized words that are likely to test pupils' ability to memorize and spell more than assess what they actually understand. To allow pupils to write about a topic of interest and to express themselves freely, as practiced by Nora and Nina, is more likely a better tool of assessment if the aim is to identify pupils with HLP (Bell, 2012; Tomlinson, 2014).

Nina differed from the other teachers in that she considered the assessment of the pupils also from their general competence in many subjects and their rapidness in grasping new concepts. She explained that they wanted to discuss and converse orally, but she did not expect them to be able to speak without mistakes. For example, she explained that the ALs sometimes forgot grammatical details when they spoke fast and thus needed more practice in this respect. Nina's way of describing these pupils seemed to emphasize the pupils' potential more than being a set of standards about what an advanced pupil should be able to demonstrate to fall under this "category". She was thus more in line with Idsøe's (2014: 25) recommendation that the identification process of pupils with HLP should focus on pupils' potential rather than on their achievement.

Nina was also the only teacher who regularly asked the pupils to give her explicit feedback on the level of the texts she gave them. The pupils were thus involved in assessing themselves and their learning process. By asking the pupils to evaluate their reading and how the texts suited their level, the pupils were being trained to apply metacognition and reflect on

their own learning. In the light of Ryan and Deci's (2000) Self Determination Theory (STD) (see section 3.3.4), providing texts that were adapted to their competence level would likely satisfy the pupils' need for competence. In addition, they were actively involved in and influenced their own learning, supporting their need for autonomy. The fact that Nina actively sought feedback from her pupils could also make it easier for them to voice their opinions than if they had to initiate the feedback themselves. Arguably, the pupils were likely to feel relatedness to their teacher because of her support and interest in caring for their needs (Ryan and Deci, 2000).

6.3 How do the teachers adapt their EFL instruction?

6.3.1 Differentiation practices

The teachers may be divided into two groups when it comes to the planning and conducting of their EFL instruction. Nora and Robert aimed to follow the same procedures for all their lessons, while Nina and Beth emphasized variation. Variation is an important principle for differentiation (Directorate of Education, 2016), as differentiation implies a practice of the teacher adapting, e.g., curriculum, methods, and activities to meet with different pupils' educational needs (NOU 2016:14, 2016). Thus, there were arguably more opportunities for differentiation in Beth's and Nina's classrooms than in the other two.

Nora and Robert used the textbook as the basis for their differentiation. The strong hold of textbooks in Norwegian EFL teaching has been confirmed by several scholars (Charboneau, 2016; Drew and Sørheim, 2009; Hellekjær, 2007; Sandvik and Buland, 2013). It is unlikely that such a reliance on the textbook enables differentiation to the benefit of all pupils (Bell, 2012). A teaching practice where the textbook becomes the premise for the progression of teaching and the only source of pupils' reading materials does not consider that pupils with HLP may need a more rapid progression than their peers (Directorate of Education, 2016). Such a practice also does not take into account that pupils would probably benefit from being provided with a variety of texts, including self-chosen texts (Day and Bamford, 1998; *LK06* English subject curriculum; Krashen, 2004). Although Robert realized that the textbook texts did not challenge the ALs, all his pupils nevertheless read the same textbook texts. Such a practice is not likely to utilize these pupils' reading capacity or provide them with a feeling of competence (Ryan and Deci, 2000). In light of Krashen's (1982) *Input*

hypothesis (see section 3.3.3), the ALs were not being provided with input that was beyond their current competence level.

One also needs to consider the approach to how the textbook is being used. Choral reading is time-consuming and this time could arguably be used more productively. Considering the few lesson hours available for the English school subject, this issue is important to address. Nora prepared her pupils for their homework by going through texts from both textbook levels. She also played the audio versions of each text. The pupils read and translated some lines from their respective texts. It is likely that the ALs, who did not find the texts either challenging or interesting, were bored during these sessions. In fact, Robert expressed that the pupils found choral reading boring, but that most handled it. One could argue that teachers should rather aim to find more efficient ways of practicing, promoting, and stimulating reading. Beth challenged the ALs by having them read and translate longer sections of the homework text. However, it is questionable whether this method represents a challenge for the ALs if the text itself is easily understood.

Nina planned her teaching according to three levels. When she wanted the whole class to work on the same task, she differentiated the tasks so that all the pupils could work with the texts on their level. She offered tasks that required both lower and higher order thinking. She did not define who should work on which text or tasks, so the pupils could choose from several texts and tasks. By offering a range of tasks and texts on different levels, it becomes less important which pupil works with which task (Dean, 1998). The ALs are thus not bound to wait to be given challenges until after the whole-class teaching is finished. In contrast, Nora's pupils said they often had to wait for up to 20 minutes while the teacher explained things to the whole class before they could work individually. During such whole-class instruction, the ALs were often bored. Nina's EFL instruction planning strategically addressed the needs of the different levels in the class and thus her differentiation practice was part of a strategic plan and not an *ad hoc* practice (cf. Smedsrud and Skogen, 2016).

Teachers' choice and use of materials influence their differentiation practices. Although all the teachers used the textbook in their teaching, they also made use of other materials to challenge the ALs. Nora and Robert gave their pupils extra sheets or booklets with grammar tasks in addition to their ordinary tasks. Nora explained that when the pupils had finished an exercise sheet, they were given new ones on a higher level. It had hardly ever happened that she ran out of exercise sheets to give to the pupils. Robert's pupils explained that the booklets were very long, so they rarely ran out of tasks. Considering that these were all grammar tasks, they arguably represent what George (2011) refers to as MOTS ("more of

the same”), which may be very demotivating for pupils with HLP (Hattie, 2007; Idsøe, 2014; Smedsrud and Skogen, 2016). These pupils may therefore refrain from working efficiently and rapidly with such tasks. Hence, they may in fact slow down their pace to avoid such repetition (Børte et al., 2016; Idsøe, 2014). Nora’s pupils confirmed that they did not ask for more challenges because it resulted in more of the same.

Nora explained that it had happened only once that a pupil had finished all the tasks and that she had then given him a book to read. It seems rather a paradox to be restrictive about allowing pupils to read books in their EFL classes, especially considering the benefits of reading extensively (Day and Bamford, 1998; Krashen, 2004). Further, when a pupil has demonstrated mastery of what is being worked on, it would benefit the pupil if s/he was allowed to move on to enriched tasks and tasks requiring higher order thinking (George, 2011; Idsøe, 2014; Smedsrud and Skogen, 2016).

Beth provided opportunities for her pupils to read online texts adapted to their level on Readtheory. In addition, she provided copied texts with tasks based on the same principle as Readtheory. Readtheory presents texts in a test-format designed to assess comprehension. The pupils answer quizzes that assess and adjust the texts to target their level and also track their progress. To be made aware of their progress may be motivating for many pupils. However, Readtheory does not allow pupils to choose texts themselves and the quizzes are based on right or wrong answers. Hence, Readtheory does not assess or stimulate pupils’ higher order thinking skills or autonomy. An approach to the teaching of reading also needs to consider pupils’ need for extensive, voluntary reading, and opportunities to work with texts to which they can apply higher order thinking (Day and Bamford, 1998; Hellekjær, 2007; Krashen, 2004). Hence, Readtheory may aid adapted reading instruction, but should not be the only tool for it.

Robert believed the ALs needed other reading materials besides the textbook to be appropriately challenged. However, he did not have the time to find other resources and thus all the pupils were required to read the same text. He nevertheless reported that he knew that the parents provided English books for the ALs. In a sense, therefore, he actually had access to alternative reading materials for his ALs. In fact, one of his pupils read long English books in her spare time. It is surprising that he did not seize the opportunity to make use of reading materials provided for his pupils through their parents. In addition, his pupils were allowed to read Norwegian library books when they were finished with their tasks in his EFL classes. Presumably, it would not be very demanding to have the pupils read English instead.

6.4 How is the instruction experienced by these pupils?

Haug (2006:51) argues that it is not sufficient only to study teachers' instructional methods and general teaching practices to measure the effectiveness of their adapted instruction. One also needs to consider how the adaptation is perceived by the individual pupil. The pupils' experiences will be discussed through the lens of SDT (Ryan and Deci, 2000), specifically addressing their needs to have a feeling of competence, autonomy, and relatedness to be motivated in their EFL classes.

6.4.1 Feeling of competence

One could argue that the pupils appeared to have a good understanding of the English language. They engaged much and in autonomous ways with English outside school. They identified with the English language and several of them preferred the English language to Norwegian. For Sarah (School 2), English was such a big part of her identity that she spoke English to herself when having a bad day.

The pupils also consciously used strategies to develop their English skills. For example, they deliberately turned off subtitles when watching movies/TV. They talked English with their parents and discussed words and meanings with them. They consulted *Google Translate* to learn new words. They were critical of Norwegian translations of movies and books and preferred the original language (English) because it felt more authentic and correct. A critical awareness of language is a characteristic of pupils with HLP in literacy (Idsøe, 2014). Their need for authenticity will further be discussed in section 6.4.3. The pupils expressed that they had a large and advanced vocabulary from their engagement with English outside school. Most of their time was spent on receptive skills and they thus wanted to develop their productive skills, especially their pronunciation and writing.

One could argue that several of the pupils were not given opportunities to develop their actual English skills in their EFL classes. They expressed that they already knew what was taught in their EFL classes and they perceived the tasks, booklets and grammar sheets as repetitive. In fact, Ingrid (School 4) did not perceive the EFL classes as educational at all because she did not learn anything new. Liam and Thomas (School 3) expressed that much of what was being taught was repetition and Ella (School 4) felt she was just doing grammar tasks she already knew. This finding is thus in line with previous Norwegian research in the

field suggesting that the instruction in Norwegian schools is not adapted to pupils with HLP (Directorate of Education, 2016; NOU 2016:14, 2016; Munden, 2016; Rønnestad, 2010).

The pupils felt that tasks they were given did not provide opportunities for demonstrating their actual level of proficiency, such as their large vocabularies and rapidness in understanding the texts and learning new words. Thus, they wanted opportunities to be allowed to read and write longer stories and more opportunities to talk more freely.

Robert relied entirely on the textbook, had all the pupils read the same text, and did not make use of other teaching materials. He taught “to the middle” and focused on including the struggling pupils. It is not a surprising finding that his ALs were not appropriately challenged. Such a teaching practice is highly problematic in the light of adapted instruction. Arguably, neither the low-level nor the high-level pupils were provided with comprehensible input (cf. Krashen, 1982) and neither would benefit from the instruction when it was above or below their zones of proximal development (cf. Vygotsky, 1978). As argued by Bell (2013:88), teachers should not teach to the middle of the group and hope that the pupils will take from the lessons what they need. Robert’s teaching practice affected his ALs quite negatively and his pupil, Ingrid, expressed that it “sucked” to have to repeat things she already knew.

The findings from Robert’s practice are comparable with the 7th graders’ experience in Schools 2 and 3. Their respective 5th grade EFL teachers had had similar teaching approaches as Robert’s. Looking back on their 5th grade EFL classes, the pupils in School 3 expressed that such a teaching practice had been little challenging and resulted in them not learning anything. Hattie’s (2009) research review concluded that pupils in less effective teachers’ classrooms may learn about a year less than their peers in the classrooms of effective teachers. This might explain why Beth did not perceive her pupils as advanced.

Interestingly, the pupils in Schools 2 and 3 reported that from changing teacher and having the EFL teaching more adapted to their level, they had come to enjoy their EFL classes more. The pupils in School 2 explained that their motivation for English had changed considerably after having been taught by Nina since 6th grade. Thus, these pupils represented an exception to the reported trend of Norwegian pupils’ motivation steadily decreasing from year 5-10 (Topland and Skaalvik, 2010), at least concerning their EFL lessons. In fact, Nina’s pupils (7th graders) appeared to be more motivated in their EFL classes than the youngest pupils in this study. A key issue for teachers should be to find out how to assist pupils in remaining motivated through the process of learning a language (Ushioda, 2012). Arguably, Nina’s practices had stimulated the pupils’ motivation.

Another interesting finding was that some of the pupils, such as Ella and Ingrid (School 4), adjusted their tasks themselves to make them more challenging. For example, when Ingrid had to write a few sentences for homework, she found it too boring and wrote a whole text instead to include more details. Arguably, doing more than what was required of her was probably not as much a result of high motivation as it was a result of an inner drive to use her own capacity and her need to feel competent (cf. Ryan and Deci, 2000).

It is not surprising that the pupils expressed that being provided with challenges was closely related to their motivation in their EFL classes. As described in section 3.6.1, several of the pupils nevertheless seemed to be provided with MOTS (cf. George, 2011) rather than a qualitative increase of challenges. This practice affected the pupils negatively. For example, Nora's practice of continuously giving the pupils more tasks had caused the ALs to refrain from asking for more challenges. Similarly, Robert's pupils had thick grammar booklets that were perceived as boring because they were repetitions of what they already knew. The pupils in School 3 usually worked with tasks on handouts. Although they were allowed to skip the easy tasks and move on to more difficult ones, Liam nevertheless stated that Beth really only gave more of the same tasks.

Reis' (2003:189) argument that many pupils with HLP learn at an early age that if they do their best in school, they will be rewarded with endless more pages of the same kind of practice material thus seems valid. Although the majority of the pupils claimed to be giving their best effort in their EFL classes, they were arguably at risk of losing their motivation for continuing to do so. Hence, they may eventually learn to expend minimum effort, creating a cycle of underachievement (Reis, 2003:189). One may also speculate whether there were other pupils with HLP in these EFL classes who had already lost their motivation and were thus not high achievers.

As previously mentioned, the majority of the pupils expressed that they made their best efforts at school. Some of the pupils nevertheless showed tendencies of underachievement. For example, the pupils at School 3 found the words to be memorized easy and often did not practice for the tests. Thomas (School 3) had not practiced for the most recent vocabulary test and had only made a few mistakes. To get all the words correct, he would have had to look through the vocabulary twice. That he only would need two repetitions indicates that he had a good memory and that memorizing the words was not actually a challenge for him. He was also used to achieving perfect tests without practicing.

Another interesting learner profile was Martin (School 2). His parent (P5) expressed that Martin had developed his English on his own. However, P5 had recently realized that

Martin needed help with strong verbs. Martin was somewhat frustrated with the mistakes he made with strong verbs, as he found them easy and boring to practice. At the same time, Martin was the only one in the interviews who wished for a more advanced texts in the textbook. Thus, despite making mistakes he seemed to want more challenges. Because pupils with HLP often have a strong working memory, they may need fewer repetitions and a more rapid progression than their peers (Directorate of Education, 2016; Børte et al., 2016; Idsøe, 2014). Lack of motivation may cause them to only work at partial capacity (George 2011:152) and they may consequently develop poor learning habits that they are unable to overcome when they are later sufficiently challenged (Bailey et al., 2012; Børte et al., 2016; George 2011:152). Martin and Thomas may have lacked motivation to practice vocabulary and verbs because the progression in learning may have been too slow. Hence, making mistakes on tests should not be interpreted as an indication that they are not ready or willing to work with more challenging tasks or materials.

Several of the pupils did not think their teacher knew their actual level of knowledge. Further, because the teaching was not adapted to them, the pupils in School 4 did not think Robert expected more of them. The pupils in School 3 believed their teacher knew their actual level of knowledge, but not their interests, which they seemed to deem equally important. Teacher feedback has been found to be highly influential for pupil achievement (Hattie, 2007:86). The 2016 Norwegian pupil survey by Wendelborg and Caspersen found that high-achieving pupils felt they were given adequate support and feedback from the teacher. This is not in line with the findings in this study.

The majority of the pupils expressed that they did not know how to develop in English. Although feedback was usually provided to them in teacher-parent-pupil conferences, most of the pupils could not remember what had been said. Moreover, the pupils expressed that feedback needed to be personal and specific to be motivating, which is in line with Hattie's (2007:86) claim that feedback needs to be challenging, specific and goal-oriented to be effective. Although the pupils worked with learning goals in their EFL classes, the majority of the pupils were not motivated by these goals and perceived them as repetitive. Several of the pupils mentioned that they challenged themselves or set goals for their L2 development together with their parents. Yet, some of the parents were not aware of their children's advanced English and did not engage in their children's homework. Thus, some of the pupils in the study were at risk of not knowing how to develop and were not given adequate feedback and support on how to.

The majority of the parents believed their children were not sufficiently challenged in their EFL classes or in their homework. It is somewhat worrying that the majority of the parents had never addressed lack of challenges with the teacher. The parents' information about the lack of adaptation could be important because some of the teachers thought their ALs were sufficiently challenged and several of the pupils did not ask for more challenges. These findings suggest that the collaboration between the teacher and the parents may be important for adapting the instruction for pupils with HLP.

6.4.2. Feeling of relatedness

All of the pupils wanted to be allowed to work with same-level peers. In such homogenous groups, they could use more difficult words, talk about other topics, and would not have to stop and explain. Several of the pupils adjusted their speech to match their peers' level. Because interaction and scaffolding with a capable peer are important for L2 development (Gass, 2003:234; Mitchell and Myles, 2004:160; Vygotsky, 1978), homogeneous groups may create a productive learning situation for these pupils (Bailey et al., 2012:43; Idsøe, 2014)

Homogeneous level groups would also make pupils less self-conscious about demonstrating their full capacity because then everybody could show how good they were. It would also help and motivate them to give their best effort, because when other peers sabotage group work, it creates social pressure not to be conscientious about school work. This underlines the importance of a safe learning environment where pupils' differences are valued and accepted by both teachers and peers (Tomlinson, 2014:15).

At the same time, the social interaction within a diverse group was also considered important, and the pupils expressed that it could be fun to work with peers on different levels. The types of social interaction that take place within groups have been found to be a higher predictor of performance than the abilities of the pupils (Bailey et al., 2012). Arguably, the pupils' feeling of relatedness and belonging to their peers (Ryan and Deci, 2000) may therefore be stimulated through working with a variety of peers, grouped according to the aim of the learning activity, the pupils' ability to cooperate, their abilities and interests, or the complexity of the task at hand (Idsøe 2014; Smutney, 2000).

Several of the pupils reported that they had not asked for more challenges because they did not want to upset their peers or teachers. This was most clearly expressed by the pupils in School 1 and 4, who found it unlikely that they could be allowed to do something different than their peers. Considering that Robert and Nora both relied entirely on the

textbook and did not include other reading materials, all of the pupils were expected to do the same. It is therefore likely that doing something different from the rest of the class would expose the ALs negatively to their peers. In contrast, it was natural for the pupils in Schools 2 and 3 to ask their teachers for more challenges, and they were encouraged to do so. In Nina and Beth's classrooms, there were a variety of texts and tasks, materials, and methods⁷⁰. Hence, all the pupils were working with different materials in different ways, arguably making them feel less self-conscious about being different from the average level in the class. In fact, Nina's pupils explained that her teaching was not focused on levels. One may thus argue that Nina's teaching was differentiated so that no groups of pupils were exposed.

The pupils in School 2 were the only ones who described their teacher in exclusively positive terms. They felt lucky to have her, described her as personal, kind, interested, and creative. She did not make a fuss about mistakes they made in the classroom, thus arguably creating a low-anxiety classroom (cf. Krashen, 1982). When the ALs struggled with a challenge, they felt supported and cared for by Nina. Interestingly, they accepted and even sympathized with her when she had to give them repetitive homework. These findings support the argument that feeling supported and cared for by the teacher and peers is central for pupils' willingness to accept classroom values (Ryan and Deci, 2000:64).

6.4.3. Feeling of autonomy

A worrying finding was that the majority of pupils expressed that topics discussed in their EFL classes were of little or no relevance to their lives. In fact, the majority of the pupils could not recall having discussed a topic they had found interesting and that made them curious. Relevance has been found to be an aspect of autonomy of particular importance in children's feelings toward and engagement in schoolwork (Assor et al., 2002), also confirmed by pupils with HLP learning in EFL (Akçayoglu, 2015). Not finding relevance in the work at hand may result in withdrawal from academic work, underachievement, and low performance (Farrington, 2012). L2 learners need to have a sense of continuity between what they learn and do in school, who they are, and what they are interested in outside school (Ushieda, 2012:83). This finding thus correlates with Wendelborg and Caspersen's (2016) report, showing that Norwegian pupils who perform on the highest levels perceive school as irrelevant to their lives and future careers

⁷⁰ E.g. station work, online materials, and games.

The pupils addressed lack of relevance in several areas. Firstly, vocabulary related to the textbook texts was not considered to be useful elsewhere. In contrast, the pupils at School 2 selected their own vocabulary by noting down on their computers new and unfamiliar words from the texts they read. Including the pupils in the process of selecting which words to study, makes their learning more personal and meaningful, promotes their appliance of metacognition while reading, and develops their awareness of words (Ruddel and Shearer, 2002). This approach also promotes differentiation, as the pupils may adjust the number and difficulty of words to their individual level.

Further, the textbook texts and tasks were considered childish (pupils School 4) and unrealistic (pupils School 3). For example, although Noah (School 4) was interested in football, the textbook texts about football were “too childlike” and did not feel authentic. The pupils expressed that they wanted to read library books and read about “real stuff” (School 3). The pupils in School 2 commented that they enjoyed their texts because they learned something from them. Sarah (School 2) chose to read authentic English books in her spare-time. The pupils’ need to read texts that felt “real” indicated their linguistic awareness and critical reading (cf. Alber et al., 2005; Idsøe, 2014). Being allowed to read relevant and authentic literature about topics of interest was a need expressed by all of the pupils.

It is also worth noting that interest in the content of the text was considered more important than its level of difficulty. This was also confirmed by the pupils in School 3, who had received more challenging texts after having Beth as a teacher. Although they liked being given challenges, they wished she had known their interests because learning English through topics of interests would have made them engage more in their EFL classes.

Several of the pupils expressed a wish to develop in writing. They wished they could write longer texts, not just sentences. Writing about topics of interest would make them “more inspired to write” (Oliver, School 1). One could argue that the majority of the pupils felt restricted by the writing tasks they were given.

Interestingly, Beth described her pupils as “lazy” and that, when given too much freedom, they would do the minimum of what was required. Her ALs, on the other hand, wished they could write during a whole lesson. They expressed that to write about topics of interest would motivate them to write. Here, the pupils described the nature of intrinsic motivation (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Interestingly, they seemed intrinsically motivated to write and knew how they could be motivated to write more. According to Ryan and Deci (2000), teachers who are autonomy-supportive are able to stimulate both intrinsic motivation,

curiosity, and desire for challenges. Thus, Beth's belief that the pupils needed less freedom in choosing material and topics might negatively influence the ALs' motivation for writing.

It is also worth noting that writing needs to have a function. The English subject curriculum underlines that writing different English texts in different situations where writing is *necessary* (my emphasis), may "stimulate the joy of writing" (Directorate of Education, 2006b:2). Thus, the pupils had a need to feel that what they wrote about would be important and interesting to their readers. Thomas (School 3) explained that when he felt that people were interested in what he wrote, he became motivated to write. To feel that their opinions and interests were valued was strongly related to their motivation to write. The pupils in School 2 expressed that writing an argumentative text about a self-chosen topic was motivating because they could express their opinions. To be able to express and argue one's own opinions about familiar topics is further a competence aim in the English subject curriculum. Because language is a medium for self-expression, self-development and communication (Ushieda, 2012:83), the pupils should be encouraged to write about their own interests and opinions in their L2.

6.5. Limitations of the study

The study is limited in several ways. Firstly, the small selection of participants means that its findings cannot be generalized about the entire population of teachers or pupils with HLP. Therefore, only tentative conclusions and impressions about Norwegian EFL teachers' differentiation practices and the experiences of their pupils with HLP can be drawn.

Further, the study obtained data through a single research tool: interviews. Other research tools, such as observations of EFL lessons, might have given valuable information about the interaction between the teachers and the pupils. However, using more methods and participants to add data to this study was not possible due to time constraints and the scope of the thesis. However, the triangulation of data (Maxwell, 2009:245) from both teachers, pupils and parents strengthens the validity of this study (see section 4.7).

Another limitation of the study is that the participants knew the selection criteria for why they were targeted. It is possible that they may have responded in line with their knowledge of themselves as an "advanced learner", or being a teacher or parent of one. However, because there are no tools for identifying pupils with HLP, and thus no way to

select them anonymously, the selection process for this study needed to be open and transparent because the teachers needed to know which pupils to select.

It is further possible that the pupils would not have addressed or believed they needed any advanced adapted teaching had they not been informed that they were considered advanced learners. However, several of the pupils seemed to be uneasy when talking about their own high abilities because they did not want to “brag” (School 1) and they often modified their answers so as not to come across as someone who complained. Further, several of them had not expressed that they needed more challenges because they did not want to upset their teacher or peers. Thus, one may argue that by allowing the pupils to know why they were selected, access to richer data became available; the dilemma of some of the pupils addressing themselves as high achievers was reduced because the researcher (and thus the teacher) had done this for them.

Despite the limitations listed above, it is believed that the teacher, pupil and parent interviews provided sufficient data to justify the tendencies pointed out in the discussion.

6.5 Implications and recommendations

Based on the reviewed literature, previous research, and the findings of the current research, this section presents some recommendations and possible implications for the teaching of EFL in relation to pupils with HLP in Norwegian primary schools.

To begin with, knowledge about the needs of pupils with HLP, and competence in how to differentiate EFL teaching to accommodate for them, needs to be addressed on a political and systematic level. Firstly, teacher education programs and professional in-service courses for teachers need to prepare EFL teachers for how to adapt their EFL teaching for pupils with HLP in the EFL classroom. Although all of the teachers in this study were qualified to teach English, the majority felt their education had not prepared them well enough to be EFL teachers. Their EFL adaption practices differed significantly and some practices were clearly more effective and appropriate than others.

Further, it seems necessary for administration staff to acknowledge, gain knowledge of, and put pupils with HLP on the agenda in professional discussions and teacher staff meetings. Schools should aim to create a professional culture where competence in appropriate and effective differentiation for all pupils is reflected in the planning, conducting, and evaluation of teaching. The administration should therefore organize time for in-service

courses for teachers and set aside time for them to reflect, try out, and evaluate teaching strategies aimed at pupils with HLP. The findings in this study suggest that the professional culture is a main driving force for decisions and priorities made by the teachers.

Moreover, EFL teachers need to develop competences and strategies for assessing their pupils with HLP in the EFL classroom. They need to assess their pupils from their potential rather than achievement. Thus, they should not base their assessment on the pupils' ability to reproduce or memorize knowledge (e.g. vocabulary tests or reading comprehension questions), but rather from a range of characteristic traits, such as rapidness in understanding new concepts, linguistic awareness, large vocabulary, and interest in the English language.

The findings of this study further suggest that pupils with HLP want and need to be challenged. However, relevance and interest in the work at hand are extremely important aspects of their motivation to engage with schoolwork in their EFL classes. It is therefore recommended that EFL teachers carefully consider the texts, tasks and materials presented to their pupils with HLP, and that they should not rely on the textbook to do this for them. Teacher-chosen texts should be chosen for their appropriateness and relevance and need to be accompanied with tasks that allow pupils to apply higher-order thinking skills. Pupils should also be allowed to choose texts they find challenging, interesting and relevant from a wide range of genres. To stimulate these pupils' writing, it is further recommended that EFL teachers provide opportunities to write in a range of genres, such as argumentative and narrative texts. To expand their vocabulary, the pupils with HLP may be allowed to select their own vocabulary from texts they read, or to use familiar vocabulary in creative ways, such as to find the synonyms and antonyms of these words. The pupils should further be provided with opportunities for rapid progression, they should be allowed to skip tasks they already master, and they should be given meaningful work when finished with their tasks.

Lastly, the findings in this study suggest that many pupils with HLP do not work productively and freely in mixed level groups. They spend much time explaining and adjusting their speech in order to use less advanced words because they do want to confuse their peers. They also describe the social pressure of not appearing as proficient speakers or coming across as conscientious about schoolwork. It is therefore recommended that pupils with HLP be given opportunities to interact and practice their skills with peers on the same level.

7. Conclusion

This thesis has focused on pupils with higher learning potential (HLP) in English as a foreign language (EFL) intermediate classes (grades 5 to 7) in four Norwegian schools. The study aimed to find out whether the Norwegian intermediate EFL teachers adapted their instruction to accommodate for their pupils with higher learning potential, and if so, how they adapted their instruction to accommodate for these pupils. It also aimed to find out how the pupils experienced their EFL instruction.

The first two aims referred to the teachers' understanding of the concept of adapted instruction, their perception and assessment of pupils with HLP, and if and how they planned and carried out their teaching to accommodate for these pupils. The third aim referred to how the pupils experienced their teachers' teaching practices and was considered important to supplement the first two since pupils' experiences could throw light on the quality and appropriateness of the adapted instruction (Haug, 2011:51).

The study was qualitative and the data was obtained from semi-structured interviews with four EFL teachers from different primary schools and three to four high-achieving pupils in each of their classes. One of the schools was targeted through the researchers' knowledge about this school's awareness of pupils with HLP. The pupils, 13 in total, were interviewed in four group interviews. In addition, the pupils' parents were interviewed through an online interview.

The study showed that, although the teachers acknowledged that their pupils with HLP needed adapted instruction, they varied in the extent to which they adapted their EFL instruction to accommodate for these pupils. The teachers expressed that factors such as lack of focus on these pupils from the administration, being alone with large classes, lack of teaching resources, and lack of opportunities to reflect on practices with colleagues, made the task of adaption difficult and challenging.

The majority of the teachers did not feel that the administration put pupils with HLP on the agenda or provided opportunities for collegial discussions on how to adapt for these pupils. The target school differed significantly from the others in this regard, where the administration did put adapted instruction on the agenda on a regular basis and provided the teachers with time to discuss, suggest methods, and evaluate these in teacher staff meetings.

Another finding was that the teachers' perceptions of how a pupil with HLP behaves in the EFL classroom influenced whether or how they adapted their instruction to

accommodate for them. This finding was based on the teachers' descriptions of the pupils in focus. The majority of the teachers expected the pupils with HLP to be intrinsically motivated, work efficiently and fast, and to ask for more challenges on their own accord. These expectations led to teaching practices where the pupils were expected to finish their work fast and efficiently so that they could be given new challenges. The expectations of the pupils being intrinsically motivated also led to the assumption that the pupils would initiate and ask to be given more challenges if they needed them.

The study showed that all the teachers based their teaching on the textbook, although to various degrees. Whereas two of the teachers varied their teaching and made use of other materials, such as additional books and online resources, the other two relied entirely on the textbook and did not make use of other texts. All of the pupils confirmed the expectation that a teaching approach where the textbook was the only medium of teaching would not provide appropriate adaption for the pupils in focus. All of the pupils had experienced this practice either in their previous or in their current classes. When all of the pupils were expected to read the same texts, this practice left them with a feeling that they did not learn anything. The pupils in the classes where this approach was the current practice were highly concerned about not progressing and developing their L2 skills. Because the textbook texts were easy and quickly read through, and the related workbook tasks were often based on reading comprehension questions, the pupils felt restricted both in their reading and in their writing. Individual reading aloud of the homework texts also restricted their oral English capacity, as they wished they could be allowed to talk more freely. Moreover, these pupils also expressed strong negative feelings about the EFL instruction and sometimes dreaded their EFL classes.

Another main finding was that the majority of the pupils were mostly challenged in terms of quantity and not quality. This finding was based on the teachers' practices of giving the pupils more of the same work. When the pupils were finished with a task, they were given new sheets of grammar tasks, they read longer texts (not necessarily more advanced texts) from the textbook, they were expected to write more sentences, and to read and translate longer paragraphs of the homework texts. Such practices were described negatively by the pupils and several of them had refrained from asking for more challenges because it resulted in more of the same work, which they also described as repetitive and demotivating.

The study showed that although the pupils were generally very motivated to engage with the English language outside of school, the majority of them perceived their EFL classes as little relevant, meaningful, or motivating. Lack of motivation in their EFL classes was found to be a major concern for many of the pupils in focus. They related how topics of

discussion, texts, vocabulary, and tasks were only marginally relevant or interesting. In fact, they considered being interested in a text and its relevance as more important than its level of difficulty. They expressed a wish to be allowed to read longer and authentic texts and to discuss topics they found personally interesting. Regarding their writing, they wished they could be allowed to write longer texts, both narrative and argumentative, about self-selected topics.

The study revealed that the majority of the pupils did not explicitly know how to develop their English skills. Furthermore, the weekly learning goals were not motivating because they were considered to be repetitive. Several of the pupils therefore, sometimes together with their parents, had to take intuitive steps to continue their L2 development. However, because some of the parents were not aware of their children's high level of English skills, and did not engage in their homework, the study revealed that some of the pupils were at risk of not being given support in their L2 development by either their teacher or their parents.

The study also showed that the pupils in focus wished to be allowed to work with adequate level peers. Several of the pupils adjusted their speech and used less advanced vocabulary when working in groups of mixed levels. The social pressure to not appear conscientious about school work was also a challenge for some of the pupils. They also spent much time explaining to their peers, but they nevertheless acknowledged that working in mixed level groups could also be stimulating.

The study also showed that the pupils in the target school appeared to be more motivated than the pupils in the other schools. This finding was based on the fact that they looked forward to their EFL classes and that topics of focus in their EFL classes were perceived as interesting and made them curious. They appreciated the varied teaching they received and that they were allowed to choose from a range of texts and tasks. Furthermore, they emphasized their feeling of being cared for by their EFL teacher. Thus, the study suggests that pupils with HLP can be appropriately accommodated for in mixed level EFL classes.

One of the main contributions of the thesis is that it has addressed a relatively new field of research in a Norwegian context. Since no previous studies on pupils with HLP have been carried out in a Norwegian EFL context, little has been known about how they are accommodated for by their EFL teachers. The necessity to conduct research on how these pupils can be accommodated for in an adequate manner is of high relevance for the educational sphere. Furthermore, studying this phenomenon from the perspectives of both

teachers, pupils and parents, has added to its validity. By including the pupils' voices in the study, the thesis has contributed to giving insight into these pupils' life worlds. Teachers and administrators may better address the needs of pupils with HLP if more knowledge about them is produced. By including a target school in this study, the thesis has also provided insight into practices that may be used to model the teaching of pupils with HLP in Norwegian EFL classes.

In terms of future research, more knowledge about the EFL development of pupils with HLP in Norway is needed. As it is argued that young language learners are more open and enthusiastic to learning new languages (Hasselgren, 2000), it would be interesting to study even younger pupils than the ones in this study. Considering that the youngest pupils in this study appeared to be the least motivated in their EFL classes, the EFL adaption practices for pupils with HLP in grades 1 to 4 would be important to research. As Flemmen (2006:186) points out, "And it is when observing children being totally uninterested or obviously suffering from boredom at an age when their desire for learning is at its greatest that one has to ask how much "damage" is done to them in relation to English" (my translation). Flemmen's study of very young EFL learners did not include the pupils' voices, which would have been interesting in order to understand why they were bored and uninterested. The pupils' feelings and attitudes towards their EFL classes in their early years of schooling are likely to influence their future motivation for developing their English (Gardner, 2012). Thus, research into EFL motivation in the elementary grades, including the pupils' voices, seems highly relevant.

Quantitative methods, such as questionnaires, would also make it possible to research on a larger scale how EFL teachers accommodate for their pupils with HLP. Asking EFL teachers how they assess these pupils could give valuable information about what level of proficiency EFL teachers look for in their pupils with HLP and whether they believe these pupils need advanced adaption of teaching beyond what the textbook offers. It could also reveal to what extent the teachers are aware of the possibility of pupils with HLP being low achievers.

In Norway, adapted instruction for pupils with HLP has been viewed elitist and thus a hindrance for equality (Børte et al., 2016; Idsøe 2014; Smedsrud and Skogen, 2016). Needless to say, not to provide one group of pupils the same support as other groups of pupils is not treating pupils equally. Next, adapted instruction for pupils with HLP in the inclusive classroom may contribute to increased learning outcomes for all pupils (Eyre, 2001; Meld. St. 21, 2016-2017; VanTassel-Baska and Wood, 2010). It would therefore be interesting to

research how instruction practices adapted for pupils with HLP affect other groups of pupils. If such practices are in fact to the benefit of *all* pupils, they would be highly relevant for the Norwegian educational sphere.

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Appendices

Appendix 1a: Teacher Interview guide- English version

Teacher profile

1. For how long have you been teaching English?
2. What is your higher education in English? How many credits do you have?
3. How well prepared do you feel your education has made you to teach English?
4. How many classes do you teach in English?
5. For how long have you taught your current pupils?
6. Do you plan your English teaching together with other colleagues?
7. What is important for you in the planning of your lessons?

The advanced learners:

1. How do you recognize which pupils are advanced EFL learners?
2. What do they need to develop their English skills, in your experience?

The understanding of adapted instruction

1. Do you and your colleagues/leaders talk about how to adapt instruction at your school?
2. How do you understand this concept and how does it affect your teaching?
3. Do you and your colleagues/leaders talk about the advanced learners specifically at your school?
4. How do you adapt your English teaching to include the advanced learners?
5. Do you have strategies for assessing their pre-knowledge?
What do these strategies involve (tools and methods)? (i.e Pre-knowledge tests about topics, achievement tests, logs?)
6. What works well and what challenges do you face when adapting your teaching for the advanced learners?
7. Are you familiar with- and make use of their out-of-school English practices and interests?
8. Do you use parents as a source in assessing their knowledge and out-of-school practices?

Adapted EFL instruction

1. What do you include in a typical English lesson?
2. Which text book do you use and how satisfied are you with it?
3. How does it work for the advanced learners?
4. Do you make use of other material/resources to accommodate for the advanced learners? If so, what?
5. How do you help the advanced learners in developing their reading skills?
6. How do you help them developing their writing skills?
7. How do you help them in developing their speaking skills?
8. How do you help them in developing their listening skills?
9. How do you help them in developing their vocabulary?
10. What do the advanced learners do if they finish a task before the others?
11. What types of homework do they get and what is important for you in your planning of their homework?

Motivation

1. What, in your experience, motivates the advanced learners for learning English?
2. What may demotivate them, in your experience?
3. Do you expect more of them than that of the other pupils? In what ways? Do you tell them?
4. How do you give them feedback?
5. Are the advanced learners given the possibility to choose material and methods?
6. How are the advanced learners working together with their peers in your EFL classes?
7. Are the pupils given the possibility to give you feedback on the teaching? If so, how? (i.e. logs, questionnaires)
8. Are the advanced learners involved in setting their own learning goals?

Wishes

1. What would help you to accommodate for your advanced learners?
2. Is there anything else you would want to add?

Appendix 1b: Teacher Interview guide- Norwegian version

Lærer profil

1. Hvor lenge har du undervist engelsk?
2. Hvilken utdanningsbakgrunn har du I engelsk? Hvor mange studiepoeng har du?
3. Hvor godt føler du utdannelsen din har forberedt deg på å undervise engelsk?
4. Hvor mange klasser underviser du I engelsk?
5. Hvor lenge har du undervist elevene du har nå?
6. Planlegger du engelsk sammen med andre kolleager?
7. Hva er viktig for deg I planleggingen av engelsktimene dine?

The advanced learners:

1. Hvordan gjenkjenner du hvilke elever som er advanced learners I engelsk?
2. Hva trenger de for å utvikle seg I engelsk, etter din erfaring?

Forståelsen av tilpasset undervisning:

1. Snakker du og kollegaene dine/ledelsen om hvordan å tilpasse undervisningen på skolen deres?
2. Hvordan forstår du dette konseptet of hvordan påvirker det undervisningen din?
3. Snakker du og kollegaene dine/ledelsen spesifikt om the advanced learners på skolen deres?
4. Hvordan tilpasser du engelskundervisningen din for å inkludere the advanced learners?
5. Har du strategier for å måle deres før-kunnskaper? Hva innebærer disse strategiene? (verktøy og metoder)? (feks. kartleggingsprøver før et emne, andre prøver, logger?)
6. Hva fungerer godt og hvilke utfordringer opplever du når du tilpasser undervisningen din for the advanced learners?
7. Er du kjent med, og benytter deg av praksiser og interesser de har i engelsk utenfor skolen?
8. Bruker du foreldrene som kilde for å kartlegge kunnskapen og praksisene deres utenfor skolen?

Tilpasset EFL undervisning

1. Hva inkluderer du i en typisk engelsktime?

2. Hvilken tekstbok bruker du og hvor fornøyd er du med den?
3. Hvordan fungerer den for the advanced learners?
4. Benytter du deg av annet materiell/ressurser for å imøtekomme the advanced learners?
Isåfall, hva?
5. Hvordan hjelper the advanced learners med å utvikle leseferdighetene sine?
6. Hvordan hjelper the advanced learners med å utvikle skriveferdighetene sine?
7. Hvordan hjelper the advanced learners med å utvikle de snakkeferdighetene sine?
8. Hvordan hjelper the advanced learners med å utvikle de lytteferdighetene sine?
9. Hvordan hjelper the advanced learners med å utvikle ordforrådet sitt?
10. Hva gjør the advanced learners hvis de blir ferdige med en oppgave før de andre?
11. Hva slags type lekser får de og hva er viktig for deg når du planlegger lekser?

Motivasjon

1. Hva, etter din erfaring, motiverer the advanced learners for å lære engelsk?
2. Hva kan demotiverer dem, etter din erfaring?
3. Forventer du mer av dem enn av de andre elevene? På hvilke måter? Forteller du dem dette?
4. Hvordan gir du dem feedback?
5. Får the advanced learners mulighet til å velge materiell og metoder?
6. Hvordan jobber the advanced learners sammen med sine medelever I dine engelsktimer?
7. Får elevene mulighet til å gi deg feedback på undervisningen? Isåfall, hvordan? (F.eks. logger, spørreskjema)
8. Er the advanced learners involvert i å sette sine egne læringsmål?

Ønsker

1. Hva ville hjelpe deg med å kunne imøtekomme dine advanced learners?
2. Er det noe annet du ønsker å ta opp eller legge til?

Appendix 2a: Pupil interview guide- English version

Profile

1. How do you use English in your sparetime?
2. Are there things you want to improve in your English language?
3. What skill do you practice the most? Reading, listening, speaking or writing? Why?
4. What skill do you practice the least? Why?
5. What skill you find the most difficult in English?
6. What do you do when you meet an English word you do not understand?

Adapted EFL instruction

1. What does a typical English lesson look like?
2. What do you think about the English textbook?
The texts? The task?
3. What is the difficulty level of English in the English lessons?
4. What do you feel about the level of difficulty of your English homework?

Motivation

1. Do you give your best effort in your English classes?
2. Do you discuss topics that interest you or make you curious?
3. Are you allowed to choose literature and texts yourself?
4. Are you allowed to write about things that are important to you? What is important to you?
5. Can you describe how you feel about your English classes using 3 words? Why these words?
6. How do you work with your peers in the English classes?
7. What is needed for group work to be fun and educational?
8. Are you sometimes allowed to work with peers on your level?
If yes: How do you find this?
If no: What would that be like?
9. How do you feel if you make a mistake in the classroom?
10. Do you think your teacher expects you to not make any mistakes?
11. Do you think your peers expect you to not make any mistakes?

Support from the teacher

1. Do you know how to improve your English skills?
2. Are you told how you can develop your English skills?
3. Do you believe your teacher knows your actual knowledge of English?
4. Do you believe your teacher knows how you engage with English at home?
5. Are you motivated by the learning goals?
6. Have you ever told your teacher that the level of English is too easy?
7. What do you feel about being praised?

Wishes

1. How may English best be learned at school?
2. What is needed for you to develop your English skills at school?
3. What would it mean to you to learn English like that?

Appendix 2b: Pupil interview guide- Norwegian original version

Profil

1. Hvordan bruker du engelsk i fritiden din?
2. Er det noe du ønsker å forbedre i engelskspråket ditt?
3. Hvilken ferdighet øver du mest på? Lesing, lytting, snakking eller skriving? Hvorfor?
4. Hvilken ferdighet øver du minst på? Hvorfor?
5. Hvilken ferdighet syns du er vanskeligst på engelsk?
6. Hva gjør du når du møter et engelsk ord du ikke forstår?

Adapted EFL instruction

1. Hvordan ser en typisk engelsktime ut?
2. Hva syns du om engelskboka?
Tekstene? Oppgavene?
3. Hvordan er vanskelighetsgraden på engelsken i engelsktimene?
4. Hva føler du om vanskelighetsgraden i engelskleksene?

Motivation

1. Gir du din beste innsats i engelsktimene?
2. Diskuterer dere emner som er interessante eller får deg nyskjerrig?
3. Får du velge litteratur og tekster selv?
4. Får du skrive om ting du som er viktige for deg? Hva er viktig for deg?
5. Kan du beskrive hva du føler om engelskfaget med 3 ord? Hvorfor disse ordene?
6. Hvordan jobber du med medelevene dine i engelsktimene?
7. Hva er nødvendig for at gruppearbeid skal være gøy og lærerikt?
8. Får du noen ganger jobbe med andre medelever på ditt nivå?
Hvis ja: Hva syns du om det?
Hvis nei: Hvordan ville det vært?
9. Hva tenker du om du gjør en feil i klassen?
10. Tror du læreren din forventer at du ikke gjør noen feil?
11. Tror du medelevene dine tenker at du ikke gjør noen feil?

Støtte fra lærer

1. Vet du hvordan du kan forbedre engelsken din?

2. Blir du fortalt hvordan du kan utvikle deg i engelsken din?
3. Tror du læreren din vet hva du faktisk kan i engelsk?
4. Tror du læreren din vet hvordan du bruker engelsk hjemme?
5. Blir du motivert av læringsmålene?
6. Har du noen gang fortalt læreren din at nivået på engelsken er for lett?
7. Hva føler du om å få skryt?

Ønsker

1. Hvordan kan engelsk best læres på skolen?
2. Hva trengs for at du skal utvikle deg i engelsk på skolen?
3. Hva hadde det betydd for deg å lære engelsk på den måten?

Appendix 3a: Parent online interview guide- English version

Thank you for participating in the study! If you have any questions about the interview, do not hesitate to contact me!

1. What is the code of your child that you received in your email?
2. How does your child engage with the English language at home? (E.g. YouTube, books, music, gaming, etc.)
3. What would you say motivates your child to learn English?
4. How are you engaged in your child's English language development? (E.g. providing literature, conversations, reading, homework, etc.)
5. Do you have the impression that your child is sufficiently/appropriately challenged in his/her English lessons? Why/Why not?
6. Do you have the impression that your child is sufficiently/appropriately challenged in his/her English homework? Why/Why not?
7. Do you know what feedback your child is given by his/her English teacher?
8. Do you have the impression that your child is motivated and makes a great effort to develop his/her English at school? Why/Why not?
9. Do you have the impression that your child is motivated and makes a great effort in general at school? Why/Why not?
10. Do you have the impression that the English subject matches well with your child's interests? Why/Why not?
11. Do you have suggestions as to methods or topics you believe your child would be motivated to work with in his/her English classes?
12. Have you ever suggested to the teacher that your child needs other or more challenges in the English subject?
If no: Why?
If yes: What did you suggest and how did it change the situation?
13. What is needed for your child to develop his/her English skills at school, as you know her/him?
14. What do you think your child would suggest him/herself?
15. Your child was interviewed by me at school today. What did he/she feel about being interviewed and talking about being a good English learner?
16. If you have other things you wish to address or add, please write them here:

Appendix 3b: Parent online interview guide- Norwegian original version

Takk for din deltakelse i denne studien! Hvis du har noen spørsmål vedrørende intervjuet, ikke nøl med å ta kontakt med meg!

1. Hva er koden på barnet ditt som du fikk i emailen?
2. Hvordan engasjerer barnet ditt seg med det engelske språket hjemme? (F.eks. YouTube, bøker, musikk, gaming, osv.)
3. Hva vil du si motiverer barnet ditt for å lære engelsk?
4. Hvordan er du engasjert for at barnet ditt skal utvikle seg i det engelske språket? (F.eks. skaffe litteratur, samtaler, lesing, lekser, osv.)
5. Har du inntrykk av at barnet ditt får nok/passende utfordringer i engelsktimene?
Hvorfor/Hvorfor ikke?
6. Har du inntrykk av at barnet ditt får nok/passende utfordringer i engelskleksene?
Hvorfor/Hvorfor ikke?
7. Vet du hvilke tilbakemeldinger barnet ditt får av engelsklæreren sin?
8. Har du inntrykk av at barnet ditt er motivert og legger ned stor innsats for å utvikle seg i engelsk på skolen?
Hvorfor/Hvorfor ikke?
9. Har du inntrykk av at barnet ditt er motivert og legger ned stor innsats for å utvikle seg faglig på skolen generelt?
Hvorfor/Hvorfor ikke?
10. Har du inntrykk av at engelskfaget på skolen passer godt til interessene barnet ditt har?
Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke?
11. Har du forslag til arbeidsmåter eller emner i engelsk du tror barnet ditt ville bli motivert til å jobbe med i engelskfaget?
12. Har du noen gang foreslått til lærer at barnet ditt trenger andre eller flere utfordringer i engelskfaget?
Hvis nei: hvorfor ikke?
Hvis ja: hva foreslo du og hvordan endret det situasjonen?
13. Hva er nødvendig for at barnet ditt skal utvikle seg i engelsk på skolen, slik du kjenner han/henne?
14. Hva tror du barnet ditt ville foreslå selv?

15. Barnet ditt ble intervjuet av meg på skolen. Hva syntes han/hun om å bli intervjuet og om å snakke om det å være god i engelsk?
16. Dersom du har andre opplysninger eller betraktninger, kan du skrive dem her:

Appendix 4: Letter of consent to the teacher

Informasjonsskriv til læreren

Bakgrunn og formål

Jeg skriver masteroppgave om de sterke elevene i engelskfaget og hvilke praksiser, erfaringer, motivasjon og strategier de har for å utvikle seg i engelsk på skolen og hjemme. I forskningen vet vi lite om de sterke elevene i engelskfaget og denne studien vil være den første i Norge som fokuserer spesifikt på denne elevgruppen på mellomtrinnet. All data vi får om denne elevgruppen vil derfor være viktig i utarbeidelse av strategier for å legge til rette for at disse elevene får utvikle potensialet sitt på skolen.

Jeg ønsker å tilnærme meg disse elevene fra tre perspektiver:

- 1) elevenes egne erfaringer/praksiser
- 2) lærerens erfaringer/praksiser og
- 3) foreldrenes/foresattes erfaringer/praksiser

Studien baseres på intervju med engelsklærere på mellomtrinnet og gruppeintervju med 4-5 elever på enten 5, 6 eller 7 trinn. Temaet for lærerintervjuet vil være lærernes erfaringer med de sterke elevene i engelskfaget og hvilke utfordringer som ligger i å tilpasse undervisningen for disse.

Hva innebærer det å være med i dette forskningsprosjektet?

Deltakelse i denne studien innebærer at du:

Velger ut 3-4 av de sterkeste elevene på trinnet du underviser (evt i samarbeid med kollegaer). Alle elevene trenger ikke nødvendigvis være dine egne elever, men må være fra samme trinn. De sterkeste elevene velges ut på bakgrunn ut av dine observasjoner, kartleggingsprøver og/eller ut fra ferdigheter som viser at elevene trenger mer utfordringer enn resten av klassen, f.eks. ved at tekstboken er for lett e.l. Denne studien handler om elever som lærer engelsk som fremmedspråk. Elever som har engelsk som sitt første- eller andrespråk, vil altså ikke passe til elevgruppeintervjuet.

Elevene får så et informasjonsskriv som de skal vise hjemme og få underskrift på av foreldre/foresatte. Informasjonsskrivet har du fått på mail.

Når du har samlet alle underskriftene inn, gir du beskjed via mail til meg, slik at jeg vet at alt er i orden før intervjudagen.

Intervjuet vil vare ca. 45 min. For at jeg skal kunne fokusere mest mulig på det vi snakker om, bruker jeg en lydopptaker under samtalen vår. Du kan velge om du vil at intervjuet skal foregå på engelsk eller norsk. Du vil ikke har noe etterarbeid knyttet til deltakelsen i dette prosjektet.

Hva skjer med informasjonen?

Alle opplysninger vil bli behandlet konfidensielt og alle opplysninger som angår personer eller navn på skolen vil anonymiseres. Du, elevene, foreldrene og skolen vil med andre ord være helt anonyme i denne studien. Lydopptaket skal ikke høres av andre enn meg og vil sammen med personopplysninger og datamateriale bli slettet etter prosjektets slutt (mai 2018).

Frivillig å delta

Du står helt fritt til å trekke deg fra deltakelsen uten å oppgi grunn når som helst i studien. Alle opplysninger om deg vil i så fall bli slettet. Ditt bidrag vil likevel være svært viktig for studien og jeg håper derfor du vil være villig til å delta. Dersom du har noen spørsmål, må du ikke nøle med å ta kontakt med enten meg eller veilederne mine.

Med vennlig hilsen,
Marie Kvammen
Epost: mh.kvammen@stud.uis.no

Veiledere:
Trine Mathiesen Gilje, 51834593, trine.m.gilje@uis.no
Ion Drew, 51831094, ion.drew@uis.no

Appendix 5: Letter of consent to the parents and pupils

Informasjonsskriv til elever/foresatte

Forespørsel om deltakelse i forskningsprosjekt:

Til eleven:

Jeg er student ved Universitetet i Stavanger og ønsker å forske på hva elever som har store evner i engelskfaget gjør og trenger for å utvikle seg i engelsk? For å finne ut av det ønsker jeg svært gjerne å få snakke med deg og høre hva du tenker om dette. Jeg kommer til å spørre om hvordan du bruker engelsk både hjemme og på skolen. Jeg kommer også til å spørre deg om hva du gjør for å utvikle deg i engelsk hjemme og på skolen?

Hvis du sier ja, vil det si at du blir med i et gruppe-intervju sammen med noen andre elever fra trinnet ditt som også er sterke i engelsk. Alt kommer til å skje på skolen og det er helt frivillig å delta. Du vil være helt anonym i denne studien, det vil si at jeg ikke bruker navnet ditt eller skolen sitt navn når jeg skriver denne oppgaven.

Til foreldre/foresatte:

Jeg er masterstudent i Lesevitenskap (Literacy) ved Universitetet i Stavanger og skriver om sterke elever (advanced learners) i engelskfaget. Det finnes lite forskning om sterke elever i engelskfaget og om hva deres praksiser, erfaringer, strategier og motivasjon for å utvikle seg i engelsk er. Dette vil være den første studien som spesifikt fokuserer på disse elevene på mellomtrinnet i Norge. Jeg ønsker å tilnærme meg disse elevene fra tre perspektiver:

- 1) elevenes egne erfaringer/praksiser
- 2) skolens erfaringer/praksiser og
- 3) foreldrenes/foresattes erfaringer/praksiser.

Jo mer vi vet om denne elevgruppen, jo mer vet vi hva som trengs for at de utvikler potensialet sitt for engelsk. Derfor håper jeg at du/dere vil la barnet deres tillatelse til å delta i dette forskningsprosjektet. Jeg har fått tillatelse fra skolens ledelse til å gjennomføre prosjektet og alt vil foregå i skoletiden.

Hva innebærer det for barnet å være med i dette forskningsprosjektet?

En deltakelse i dette prosjektet innebærer at barnet ditt/deres deltar i et gruppeintervju (3-4 stk) som vil omhandle elevenes praksiser og erfaringer, strategier og motivasjon for å lære engelsk hjemme og på skolen. I gruppeintervjuet vil de kunne dele erfaringer, diskutere og brainstorme sammen. For å kunne konsentrere meg mest mulig om samtalen, vil jeg bruke lydopptaker til dette.

Hva innebærer det for deg/dere å være med i dette forskningsprosjektet?

En deltakelse for deg/dere i dette prosjektet innebærer å fylle ut et kort spørreskjema som du/dere vil få som link på mail. Ved å trykke på linken, kommer du/dere direkte til spørreskjemaet. I mailen får

du en kode til barnet ditt som du skriver inn i skjemaet. På denne måten er barnet gjenkjennbart for meg. Alle opplysninger vil likevel være helt anonyme i studien. Det er mulig for eleven å delta, skulle du/dere ikke ønske å delta. Ditt/deres bidrag vil likevel være svært viktig for studien og jeg håper derfor du/dere vil være villig til å delta.

Hva skjer med informasjonen?

Alle opplysninger vil bli behandlet konfidensielt og alle opplysninger som angår personer eller navn på skolen vil anonymiseres. Både du/dere, elevene og lærer/skolen vil med andre ord være helt anonyme i denne studien. Den tekniske gjennomføringen av spørreskjemaundersøkelsen foretas av et databehandlerprogram som heter *SurveyXact*, som er tilknyttet Universitetet i Stavanger. Spørreskjemaet lagres uten tilknytning til e-post/IP-adresse. Lydopptaket skal ikke høres av andre enn meg og vil sammen med personopplysninger og datamateriale bli slettet etter prosjektets slutt (mai 2018).

Det er helt frivillig å delta og deltakerne kan når som helst trekke seg fra prosjektet uten å oppgi grunn. Dersom du har noen spørsmål, må du ikke nøle med å ta kontakt med enten meg eller veilederne mine.

Med vennlig hilsen,
Marie Kvammen
Epost: mh.kvammen@stud.uis.no

Veiledere:
Trine Mathiesen Gilje, 51834593, trine.m.gilje@uis.no
Ion Drew, 51831094, ion.drew@uis.no

Klipp av lappen og lever til skolen:

.....
Ja, jeg har mottatt informasjon om forskningsprosjektet og jeg samtykker i at barnet mitt,
.....(navn), kan delta.

Ja, jeg har mottatt informasjon om forskningsprosjektet og samtykker i å fylle ut et spørreskjema via link som mottas på mail:

Min mailadresse: (Vennligst skriv tydelig)

Signatur:

Appendix 6: NSD Approval



Ion Drew
Postboks 2557 Ullandhaug
4036 STAVANGER

Vår dato: 07.11.2017

Vår ref: 56462 / 3 / LAR

Deres dato:

Deres ref:

Vurdering fra NSD Personvernombudet for forskning § 31

Personvernombudet for forskning viser til meldeskjema mottatt 08.10.2017 for prosjektet:

56462

*En kvalitativ studie av hva elever med store evner i engelsk på mellomtrinnet gjør og trenger for å utvikle seg i engelsk
Forskningsmetode vil være semi-strukturerte intervjuer med fire lærere som underviser engelsk på mellomtrinnet tillegg til fire gruppeintervju med 4-6 elever fra mellomtrinnet. Itillegg vil det benyttes anonyme spørreskjema (via google skjema) til foreldre. Prosjektet er en del av en masteroppgave i Literacy ved UIS.*

Behandlingsansvarlig

Universitetet i Stavanger, ved institusjonens øverste leder

Daglig ansvarlig

Ion Drew

Student

Marie Kvammen

Vurdering

Etter gjennomgang av opplysningene i meldeskjemaet og øvrig dokumentasjon finner vi at prosjektet er meldepliktig og at personopplysningene som blir samlet inn i dette prosjektet er regulert av personopplysningsloven § 31. På den neste siden er vår vurdering av prosjektopplegget slik det er meldt til oss. Du kan nå gå i gang med å behandle personopplysninger.

Vilkår for vår anbefaling

Vår anbefaling forutsetter at du gjennomfører prosjektet i tråd med:

- opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet og øvrig dokumentasjon
- vår prosjektvurdering, se side 2
- eventuell korrespondanse med oss

Vi forutsetter at du ikke innhenter sensitive personopplysninger.

Meld fra hvis du gjør vesentlige endringer i prosjektet

Dersom prosjektet endrer seg, kan det være nødvendig å sende inn endringsmelding. På våre nettsider finner du svar på hvilke [endringer](#) du må melde, samt endringskjema.

Opplysninger om prosjektet blir lagt ut på våre nettsider og i Meldingsarkivet

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

Vi har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet på nettsidene våre. Alle våre institusjoner har også tilgang til egne prosjekter i [Meldingsarkivet](#).

Vi tar kontakt om status for behandling av personopplysninger ved prosjektslutt

Ved prosjektslutt 01.05.2018 vil vi ta kontakt for å avklare status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Se våre nettsider eller ta kontakt dersom du har spørsmål. Vi ønsker lykke til med prosjektet!

Marianne Høgetveit Myhren

Lasse André Raa

Kontaktperson: Lasse André Raa tlf: 55 58 20 59 / Lasse.Raa@nsd.no

Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering

Kopi: Marie Kvammen, mariekvammen@gmail.com

Personvernombudet for forskning



Prosjektvurdering - Kommentar

Prosjektnr: 56462

DATAINNSAMLING

Det skal registreres personopplysninger gjennom personlige intervjuer med lærere og gruppeintervjuer med elever. Det skal videre gjennomføres en spørreundersøkelse med elevenes foreldre som utvalg.

TAUSHETSPLIKT

Det legges opp til at læreren skal velge ut deltakere basert på elevenes prestasjoner i faget. Personvernombudet forutsetter at elevenes foreldre samtykker til deltakelse før studenten får tilgang på deres opplysninger. Vi forutsetter videre at læreren omtaler elevene på en måte som ikke gjør identifiserbare, hverken direkte eller indirekte. Læreren bør i forkant av intervjuet minnes om sin taushetsplikt og at relativt få bakgrunnsopplysninger kan være identifiserende innenfor et lite utvalg.

INFORMASJON OG SAMTYKKE

Utvalget informeres skriftlig om prosjektet og samtykker til deltakelse. Informasjonsskriv til både lærere og elever/foreldre er hovedsakelig godt utformet. Vi ber imidlertid om at det tilføyes opplysninger om gjennomføringen av spørreundersøkelsen i informasjonsskrivet til foreldre, slik at det kommer klart frem at gjennomføringen ikke vil være anonym og at SurveyXact vil være databehandler. For forslag til tekst, henviser vi til personvernombudets nettsider:

http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvernombud/hjelp/forskningsmetoder/nettbaserte_sporreundersokelser.html

BARN I FORSKNING

Merk at når barn skal delta aktivt, er deltakelsen alltid frivillig for barna, selv om de foresatte samtykker. Barna bør få alderstilpasset informasjon om prosjektet, og det må sørges for at de forstår at deltakelse er frivillig og at de når som helst kan trekke seg dersom de ønsker det.

DATASIKKERHET

Personvernombudet legger til grunn at forsker etterfølger Universitetet i Stavanger sine interne rutiner for datasikkerhet. Dersom personopplysninger skal sendes elektronisk eller lagres på privat pc /mobile enheter, bør opplysningene krypteres tilstrekkelig.

DATABEHANDLER

SurveyXact, som er tilknyttet Universitetet i Stavanger, er databehandler for prosjektet. Personvernombudet legger til grunn at Universitetet i Stavanger har inngått skriftlig avtale med SurveyXact om hvordan personopplysninger skal behandles, jf. personopplysningsloven § 15.

PROSJEKTSLUTT

Forventet prosjektslutt er 01.05.2018. Ifølge prosjektmeldingen skal innsamlede opplysninger da anonymiseres.

Anonymisering innebærer å bearbeide datamaterialet slik at ingen enkeltpersoner kan gjenkjennes. Det gjøres ved å:

- slette direkte personopplysninger (som navn/koblingsnøkkel)
- slette/omskrive indirekte personopplysninger (identifiserende sammenstilling av bakgrunnsopplysninger som f.eks. bosted/arbeidssted, alder og kjønn)
- slette digitale lydopptak

Vi gjør oppmerksom på at også databehandler (SurveyXact) må slette personopplysninger tilknyttet prosjektet i sine systemer. Dette inkluderer eventuelle logger og koblinger mellom IP-/epostadresser og besvarelser.

Appendix 7: Translations of quotes from interviews conducted in Norwegian

School 1:

Quote 32, Tina:

Fordi noen ganger er det et lett ord, men så kommer jeg ikke på hvordan jeg uttaler det og da blir det helt stille og så må liksom læreren hjelpe meg og jeg føler ikke at jeg trenger egentlig hjelp.

Quote 33, Tina:

Jeg har ikke akkurat fått noen sånne tips av læreren min eller noe sånn, men pappa pleier hjelpe meg til å si at nå må du gjøre det for å få det bedre (...) Han sier 'Ok, nå skal vi bare snakke engelsk'.

Quote 35, Oliver:

Det kan faktisk forandre hvordan du tenker om Engelsk (...) [Når] du får være god, når du ser fram til [engelsktimene] får du lyst å følge mer med (...) fordi nå kommer jeg til å lære noe nytt.

School 2:

Quote 36:

Jo mer samvittighet du har jo mer utfordrende er det. For da vet du hvis du deler antall minutter på antall elever så vet du egentlig hvor lite du faktisk har igjen til hvert eneste barn. Og så skulle du bare ønske at det var så veldig mye mer.

Quote 39:

Jeg prøver å undervise engelsk på en litt... ny måte, skal jeg si det?, Sånn vanlig, slik som jeg husker jeg ble undervist i engelsk og som jeg vet en del lærere gjør her er jo mye sånn, at vi sitter i timen, leser en tekst sammen og så er det gloseprøve og så gjør noen sånne grammatikkoppgaver og så er året sånn. Med engelsk. Og det blir fort kjedelig. For det første blir det kjedelig for de flinke, men så blir det også dørgende kjedelig for de som ikke liker engelsk- de blir ikke motivert. Så jeg prøver egentlig å variere undervisningen veldig mye så mye jeg klarer.

Quote 40:

Ofte hvis vi jobber med (...) noe (...) alle skal jobbe med, men på sitt nivå, så forventer jeg jo at noen kanskje klarer å produsere fem setninger, men hvis en av disse kommer og leverer, så sier jeg 'nei, du klarer jo mer, du kan gå dypere inn i det, her er noen små feil, du kan lage litt lengre setninger, endre adjektiv'. Og det vet de at jeg forventer av dem.

Quote 42:

Flere voksne i klasserommet. Enkelt og greit. Tilpasset opplæring er ikke vanskelig i teorien. Men når du kommer i klasserommet med 30 individer med 30 individuelle starter på dagen. Av og til sluker noe deg og så gikk halve timen.

Quote 44:

Sarah: Det var gøy.

Martin: Ja.

I: Var det gøy?

All: Ja.

Martin: *Veldig*.

Filip: Lag din egen debatt om et emne.

I: Hvorfor var det gøy?

Sarah: Fordi du kunne snakke om meningene dine.

Lisa: Du kunne på en måte velge og så kunne du skrive om hva *du* mente og hva andre folk mente.

Quote 46:

Kristian: Alle måtte lese den samme teksten.

I: Hvordan var det da?

Maren: Da måtte alle lese Step 2.

Kristian: For de som ikke kunne det så godt så brukte de kanskje 15 minutter på å lese teksten.

Mens de som var skikkelig gode kunne lese den på 3 minutter.

Maren: Og da fikk vi liksom [høre] du må lese den en gang til fordi det er ikke sikkert at du fikk med deg alt, liksom.

School 3

Quote 47:

Så du ser det i den forstand at de har et godt språkøre, de er veldig motivert, de forstår hvorfor engelsk er viktig, og de får det godt til, både skriftlig og muntlig (...) Og de sterke [elevene] har ofte en indre motivasjon for å gjøre det enda bedre.

Quote 48:

Det er veldig mange ting du som lærer i skolehverdagen må gjøre før du kan gi de sterke en utfordring. Så dessverre føler jeg at den blir nedprioritert. At du har kanskje gjøremål som du må gjøre før du får overskudd til å på en måte ta tak i de sterke. Så de gangene jeg veldig tydelig har gitt de sterke ekstra utfordringer er hvis de har bedt om det, eller foreldrene har bedt om det (...), men utover det har det vært veldig lite.

Quote 52:

Men det som ofte er vanskelig er at de gir aldri uttrykk for (...). Det er ingen her i 5 trinn som på en måte veldig tydelig har gitt meg beskjed om at: 'jeg vil ha mer engelsk', selv om de sikkert sitter og tenker det. Så jeg er helt sikker på at de sterke elevene, de ønsker sikkert mer, mer utfordringer, men i min praksis så skjer det veldig sjelden at de får disse utfordringene de ønsker. Så (...) de er med i den ordinære undervisningen og de gjør leksene, men det blir liksom ikke noe mer enn det, dessverre.

Quote 53:

Per nå har jeg ingen god løsning på hvordan jeg kan utfordre dem i timene og når det kommer til lekser. Så det eneste jeg ser for meg er bare at jeg selv må finne opp noe. Finne en tekst som ligger et nivå høyere. (...) For det er så lett å tilpasse leksene til de svakeste ved å gi dem mindre (...). Men for de sterke så har jeg ingen god løsning på det. Men jeg tror det henger mye sammen med tid. Jeg føler personlig at jeg, jeg vet om disse elevene, og jeg har liksom dårlig samvittighet overfor at jeg ikke utfordrer dem nok, i både lekser og i timene, men samtidig så handler det om at det krever en god del å finne nytt materiale til dem utover tekstboken.

Quote 56:

Ingrid: Det er litt kjedelig siden, eller det er jo kjekt da, men liksom, jeg føler ikke jeg får brukt engelsken min nok.

I: Hvordan da?

Ingrid: fordi at det er litt sånn, det er mange ord jeg kan fra før av og alle ordene vi leser og sånn. Så det er på en måte kjedelig.

I: Dere andre da?

Ella: Vi jobber med sånn at vi skriver i hefter og sånn, med *a* og *an*, og det kan jeg veldig godt fra før av så det blir liksom å sitte der og så skrive noe du kan. Så blir jeg veldig fort ferdige med sidene.

Quote 57:

Ella. Det er litt sånn *a* og *an* og litt sånn forskjellig.

Ingrid: Det er lett. Jeg synes det er litt barnslig.

I: Hvorfor da?

Ingrid: For det er ting jeg allerede kan. Og så er det kjipt å gjøre det på nytt igjen.

Ella: Du må jo pugge da, men det *er* jo litt gøy å prøve nye ting og.

Noah: Men jeg syns jo det spørs på oppgaven. Men det er fortsatt barnslig. Det kommer an på hva som er i teksten og sånn.

Quote 58:

Noah: Sånn førsteklasseaktig. Når (*navn på læreren) setter på cden så klarer jeg ikke høre på stemmen. Den er fæl.

I: Hvorfor det?

Noah: Den er dum.

Ella: Akkurat som at det er en førsteklasing som leser

I: Snakker barnslig?

Noah: Og tregt.

Quote 59:

Ella: Det hadde vært gøy. Fordi noen ganger må du stoppe opp og forklare de andre. Hvis det er på likt nivå så blir det kanskje enklere (...). Det blir for mye forklaringer av og til.

Ingrid: Og da kunne du snakke om litt andre ting. For hvis du snakker med de andre så sier du ting som de ikke vet og så spør de og sånn. Av og til vet jeg ikke hva det er på norsk.

School 4

Quote 63:

Jacob: Da var alle på samme nivå.

Thomas: Ingen lærte noe spesielt.

Liam: Da var det egentlig bare alt likt på alle, liksom.

Jacob: Nei, vi fikk ikke utfordringer av det.

I: Så med [Beth] har det kommet mer utfordringer?

Elevene: Ja.

Thomas: Og det er bra.

I: Betyr det at dere liker engelsk bedre nå enn før da?

Elevene: Ja

Liam: Mye mer

I: Hvorfor?

Jacob: Nå får vi litt vanskeligere [stoff]. Og når du får litt vanskeligere [stoff], litt mer utfordring, så blir du mer motivert. Du sier inni deg at 'dette skal jeg klare'. Fordi du pusher deg selv til å klare det.

Quote 64:

Thomas: Jeg fikk alt rett utenom to feil
I: Hva tenker du om de feilene?
Thomas: Den ene var vanskelig og den andre var en slurvefeil.
I: Hadde du øvd?
Thomas: Nei
I: Hvor mye måtte du ha øvd for å få alt rett?
Thomas: Sett igjennom det to ganger så hadde jeg fått alt rett
I: Hvorfor øvde du ikke?
Thomas: Kom ikke på det (...) Men jeg pleier å få ganske mye rett uten å øve

Quote 66:

Thomas: De har uinteressant info.
Jacob: Ja.
I: Innholdet?
Alle: Ja.
I: Hvordan da?
Jacob: Drager.
Liam: Drager og dinosaurer og sånn.
I: Hva ville dere lest om da?
Liam: Litt sport, mer virkelige ting.
Thomas: Biblioteksbøker.

Quote 67:

Liam: Det hadde vært kjekkere.
Jacob: Underholdningsrikt.
Liam: Og da hadde jeg gjort mer og på en måte.
T og J: Ja.
Thomas: Da hadde jeg liksom, på en måte, levd meg mer inn i det.
I: Hadde det det?
Liam: Ja.
Jacob: Blitt mer motivert.

Quote 69:

Jacob: Det hadde motivert meg mye mer.
Thomas: Mye mer motiverende.
I: Hvorfor det?
Jacob: Fordi når du får noe du har interesse for, motiverer det mye bedre. Samme med sport også, hvis du er interessert i det, og du kjenner folk som også er interessert i det, da blir du mye mer motivert til å holde på med det.
I: Hva gjør du hvis du er motivert i engelsk?
Thomas: Da vil du bare ikke slutte, på en måte.
Jacob: Ja.
Liam: Du vil bare fortsette til du er ferdig.
Thomas: Liksom fortelle alt ut.