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Author: Olena Yurchenko	

Supervisor: Associate Professor Rebecca Anne Charboneau Stuvland

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Reflections on multicultural education: Teachers' experiences of teaching multicultural classes

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Abstract

This thesis investigates teachers' experiences of and attitudes towards multicultural education and its implementation in Norwegian schools. A further aspiration of this paper is to examine the extent to which teachers adapt their teaching methods to meet the needs of their minority students. The study also aims to examine whether the teachers take into consideration the knowledge of student's background while choosing the texts and other visual materials for EFL teaching in Norwegian secondary schools. The paper draws on theoretical framework and research on culture and its relation to language, multicultural education- its main principles and dimensions, culturally responsive teaching, and multicultural literacy. The research was qualitative, based on six interviews with lower secondary and upper secondary school teachers, which took place in February 2020. Audio recordings of the interviews and field notes were used to collect data.

Based on the qualitative interviews, the present thesis has four main findings. First, the findings of the paper indicated the teachers lacked knowledge and understanding of the concept multicultural education. Second, the findings of the present study indicated that the teachers did not use different teaching methods and strategies to address their minority students. The participants of the present study believed that differentiating their teaching methods to the needs of any particular student group, would make them feel different and excluded. Thus, the participants addressed everyone as "We, Norwegians" or they tried to see and adjust their teaching methods to the needs of an "average student". Third, the interviews with the teachers revealed that they did not make use of their students' backgrounds and did not implement multicultural content into their classroom practices. The participants of the study stated that they tried to think about their students' backgrounds when choosing the materials for the classes. However, by claiming so, the teachers mostly referred to excluding certain material, which they found inappropriate to be taught in culturally diverse classes (e.g., gun ownership, gay marriage, religious holidays).

Fourth, all the participants of the present study emphasized the importance of exposing minority students to the materials they would not necessarily respond positively to, which would help them to broaden their horizons and develop respect and tolerance towards various conflicting points of views. The participants reported that, exposing students to various conflicting cultural expressions was a great possibility for arranging class debates and critical discussions. At the same time, none of the participants felt prepared or qualified to lead these discussions and tried to avoid controversial topics which might have led to the discussions the teachers were not prepared to

have. Due to the fact that the students' cultural capital was disregarded and ignored, this resulted in a cultural mismatch between the teachers and minority students', which led to several incidents of minority students' negative response to the materials used in class. Thus, this research study argues that a need for a multicultural approach to teaching English, which will acknowledge and exploit the cultural capital of all students in the class.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The increase in immigration and mobility has become an everyday phenomenon in the modern world. As the societies around the world are getting ethnically, culturally and linguistically diverse, so do the school classrooms. In Norway, according to Statistics Norway (further SSB), by the end of 2016, there were 102 900 immigrant children and Norwegians born to immigrant parents in Norwegian secondary schools. This makes up 16% of the total number of secondary school pupils (SSB, 2017).

During the past two decades growing diversity in classrooms has led many scholars to question whether a traditional monocultural approach to teaching, which aims to reflect one reality and usually favors a dominant group of a society (Nieto & Bode, 2018), has been sensitive enough towards the needs of minority students. The concept multicultural education arose as a rejection of the dominant monocultural traditional education, and it is defined as a reform "whose major goal is to change the structure of educational institutions so that male and female students, exceptional students, and students who are members of diverse, racial, ethnic and cultural groups will have an equal chance to achieve academically in school" (Banks, 1999, p. 1). Since then, the field of multicultural education has drawn attention of many scholars around the globe (e.g., Banks, 2010; Ford and Quinn, 2010; Aktoprak et al., 2017; Özen, 2015; Delk, 2017; Jenkins-Martin, 2014).

During the past decade, multicultural education has become an interesting research topic in the Norwegian educational context. The concept has drawn attention of many scholars: Pihl (2010), Iversen (2016), Jortveit (2014), Chinga- Ramirez (2015), Tosic (2012), Dahl and Krulatz (2016), and Krulatz and Torgersen (2016) among others, have contributed to a better understanding of multicultural and multilingual matters in the Norwegian Education system. The main objective of multicultural education, which is equality in education for all the students, regardless of their backgrounds, is also one of the core principles of Norwegian education. As stated in the section the "Core Curriculum" of the Norwegian National Curriculum (*LK06*):

> The point of departure for schooling is the personal aptitude, social background, and local origin of the pupils themselves. Education must be adapted to the needs of the individual. Greater equality of results can be achieved by differences in the efforts directed towards each individual learner. Breadth of skills is realized by stimulating their unique interests

and abilities. Individual distinctiveness generates social diversity - equal ability to participate enriches society (Core Curriculum, 1994).

Thus, the present study aims to investigate how the Norwegian schoolteachers ensure equality for all students in the EFL classrooms.

1.2 Main objectives and research question

The research question of the present study is: How do Norwegian lower- and upper secondary school teachers address minority students in the EFL classroom? The aim of this study is to gain insight into teachers' perspectives, attitudes and experiences with facilitating education to the needs of minority students in the EFL classroom. Thus, the study seeks to address the following sub-questions:

- How is the concept of multicultural education understood by the Norwegian lower- and upper secondary school teachers?
- What teaching methods and strategies do the teachers use to teach multicultural classes?
- How and to what extent do teachers integrate the minority students' cultures into teaching English in multicultural classes?
- To what extent do teachers take into consideration the knowledge of student's background while choosing the texts and other visual materials for EFL teaching in Norwegian secondary schools?
- What are the possible challenges of using the mainstream curriculum materials in culturally diverse classes?

1.3 Motivation

Being both a multilingual and multicultural person, I have always been curious about the role of culture and language in one's personal development. Negotiating my identity between two cultures I grew up with (Ukrainian and Russian), and, as a young adult, trying to integrate into a third one (Norwegian), has been and still is an interesting experience. Being a multicultural student both in Ukraine and in Norway, has made me wonder whether the school, and my teachers in particular, were able to see all of me: with all my linguistic and cultural capital. Today, working as a teacher

in a Norwegian lower secondary school, I ask myself: Am I able to see all the potential of my minority students? Do I provide them with all the possibilities and "tools", necessary to exploit their language and cultural capital, so that they develop both personally and academically?

Thus, my aspiration is to contribute to the research of multicultural and multilingual pedagogy, by investigating teachers' perspectives and experiences with facilitating education to the needs of minority students in Norway. Further, the present study aims to examine what shapes teachers' choice of materials for the ESL classes, as well as to what extent teachers take students' backgrounds into account while choosing materials for the classes. I would also like to contribute to the development of teachers' knowledge on teaching minority students, as well as to demonstrate that there is a need for including the courses in multicultural education in teacher-training programs in Norway.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

The present study consists of seven chapters. First, the Introduction, which presents the background of the study, research question and sub-questions, as well as motivation for the project. Chapter two provides the theoretical dimensions of the study. It consists of three sections: Key terms, Multicultural Education, and Multicultural Literacy. The first section presents the concepts Culture, Culture and Language, and Multiculturalism. The second section focuses on the concept of Multicultural education- its core principles and dimensions. The final section will draw attention to the concepts multicultural-, critical- and sociocultural literacy. Chapter three provides information about the Norwegian educational context, focusing on the principles of equality of opportunity and culture incorporation, proclaimed in various Education Documents, such as the Norwegian Education Act, The National Curriculum and English language curriculum. Chapter four presents the literature review of previous research conducted in the Norwegian context. The fifth chapter presents methodology and research design that were applied in the present study. Chapter six lays out the findings of the study, obtained from the interviews with the teachers. Chapter seven analyses and discusses the results of the study through the lens of theoretical framework and in relation to the literature review. The final chapter provides a brief summary of the findings and previously presented relevant theory, as well as directions for further research.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to present the relevant theory and to draw attention to the research studies conducted within the field of multicultural education. The chapter is subdivided into three sections. The first section centers on the key concepts which will be frequently referred to in this study: Culture, Culture and Language, and Multiculturalism. The second section of the chapter focuses on the concept of Multicultural education- its core principles and dimensions. Further, the section provides a comparison of multicultural education and culturally responsive teaching, a concept which sometimes is used interchangeably with the concept Multicultural education. The final section will draw attention to the concepts multicultural-, critical- and sociocultural literacy.

2.2 Key terms of the study

2.2.1. Culture

The term Culture is immensely broad and complex and has been much debated within social anthropology. Apte (1994), among others, claims that despite numerous attempts to define the term, there was no commonly agreed definition of the concept's nature. Reinforcing Apte's (1994) claim, Eagleton (2000) in his book "The Idea of Culture" states that culture "... is said to be one of the two or three most complex words in the English language and the term which is sometimes considered to be its opposite- nature- is commonly awarded the accolade of being the most complex of all" (Eagleton, 2000, p. 1).

Today there exist various definitions of the term. Lebrón (2013), for instance, defines culture as "a set of values and beliefs, or a cluster of learned behaviors that we share with others in a particular society, giving us a sense of belonging and identity" (p. 126). A similar definition of the term is presented by Walscham (2002) who defines culture as a set of shared norms, symbols, values in any society. A culture, according to the scholar, is then based on humankind's thoughts, knowledge, ideas and imagination. Similarly to Lebron (2013) and Walscham (2002), Koshy (2017) claims that culture is embodied "in what we do, what we think and what we think others are thinking. Culture is created by humans and imbibing culture enables one to live amicably and socially in a society. It expands the range of activity one can do" (p. 23). A similar interpretation of culture is provided by Banks (2010) who claims that "the essence of a culture is not its artifacts, tools, or other tangible cultural elements but how the members of the group interact, use, and

perceive them" (p. 8). Culture, then, is not an innate or inherited quality, but rather it is learned through the participation in all spheres of social life. This point is reinforced in Erickson's (2010) understanding of culture as a social construction. The scholar claims that culture "constructs us and we construct it" (p. 37).

Compared to the scholars mentioned above, who treat culture as a single domain, Risager (2003), as cited in Krakhellen (2011) offers a different understanding of the concept, distinguishing between three forms of culture: individual, collective and aesthetic culture. The first form refers to the individual's personal cultural development. The second form of the culture, the collective form, is further divided by Risager (2003) into a hierarchical and a nonhierarchical type, where the first type focuses on cultured and uncultured individuals, while the second view acknowledges different groups of individuals having their own cultures. The aesthetic form of culture refers to art, music and literature (Risager 2003, p. 85-87) and it is, according to Krakhellen (2011), the most often referred type of culture today.

The notion of culture is of particular interest for the present study, which aims to investigate how it influences the way the teachers' address their minority students, as well as how minority students perceive teachers' instructions and the materials used in class. As it has been discussed in Krakhellen (2011), culture plays an important role in the EFL classrooms, as language learning is embodied in a cultural context. The scholar claims that in the EFL classrooms, one's own individual culture is influenced by the interaction of the collective culture and target culture, which usually happens through aesthetic culture. Additionally, Li (2013) argues that in the context of multicultural education the term culture refers not only to students with diverse cultural backgrounds but also how different individuals interpret knowledge, traditions, values and behaviors (p. 25).

2.2.2. Culture and language

Since the 1990s there has been great interest towards the interaction between culture and language (Risager, 2006, p. 1). This interest has been expressed in several research studies, which focused on how different cultures were expressed via various discourses, and how language contributed to the development of one's cultural identity.

Numerous scholars argue for the close connection between language and culture. The following assumption has often been used for the argument that language learning should happen

together with learning about the culture of a target-language country (Risager, 2006, p. 9). Supporting this claim, Byram introduces the term language-and-culture (Byram, et al, 1994) and Galisson (1994) talks about langue-culture. Nelson Brooks (1960), among others, emphasized the strong bond between language and culture. In his book "Language and Language Learning" he claims the following:

> Language is the most typical, the most representative, and the most central element in any culture. Language and culture are not separable; it is better to see the special characteristics of a language as cultural entities and to recognize that language enters into the learning and use of nearly all other cultural elements (Brooks 1960, p. 85, cited in Krakhellen, 2011, p. 14).

> While some scholars (e.g. Kramsch, 1998; Lund, 2007), agreed to Brooks' view of language and culture as two inseparable dimensions, there were some scholars that criticized this approach. As an example, Risager (2006) claims that the unity between a specific language and its cultural context is "a construction that makes no sense" (Risager 2006, p. 171). Krakhellen (2011), on the other hand, questions Risager's (2006) approach and assumes that her statement is too strong, as there always will be a bond between culture and language, since all the languages are used in a context (p. 14). He further claims that this unity of language and its cultural context is of particular importance in culturally diverse classes, where "English might be the one language all the students share" (Krakhellen, 2011, p. 14). Similar ideas could be found in Ragnhild Lund's study (2007) who expresses the idea of the interrelationship between language and culture and states that language teaching should always include teaching about target culture, otherwise, "it would bring us back to the times when language learning was seen as a question of learning the forms of the language, and not a question of learning language use in contexts in the real world" (Lund 2007, p. 40, cited in Krakhellen, 2011, p. 15). Krakhellen (2011) supports Lund's (2007) point of view and emphasizes its importance in multicultural education, since all sorts of students' communication are embedded in a certain cultural context.

2.2.3. Multiculturalism

Krakhellen (2011) states that the term "multicultural" is frequently used, however, it is rarely defined. Kramsch (1998) defined the term as a "political term used to characterize a society composed of people from different cultures or an individual who belongs to several cultures" (p. 129).

For Song (2010) "multiculturalism" is as a political idea, a way of responding to challenges of rapidly growing cultural diversity. Song (2010) further states that the term is often perceived as a rejection to the "melting pot" concept, according to which minority population is expected to assimilate, "melt into" the majority culture. Instead, the minority cultures can maintain their cultural practices, identities and other distinctive features (Song, 2010).

Compared to the scholars mentioned above, Berry and Ward (2016) suggest that multiculturalism is a polysemous term and its definitions differ across societies. Berry, Kalin and Taylor (1977), as cited in Berry and Ward (2016, p. 441-442), offered three different meanings of the concept. Multiculturalism is, first of all, a demographic fact: due to globalization and increase in immigration, ethnic, linguistic, cultural and religious diversity is a commonplace around the world. Secondly, one can view multiculturalism as an ideology, referring to the individuals' or groups' beliefs about being accepted or rejected in diversity. Berry and Ward (2016) further develop this definition of multiculturalism, claiming that multiculturalism as an ideology refers to "an appreciation of diversity and support for cultural maintenance in conjunction with a recognized need for mutual accommodation that promotes equitable participation" (p. 447). The third definition of multiculturalism is that of multiculturalism as policy. In this sense, the concept refers to the governments' public policies and programs, aiming to promote and support diversity within society, as well as to "facilitate equitable participation for heterogeneous ethnocultural groups" (Berry & Ward, 2016, p. 444).

The author of this study finds Kramsch' (1998) definition of the term as the most encompassing and suited for the purposes of the project. Kramsch' (1998) can contribute to understanding of a multicultural class as a society composed of students coming from different cultures, as well as students who belong to several cultures.

2.3 The principles of multicultural education
2.3.1. The definition of the concept multicultural education

According to Tosic (2012), there is no commonly accepted definition of the term "multicultural education", as scholars usually bring in their own understanding and perception of this term (p. 11). According to Bennet (2003) multicultural education is the education based on the democratic values in a pluralistic society. Bassey (1997) defines multicultural education as "an attempt to instill pride in minority consciousness by incorporating people of color into the curriculum- an

affirmation of self-worth" (p. 233). Golnick and Chinn (2009), when defining multicultural education, state that due to the fact that all the pupils are different, they cannot be taught in the same way. Pupils are different in terms of their age, ethnicity, race, religious beliefs, skills and experiences. The scholars further state that "Multicultural education is a concept that incorporates the diversity of students and equality in education. Equality ensures that students are provided the same access to the benefits regardless of their group membership" (Golnick & Chinn, 2009, p.4). The scholars argue that multicultural education is an educational strategy, which incorporate all the students' cultural backgrounds in order to provide adequate teaching instructions. Thus, it will contribute to the promotion of the concepts of culture, diversity and equality into the school environment (Gollnick & Chinn, 2009, p. 4).

Unlike the scholars mentioned above, who define multicultural education merely as a transformation of classrooms practices, Banks (2010) defines multicultural education as a process and an educational reform which aims "to change the schools and other educational institutions so that students from all social-class, gender, racial, language, and cultural groups will have an equal opportunity to learn" (p. 4). By claiming so, Banks (2010) emphasizes that multicultural education usually is understood primarily as the integration of content related to various cultural, ethnic, and religious groups. This view of multicultural education, according to Banks (2010), is insufficient, because "teachers who cannot easily see how their content is related to cultural issues will easily dismiss multicultural education with the argument that it is not relevant to their disciplines" (p. 20). He argues that claiming cultural content to be irrelevant may be used as an argument against implementing multicultural education. The scholar claims that math or science teachers, who assume that their subjects are culturally neutral, will not see the need to make use of multicultural education. Banks (2010) concludes that multicultural education could not be reduced to integration of multicultural content only, and he further develops five dimensions of multicultural education: content integration, the knowledge construction process, prejudice reduction, an equity pedagogy, and an empowering school culture and social structure. These dimensions will be presented in the following subsection.

Furthermore, Banks (2010) claims that in order to implement multicultural education, one would need to reform the whole school environment. This requires one to view school as a social system (Figure 1), in which all of its variables are interconnected. This would include "its power

relationships, verbal interaction between teachers and students, culture, curriculum, extracurricular activities, attitudes toward minority languages, testing program, and grouping practices. The school's institutional norms, social structures, cause–belief statements, values, and goals must be transformed and reconstructed" (Banks, 2010, p. 23). Banks (2010) claims that reforming one of the school's variables would not be sufficient, for instance, changing the institutional materials would be of limited use among the teachers with racial or ethnic prejudice. Therefore, according to Banks (2010), it is, first and foremost, essential to provide teachers with knowledge of various ethnic or cultural groups, as well as democratic values and attitudes.
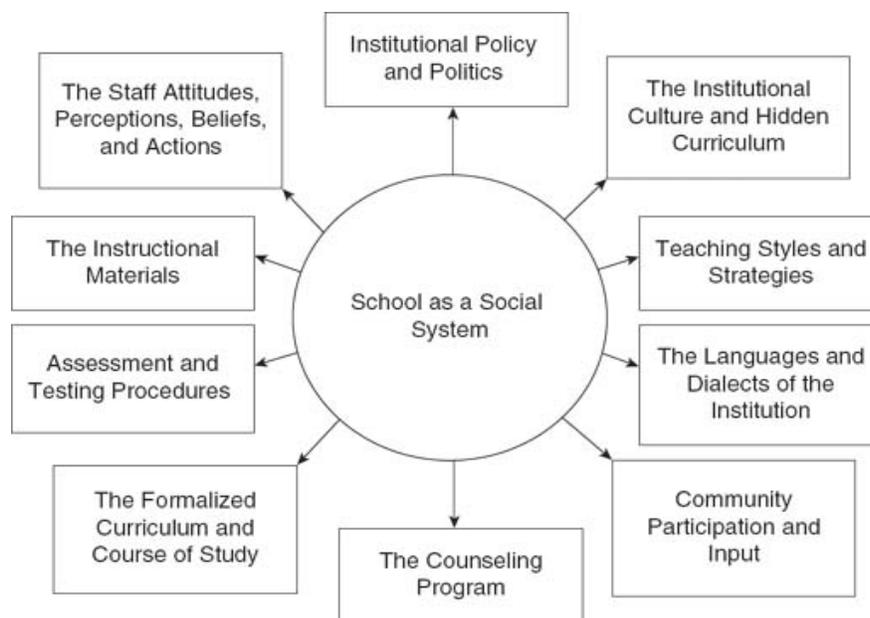
Figure 1: School as a social system. Source: Multicultural education: Issues and Perspectives, (Banks, 2010, p.23)

The view of multicultural education as a total transformation of the entire school system is supported by Koshy (2017) who claims also that multicultural education should pervade all spheres of school environment. The scholar claims that multicultural education is a student-centered approach, whose main principles are:

> …[to recognize] that students' experience should be placed at the centre of education; curriculum and that classroom experience must lead a student to an experience wherein the student can understand and perceive the world without prejudices and biases. Students must

be provided freedom of expression and thought so that they can critically analyze oppression and power relations in their society. Classroom techniques must be suited to enable this freedom of thought. These goals can only be possible if the staff is culturally competent and unbiased in terms of diversity (Koshy, 2017, p. 23).

Koshy's (2017) definition of multicultural education and its main objectives are of particular interest to the present study, which aims to investigate how and to what extent teachers in Norway implement the main principles of multicultural education. The study also aims to look at whether the teachers provide all students, regardless of their ethnic or cultural backgrounds, with the opportunity to exploit their potential, as well as necessary knowledge and abilities to better the society we live in today.

The opposite of multicultural education is monocultural education (Nieto & Bode, 2018, p. 35). Monocultural education aims to reflect one reality and usually favors a dominant group of a society. Discussing the concept of monocultural education, Nieto and Bode (2018) point out that those, who are responsible for deciding what should be included in the curriculum, usually make choices that are biased by their own life experiences, education and backgrounds. Thus, Nieto and Bode conclude that, because of the fact that the points of view of so many are left out, monocultural education is "an incomplete and dishonest education" (Nieto & Bode, 2018, p.35). Moreover, the scholars view monocultural education as harmful, since it excludes the viewpoints and perspectives of many diverse groups from the pedagogy and curricula-making, as well as it divests all students of multiculturalism, which today is a part of our lives.

2.3.2. Dimensions of multicultural education

Banks (2010) states that multicultural education is a wide concept which includes several dimensions. The dimensions of multicultural education (Figure 2) may be used as a guideline by the teachers who want to enable adequate multicultural education in their classrooms. These dimensions are content integration, the knowledge construction process, prejudice reduction, an equity pedagogy, and an empowering school culture and social structure (Banks, 2010, p. 20).
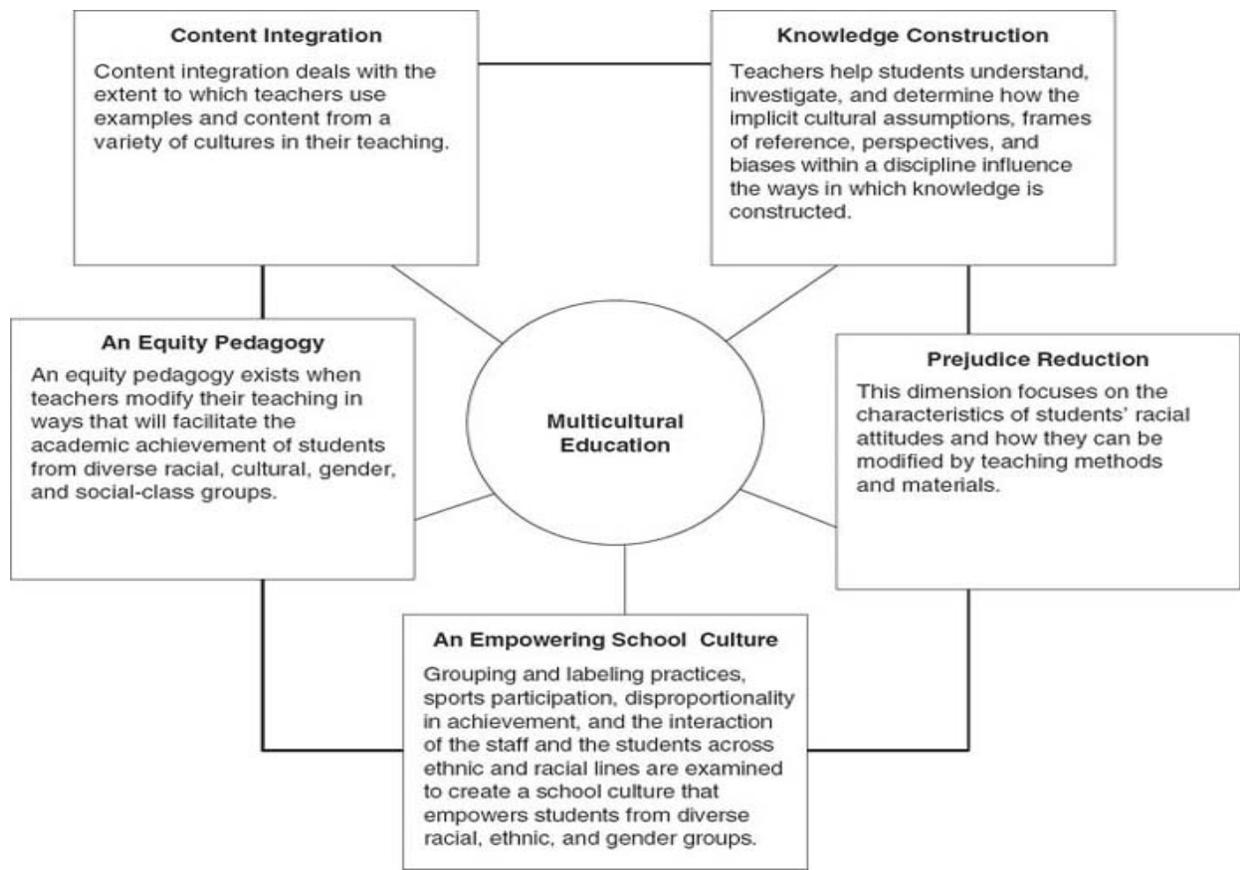
Figure 2: Five Dimensions of multicultural education. Source: Multicultural education: Issues and Perspectives, (Banks, 2010, p.23)

Content integration. Banks (2010) defines content integration as "the extent to which teachers use examples and content from a variety of cultures and groups to illustrate key concepts, principles, generalizations, and theories in their subject area or discipline" (p. 20). Erbaş (2019), discussing the content integration dimension, states that, in order to integrate various backgrounds within the classroom, as well as to secure positive attitudes and relations among the students, teachers should consider the following key questions: "What content should be included in the curriculum to support diversity in the classroom?" and "How should classroom curriculum be designed in order to support intergroup relations between students?" (Erbaş, 2019, p. 146). In answer to these questions, Gravelle (1996), as cited in Tosic (2012), suggests that "the curriculum needs to both motivate and be perceived as relevant for the learners" (Gravelle, 1996, p. 8, in Tosic, 2012, p. 12).

The knowledge construction, according to Banks (2010), describes extent to which teachers help their students "to understand, investigate, and determine how the implicit cultural assumptions, frames of reference, perspectives, and biases within a discipline influence the ways in which knowledge is constructed within it" (p. 20). According to this dimension, teachers should help their students to understand that knowledge is never neutral, as it is shaped by the perspectives, biases and beliefs within the discipline the knowledge emerges from.

The prejudice reduction dimension refers to the lesson activities that help students to develop better understanding and attitudes towards various ethnic, racial and cultural groups. Camicia (2007), as cited in Erbaş, (2019) claims that lesson activities, which focus on equality and mutual respect contribute to increasing understanding and respect towards the racial diversity in students. Therefore, multicultural education contributes to fostering prejudice reduction in the classroom, as it provides students with knowledge and opportunities to question mainstream approaches in various disciplines. By doing so, the students, according to Camicia (2007), will "develop the critical faculties necessary to challenge the hierarchies that serve as tools for prejudice construction and social injustice" (Camicia, 2007, p. 225, cited in Erbaş, 2019, p. 147-148).

Empowering school culture and social structure is defined as "the process of restructuring the culture and organization of the school so that students from diverse racial, ethnic, and social groups will experience educational equality and cultural empowerment" (Banks, 1993, p. 7). Banks (2010) states that implementation of multicultural education requires reformation of the entire school system, and that teachers should form the school culture, taking students' backgrounds into consideration.

Equity pedagogy, according to Banks (2010), exists "when teachers modify their teaching in ways that will facilitate the academic achievement of students from diverse racial, cultural, gender, and social-class groups" (Banks, 2010, p. 22). This dimension emphasizes the importance of adjusting teaching methods and strategies to the needs of minority students, as well as acknowledgment and awareness of various learning styles that are used within different ethnic and cultural groups (p. 22).

2.3.3. Culturally responsive teaching vs multicultural education: main differences and similarities

Culturally responsive teaching or culturally relevant pedagogy is often viewed as the outcome of multicultural education (Jenkins-Martin, 2014; Affagard-Edwards, 2016; Benediktsson et al, 2019). The term was first coined in 1994 by Ladson-Billings, who defined culturally responsive teaching as "a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 382). The main purpose of culturally responsive teaching is to promote equal education for all students, regardless their cultural or linguistic background (Gay, 2018).

This understanding of culturally responsive teaching is reinforced by Ortiz (2012), who claims that the concept is grounded not only on equality, but, rather, on fairness. The purpose of culturally responsive teaching, according to Ortiz (2012) is to identify and acknowledge the fact that "that cultural differences dictate modifications that are responsive to and address said differences" (p. 15). The scholar argues that culturally responsive teaching echoes the main principles of multicultural education, but on a larger scale.

It can be noticed that what is meant to exclusively distinguish culturally responsive teaching, coincides with the definition of multicultural education. For instance, Ortiz (2012) claims that, unlike multicultural education, culturally responsive teaching aims to transform not only the classrooms practices, but all levels of academic arena. However, Banks (2010), defines multicultural education as an educational reform, whose major goal is to transform the entire education system, so that all students, regardless of their cultural or linguistic background, will receive equal opportunities to succeed academically. Furthermore, Nieto and Bode (2018) define multicultural education as "pervasive", meaning that it is not a lesson activity or a subject, rather it is a process and philosophy. Multicultural education, as well as culturally responsive teaching, aims to affect all the spheres of the school life: curriculum, the school environment, the relationships among the teaching staff, students and community (Nieto & Bode, 2018).

Therefore, some scholars use these terms interchangeably, while some acknowledge the slight variations in definition and principles and view culturally responsive teaching as an outcome of multicultural education. Ortiz (2012), for instance, recognizes multicultural education and culturally responsive teaching as separate notions, however, the scholar chooses to use the term "culturally responsive multicultural education", as she believes that it helps to accept and engage students

with culturally diverse backgrounds. Ortiz believes that culturally responsive multicultural educa-tion aims to address the importance of "students' backgrounds, including prior experiences, cul-tural knowledge, and socialization practices" (p. 16).

Based on the research studies discussed in this section (Ortiz, 2012; Hammond, 2017; Chepyator-Thomson and Jepkorir Rose, 2013), it can be argued that multicultural education and culturally responsive teaching are centered in the same core principles of equal education across cultural or linguistic diversity. Both concepts are focused on the same outcome: to acknowledge the impact of student's cultural background on his academic success, to question, problematize or even criti-cize the principles of monocultural education and to call for the reform in both teaching training programs and curricula making. Thus, the author of this study views culturally responsive teaching as a concept that shares the same values with multicultural education, and which essentially is a modified version of multicultural education. Therefore, the terms multicultural education and cul-turally responsive teaching will be addressed as concepts which complement each other, since both are set up towards one common goal: equal education and equal opportunities regardless cultural or linguistic background, race or ethnicity.

2.4 Literacy development in multicultural classes
2.4.1. Multicultural literacy

According to Willis et al (2002), similarly to the concept Multicultural education, there is no com-monly accepted definition of the term multicultural literacy and scholars would usually interpret it from different perspectives. Willis et al (2002) state that the scholars who advocate for multicul-tural literacy usually view the concept as a rejection of literacy as a universal and neutral construct. Instead, the supporters of multicultural literacy claim that culture, economy, history and politics will affect students' literacy development and academic achievement (Willis et al, 2002, p. 1-2).

     Lisa Taylor and Michael Hoechsmann (2012) define multicultural literacy as the one that "is focused on developing a means of measuring cross-cultural awareness, understanding, knowledge and respect as lived relations and processes by encouraging a widening expanse of knowledge framed within an appreciation for the global intellectual heritage of different disci-plines" (p. 3). Diamond and Moore (1997) state that multicultural literacy is a process, rather than occasional cultural celebrations or "adds-on" to the main curriculum and that the concept includes all cultures. The scholars further define multicultural literacy "as a process of linking the cultural

experiences, histories, and languages that all children bring to school with language learning and academic learning that take place in the school" (Diamond & Moore, 1997, p. 7). The latter definition is of particular interest for the present study, which aims to investigate the extent to which Norwegian secondary school teachers take their students' cultural and linguistic capital into account in the EFL classroom.

2.4.2. Critical literacy

Another perspective on the concept of multicultural literacy is that of critical literacy. Critical literacy, according to Willis et al. (2002), has its origin in critical theory, and puts emphasis on historic evaluation of the dominant literacy practices and approaches. Compared to the definitions mentioned in the previous section, multicultural literacy through the lens of critical approach, would refer to one's ability to question and confront hegemonic literacy practices, social injustice and inequity in education (Willis et al., 2002, p.3).

Similarly, when defining multicultural literacy, Banks (2003) emphasizes the importance of the development of critical skills in addition to basic literacy. For Banks (2003), multicultural literacy consists of "the skills and ability to identify the creators of knowledge and their interests, to uncover the assumptions of knowledge, to view knowledge from diverse ethnic and cultural perspectives, and to use knowledge to guide action that will create a humane and just world" (p. 3). Citing Paulo Freire (1970), Banks (2003) claims that we should teach students to read the word and the world. In order to read the word, one would need the basic literacy skills, while reading the world requires one to develop critical skills. Reading the world, according to Freire (1970) and Banks (2003), means to question and criticize the existing and institutionalized knowledge, in order to "make the world a just place in which to live and work" (Banks, 2003, p. 3). In this sense, Freire's (1970) "reading the world" is what Banks (2003) defines as multicultural literacy.

A similar definition of the concept is to be found in Esau's (2014) study. The scholar claims that in today's global world it is not sufficient to acquire basic literacy skills, such as reading and writing. The scholar claims that modern literate citizens should also develop critical skills, reflective thinking and an active civic position (Esau, 2014). Esau (2014) further states that "The world's greatest problems stem not only from people being unable to read and write and do mathematics, but rather how these citizens can apply their literacy skills to make the world a more peaceful and better place for all" (p. 71).

In the multicultural classroom settings, critical literacy plays a significant role. It may encourage students to question the choice of teaching materials, as they are shaped by the preferences, experiences and attitudes of «those in power». Habegger-Conti (2015), for instance, claims that the texts can never be neutral, as they are "shaped, whether consciously or unconsciously, by the text-producer's beliefs, values, social position, geographical location, and experiences, amongst other things" (p. 115). Thus, according to Habbeger-Conti (2015), the final goal of critical literacy is twofold. Firstly, it should help the students to see that knowledge and literacy teaching are shaped by someone else's choices, and therefore help the students "to read the world", being aware of the influences of "people in power". Secondly, the goal of critical literacy is to help the students to influence the change in approaches to literacy as they are today (Habegger-Conti, 2015, p. 116).

Scholars like McDaniell (2004) and Alford (2001) claim that critical literacy is a learner-centered approach. Alfrord (2001), when elaborating on the relevance of critical literacy in multicultural classes, claims that "transmission" models of literacy do not take advantage of students' backgrounds, experiences and interpretations and therefore, conceptually do not match with pupils' understanding. Thus, by taking into account students' experiences and interpretations, critical literacy puts every learner in the focus, showing him that his life experience and the way of thinking is valued and seen.

2.4.3. Socio-cultural literacy

Another perspective on literacy acquisition is that of socio-cultural literacy. Socio-cultural approach to literacy has its roots in Vygotsky's theoretical framework. The essence of Vygotsky's theory lies in his understanding of interrelation of individual and social processes. According to the scholar's sociocultural theory, learning is a social process and a child acquires and develops literacy through participation in a cultural context (Willis at al., 2003). Vygotsky's theory can be viewed as a rejection of the behavioristic approaches to human development, which focused on the external influence on one's forming and establishment. At the same time, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory is also a rejection of the approaches that emphasize the influence of internal factors and personal experiences on one's development (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996). Instead, according to John-Steiner and Mahn (1996), the power of Vygotsky's theory resides in his understanding of

development as the "transformation of socially shared activities into internalized processes" (p. 192).

The socio-cultural literacy theory, though developed almost one hundred years ago, has been recognized and further developed by scholars all over the world. Compton-Lilly (2013), among others, defines socio-cultural literacy as "as a social and cultural practice that is shaped by history, social context, and institutionalized power. Attention is paid to literacy practices that include the ways written language is used and the beliefs, feelings, values, attitudes" (p. 5). The scholar further states that, according to the sociocultural approach, learners bring their personal experiences and knowledge to school literacy practices, however, some of these experiences remain unnoticed and unappreciated in classrooms.

Based on the sociocultural perspective on literacy, Kris Gutiérrez and her colleagues (1997), as cited in Compton-Lilly (2013), developed a model of literacy acquisition, according to which, teachers should work to establish a so-called "third space", in which educators' expectations and learners' personal life experiences coexist and "contribute to new and uniquely viable contexts in which rich discussion and learning can occur" (Kris Gutiérrez et al., 1997, cited in Compton-Lilly, 2013, p. 5). The main aim of Gutiérrez' (1997) sociocultural literacy model is to provide students with possibilities to "foster and develop distinct ways of being literate that respect cultural ways of being while providing students access to the resources, knowledges, skills, and opportunities that accompany school approved ways of being literate" (Compton-Lilly, 2013, p. 5).

Yet another interesting sociocultural literacy approach has been developed by Compton-Lilly (2013), who advocates for, what she calls as "building on what children bring", when teaching literacy. The approach is built on the idea that students bring their experiences, beliefs and values to the classroom. Therefore, a teacher's job is to pay attention not only to cognitive processes of literacy acquisition (in-the-head processes), but also sociocultural ones, more precisely, experiences and understandings children bring to the classroom (in-the-world experiences of learners) (Compton-Lilly, 2013 p. 2). Compton-Lilly emphasizes the importance of balancing cognitive and sociocultural frameworks, when teaching literacy, since focusing exclusively on one of them may "limit the ability of children to use all of what they know as they learn to read" (Compton-Lilly, 2013 p. 2).

A similar focus on learners' experiences when teaching literacy is to be found in Clay's (1998) study. The scholar emphasizes the importance of acknowledging different experiences and various backgrounds learners might have, as well as importance of building upon those experiences:

> If children are to achieve common outcomes after two or three years in school it will be necessary to recognize that they enter school having learned different things in different cultures and communities. I assume that what one already knows is important in determining what one will come to know and, if teachers believe that, they would search for what each new entrant to school, or any slow-to-get-started learner, already knows about how one can learn (Clay, 1998, p.1, as cited in Compton-Lilly, 2013 p. 5).

The influence of sociocultural perspectives can also be seen in the development of the reader response theory. According to this theory, "meaning does not reside in the text or with the author but emerges from the reader's transaction with the text" (Willis et al., 2002, p. 11). From the sociocultural perspective, reader's reaction to any text emerges from the reader's sociocultural perspectives. It means that one reads and interprets a text through one's own personal experiences, values and through participation in various cultural contexts (Blue, 2012). In the multicultural classroom settings, this approach can contribute to understanding of minority students' reactions or misunderstanding of the reading material taught in class. Due to the teachers' freedom to implement curriculum and to choose teaching material, they can choose texts, based on their own cultural perspectives, which might be different from the students'. Thus, according to Blue (2012), "when no cultural cues are familiar, students have difficulty identifying with and understanding literary text" (p.2).

2.5 Summary

As it has been discussed in this chapter, multicultural education is defined as education based on the democratic values (Bennet, 2003), aiming to instill pride in minority students' minds (Bassey, 1997). It is a concept which is based on the principles of incorporating diversity and equality in education, whose main goal is to ensure that all students, regardless of their backgrounds will have the same access to education and equal opportunities to succeed (Golnick & Chinn, 2009). Multicultural education is a transformation of the entire education system, which pervades all spheres of school environment: school policies, staff selection, students' admission,

curriculum, teaching methods and lesson's content (Koshy, 2017; Banks, 2010). Multicultural education is a student-centered approach, where students' experiences are the highest priority, and which emphasizes the importance of the curriculum and classroom activities that will help all students to "understand and perceive the world without prejudices and biases" (Koshy, 2017, p. 23). In order to do so, teachers should be aware of students' linguistic and socio-cultural capital and the influence it has on the students' learning and literacy acquisition. Therefore, the teacher's task is to acknowledge different experiences and various backgrounds learners might have and further build upon those experiences (Clay, 1998, Compton- Lilly, 2013). This approach is defined as socio-cultural approach to literacy, and it emphasizes the development and fostering the ways of being literate "that respect cultural ways of being while providing students access to the resources, knowledges, skills, and opportunities that accompany school approved ways of being literate" (Compton-Lilly, 2013, p. 5). The latter is of particular interest for the present study which aims to investigate the extent to which students' cultures are taken into account in the EFL classroom.

3. Background

According to Statistics Norway (further SSB), in 2019 immigrant population in Norway consisted of 979 254, making up 18.2% of the total population. 790 497 people of this population were immigrants, while 188 757 were Norwegian born to immigrant parents (Statistisk Sentralbyrå, 2020). SSB further states that by the end of 2016, there were 102 900 immigrant children and Norwegian born to immigrant parents in Norwegian secondary school. This makes up 16% of the total number of secondary school pupils. In upper secondary school 17% of all students were of immigrant background (SSB, 2017). Increased diversity in society requires the education system to facilitate the ways of integrating minority language and culture students into Norwegian secondary schools. As it has been presented in the report from OMOD (Organisasjon mot offentlig diskriminering):

> Norway's biggest challenge in the next 10- 20 years is not to alienate the new generation of Masala Norwegians. This will be a very unfortunate development for the Norwegian society. I know that the new generation has a lot to give. These young people are pioneers. They set out a new course, they face new challenges and they must be allowed to find their own place in the land of Fridtjof Nansen [my own translation] (Norwegian Government, 2006, p. 3, cited in Chinga-Ramirez, 2015, p. 322).

> Therefore, assuring equal opportunities to all students regardless of their ethnic, linguistic, cultural and religious backgrounds has been an important aim of Norwegian authorities. According to the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, "the Norwegian education system is based on the principles of equality and adapted learning for everyone within an inclusive environment" (Government.no, undated). The principles of inclusion are also to be found in the Norwegian Education Act which states that "Education and training shall provide insight into cultural diversity and show respect for the individual's convictions. They are to promote democracy, equality and scientific thinking" (Government.no, 2007).

> A strong emphasis on equality in education is also one of the main objectives of the Norwegian National Curriculum (LK06). The section "Core Curriculum" defines equality in education as follows:

> The point of departure for schooling is the personal aptitude, social background, and local origin of the pupils themselves. Education must be adapted to the needs of the individual. Greater equality of results can be achieved by differences in the efforts directed towards

each individual learner. Breadth of skills is realized by stimulating their unique interests and abilities. Individual distinctiveness generates social diversity - equal ability to participate enriches society (Core Curriculum, 1994).

Adapted education, according to the LK06, includes ensuring that the students are provided with the variety of subject materials, as well as differentiated instruction and intensity of education. Furthermore, the curriculum explains the importance of adapting education, stating that "pupils have different points of departure, use different learning strategies and differ in their progress in relation to the nationally stipulated competence aims" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2011, p. 5). The latter statement echoes one of the main principles of multicultural education, which states that due to the fact that all the pupils are different, they cannot be taught in the same way (Gollnick & Chinn, 2009).

Further, according to the Norwegian Education Act (1998), section 2-3a, schools shall respect all students, regardless of their religious and philosophic beliefs, as well as to provide all students with the right to an equal education. At the same time, education, according to the Norwegian Education Act, should be built on the Christian values and traditions such as "respect for human dignity and nature, on intellectual freedom, charity, forgiveness, equality and solidarity, values that also appear in different religions and beliefs and are rooted in human rights" (The Education Act, 2007). The focus on Christian heritage in the National Curriculum has been much debated, as this statement implicitly treats all the students in Norwegian schools as if they were of the same cultural and religious background (Chinga- Ramirez, 2015, p. 116). Chinga- Ramirez (2015) argues that these statements in the Educational Act implicitly and unconsciously create the distinction between "us" and "them", which, she further argues is incompatible with the inclusion work promoted by the Government.

One of the main objectives of an inclusive school, according to the Quality Framework (2011), is to ensure and to work towards the development of social and cultural competence in students, in which diversity is acknowledged and highly appreciated. It should further encourage students to develop democratic values and understand "the importance of active and committed participation in a multicultural society" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2011, p. 3). The development of students' cultural competence can be achieved by enabling them to "acquire knowledge on different cultures and experience of a wide range of forms of expression" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2011, p. 3). It is further stated that education shall ensure the development of cultural understanding and

identity, as well as tolerance and respect in students. The students shall be exposed to various "art and cultural expressions that express humankind's individuality and togetherness, and which stimulate their creativity and innovative abilities" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2011, p. 3).

The development of cultural competence is also emphasized in the English language curriculum. English as a subject should not only provide students with the opportunities of language learning, but also cultural competence: "the subject of English shall contribute to providing insight into the way people live and different cultures where English is the primary or the official language" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2013, p. 2). It is further stated that developing cultural awareness alongside communicative language skills can contribute to better understanding and respect among people with different cultural backgrounds. Lund (2007) argues that these curriculum aims send rather unclear signals. The scholar (2007) argues that by claiming that cultural awareness can promote greater interaction "the syllabus seems to indicate that this may or may not happen, and that the teaching of English does not have to make sure that it actually does happen" (Lund, 2007, p. 6). Nonetheless, Lund (2007), building on Dypedahl's (2007) point, claims that the English Language curriculum offers a "moderate call" for the development of cultural competence, as according to the scholar "the competence goals in LK-06 can provide a platform for such work" (Lund, 2007, p. 6).

While the English language curriculum emphasizes the importance of exposing students to various cultural expressions, as well as providing them with knowledge on how people live in other countries, in order to foster respect and tolerance towards different ethnic and cultural groups, the importance of engaging students in critical discussions of the material used in class is nowhere to be found. At the same time, encouraging students to discuss and critically approach various topics is clearly stated in the Norwegian Education Act, in regard to teaching Religion, Philosophies of life and Ethics: "The teaching in Religion, Philosophies of life and Ethics shall promote understanding, respect and the ability to carry out a dialogue between people with differing views concerning beliefs and philosophies of life. […] shall present different world religions and philosophies of life in an objective, critical and pluralistic manner" (the Norwegian Education Act, 1998, Section 2-4).

All of the educational documents mentioned above emphasize the importance of ensuring that all students, regardless of their ethnic, cultural, religious or socio- economic backgrounds have equal rights to succeed at school. However, according to Pihl (2003), while Norwegian educational

policies indicate good intentions in relation to the inclusion of ethnically diverse students, their academic achievement shows a different picture (Pihl, 2003, cited in Chinga- Ramirez, 2015, 328-329).

The study "Bedre integrerting" NOU 2011: 14 conducted by the Ministry of Children and Families (Kunskapsdepartementet, 2011), for instance, suggests that the drop-out rate from upper secondary school is higher among the minority students, especially among minority culture boys in vocational studies. Moreover, the data provided by Statistics Norway (Statistisk Sentralbyrå) shows that minority students and Norwegians born to immigrant parents score lower on the National tests (SSB, 2020). In 2019, 26.9% students with immigrant background achieved the lowest mastery level in English, while 24.9% of Norwegian students were at the same level. While the difference in mastery level in English among minority students and their Norwegian peers is only 2%, the gap is more visible, when it comes to Reading and Mathematics. 39.8% of students with immigrant background achieved the lowest level in Reading, compared to 23% among Norwegian students. The results of Norwegian students born to immigrant parents are somewhat better: 32.7% showed the lowest level in Reading (SSB, 2020). Furthermore, the OECD report (2019) states that 16% of students with immigrant background did not pass their lower secondary school exams. According to the report, only 84% of students with immigrant background, who had fulfilled lower secondary school, started in upper secondary school. Moreover, only 58% of minority-language students, who started in upper secondary school in 2013, obtained general or vocational qualifications (OECD, 2019, p. 60).

Summary

All the educational documents presented in this chapter (The Norwegian National curriculum (LK06), The Norwegian Education Act, The Quality Framework) demonstrate good intentions in creating inclusive school environment, where all students regardless of their ethnic, cultural or linguistic backgrounds will have equal opportunities to succeed academically. Equality of opportunities can be achieved by ensuring that education is adapted to the needs of all students and that "the point of departure for schooling is the personal aptitude, social background, and local origin of the pupils themselves" (Core Curriculum, 1994). According to Pihl (2003) and Chinga-Ramirez

(2015), though these educational documents promote equality of opportunity and adapted education for all students, regardless of their ethnic or linguistic backgrounds, their academic achievement shows a different picture.

4. Review of previous research studies- the Norwegian context

As the societies around the globe are getting ethnically, culturally and linguistically diverse, so do the school classrooms. During the past decade growing diversity in classrooms has led many scholars to question whether a traditional monocultural approach to education has been sensitive enough towards the needs of minority students. In the Norwegian educational context, however, multicultural education has never been a dominant approach (Aasen, 2012), and it has only been studied through the lens of adapted education and inclusion (Chinga-Ramirez, 2015). During the past decade the development of inclusive multicultural environment at all levels of education has received considerable attention among Norwegian scholars. The studies of Pihl (2010), Iversen (2016), Jortveit (2014), Chinga- Ramirez (2015), Tosic (2012), Dahl and Krulatz (2016), and Krulatz and Torgersen (2016) among others, have shed light upon the phenomenon of multicultural education and inclusion in Norway.

The following chapter aims to provide a review of previous research studies on the nature of multicultural education, conducted in Norway. The research studies present both teachers' and students' perspectives on multicultural education. The studies presented in this chapter were chosen based on the following criteria: The year of publication should not be older than 2010 in order to provide an up to date picture of the state of multicultural education in Norway. Furthermore, the reviewed studies' objectives should be relevant for the present study and reflect upon one or several issues mentioned below:

- The teachers' knowledge of or qualifications in multicultural education
- The teachers' and/or students' attitudes towards multicultural education
- The teachers' and/or students' experiences with multicultural education
- Teachers' strategies to address minority students (differentiated instructions)
- Culture incorporation
- Equality of opportunity in the EFL classroom.

Thus, based on the criteria listed above, six studies have been chosen as the most interesting and relevant for the present study.

The first study to be reviewed is Tosic's (2012) master thesis which investigated how Norwegian primary school teachers addressed learners with diverse cultural and linguistic background. The study focused on teachers' understanding the concept of Multicultural education, cultural/linguistic incorporation, community participation, classroom pedagogy and assessment. The results

of the study revealed that Norwegian primary school teachers showed a lack of understanding of multicultural education. Tosic (2012) suggested that the possible explanation of the insufficient competence in multicultural education resided in the fact that there was no commonly accepted definition of the term. Tosic (2012) concluded that the participants' understanding of multicultural education mostly concerned the use of minority languages in the classes, and none of the participants discussed the concept in terms of "pedagogical aspects of learning styles, collaborative learning, or incorporating cultural elements in school activities" (p. 46).

Furthermore, all the participants of Tosic's study showed appreciation and acknowledgement of minority backgrounds of their students. However, minority students' cultures were shown high respect mainly when it concerned their national or religious holidays and traditions. The scholar claimed that no examples of addressing students' minority cultures in everyday teaching practices and curriculum were mentioned by any of the participants (Tosic, 2012, p. 51). All the teachers who participated in Tosic's study (2012) emphasized the importance of bilingual teaching in order to facilitate education to the needs of minority students. However, the participants of Tosic's (2012) study reported the decrease in minority language classes, mainly because the school authorities were not in favor of bilingual teaching.

The results of Tosic's (2012) study are concordant with Isaksen's (2019) MA thesis. The paper was a case study aiming to discover how Norwegian primary school teachers experienced facilitating inclusive education for minority students. The results of the study showed that the teachers found it challenging to implement inclusive teaching into their everyday work. The main reasons the participants mentioned were the lack of time and resources, as well as the lack of bilingual teachers. As a consequence of lacking resources, the teachers reported frequent incidents of miscommunication with their minority students. The study concluded that newly arrived minority students could easily become school dropouts, who did not feel the sense of belonging to the Norwegian school.

At the same time, the participants of Isaksen's study emphasized the importance of working with "highlighting the diversity" in the class. The participants claimed that it was important to show their minority students that their way of thinking was seen and valued and that their "differentness is their power" (Isaksen, 2019, p. 29). By claiming so, the teachers showed that they perceived the class's diversity as a resource, rather than a problem. The participants of the study stated that social inclusion of minority students was the key to their professional, language (the author

mainly referred to the Norwegian language development) and personal development. However, all the participants in the Isaksen's study concluded that they needed more competence in teaching minority students. They also emphasized that they needed a different school culture when it came to sharing teachers' personal experiences with teaching multicultural classes (Isaksen, 2019).

The study of Dahl and Krulatz (2016) confirms the findings of the studies mentioned above. Dahl and Krulatz (2016) aimed to investigate to what extent the EFL teachers were qualified and prepared to teach English to linguistically and culturally diverse students. The scholars conducted a national survey, where 176 English teachers from across the country participated. According to the results of the study, 62% of the respondents reported that they were somewhat prepared to teach minority students, 33% of the teachers stated they were not prepared at all, while only 5% indicated that they felt well prepared. Furthermore, the results of the study indicated that 80% of the respondents did not have formal training in teaching minority language and culture students. An interesting point was made by one of the respondents of the study. A teacher commented that at the University of Tromsø, where he had received his teacher training education, none of the courses focusing on working with minority students had been offered as a part of his degree.

Moreover, the study indicated that generally, the teachers felt that they lacked knowledge in teaching minority students, however, they were interested in gaining more knowledge on the issue. The majority of the teachers expressed an interest in learning more about the use of effective teaching strategies, methods and classroom activities, including differentiated instruction, and various methods to teach grammar and figurative language (Dahl and Krulatz, 2016).

Furthermore, 84% of the teachers reported that they wanted to receive more training in resources for adapted teaching. However, the scholars argued that given that:

> […] adapted teaching in Norway is often taken to mean instruction adjusted to students with specific needs rather than geared to all students, it may also reflect the common perception of monolingualism as the norm, where multilingual students are seen as special cases that need particular modifications in instruction (Dahl and Krulatz, 2016).

Hence, Dahl and Krulatz (2016) concluded that Norwegian teacher training programs did not prepare teachers to teach linguistically and culturally diverse classrooms.

The results of Dahl and Krulatz' (2016) study are concordant with the findings of Jortveit's (2014) doctoral dissertation. Jortveit (2014), similarly to the scholars mentioned above, reported that the teachers did not feel competent to teach minority students. Jortveit's (2014) study aimed

to investigate how the main principles of inclusion were expressed in various educational documents, and how these further were understood and implemented by secondary school teachers in Norway.

The participants of Jortveit's (2014) study expressed positive attitudes towards culturally and linguistically diverse students and wished that their minority student received the best education. When asked to interpret the concept of inclusion, the teachers were mostly concerned with social inclusion of minority students, rather than academic. Based on Jortveit's (2014) findings it was evident that though the teachers wanted their minority students to learn and develop academically, the majority of them did not associate inclusion with providing the students with the opportunities to succeed academically.

In contrast to the studies of Tosic (2012), Dahl and Krulatz (2016) and Isaksen (2019), Jortveit (2014) concluded that, though the teachers lacked competence in facilitating education to the needs of minority students, they did not want to receive additional training. The participants reported that the responsibility for social and academic inclusion of minority students burdened them. Moreover, they emphasized that the school authorities, students' parents and minority students themselves should also have a part of this responsibility (Jortveit, 2014, p. 308).

While the studies mentioned above examined teachers' perspectives and attitudes towards multicultural education, as well as their preparedness to teach multicultural classes, the studies of Iversen (2016) and Chinga- Ramirez (2015), aimed to investigate students' experiences with inclusive education.

Iversen's (2016) master thesis aimed to examine to what extent minority students experienced equality of opportunity in the EFL classroom. The participants of Iversen's (2016) study were 10 upper secondary school students with minority language and culture backgrounds. The findings from Iversen's (2016) study indicated that minority students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds seemed to be invisible to the teachers. Therefore, no differentiated instruction was provided to address their needs. The scholar argued that since the participants had experienced the education system that had been disregarding the importance of their backgrounds for years, their linguistic and cultural capital was of little academic relevance. Iversen (2016) concluded that minority students did not experience equality of opportunity in the EFL classroom, as long as their linguistic and cultural backgrounds were ignored by the teachers.

The findings of Iversen's study (2016) reinforced the point made my Dahl and Krulatz (2016) that teacher did not possess necessary qualifications to address their minority students. Iversen (2016) suggested that teachers did not implement a multicultural and multilingual approach to their everyday practices due to the lack of multicultural pedagogy and a strong sentiment of equality as sameness in Norway. According to this approach, minority students were expected to become invisible through their sameness or likeness to other students. The scholar argued that this approach would not lead to equality of opportunity in the EFL classroom. He concluded that there was a need for a revised approach to teaching English to minority students, which would acknowledge and exploit students' linguistic and cultural capital.

Chinga- Ramirez's (2015) doctoral thesis, similarly to Iversen's (2016) study, aimed to investigate social inequality among minority students in the Norwegian educational system. The main goal of the paper was to investigate to what extent school policies and practices affected the minority students' daily life at schools, as well as how students with minority background experienced Norwegian upper secondary school.

Chinga- Ramirez' (2015) findings indicated that although the Norwegian governmental policies promoted equal opportunities in education to all students regardless of their ethnic or cultural background, in reality, minority students seemed to be excluded from this equality. The reason behind this, according to the author, resided in the fact that majority population had created an idea of an imagined community, through which equality was perceived as sameness. Due to this approach, equality of opportunities in education was framed in invisible and unspoken perception of normality, which explicitly favored certain groups of students above the others (Chinga-Ramirez, 2015).

The scholar concluded that there seemed to exist a standard, a so-called idea of "the ideal student" (den idealtypiske eleven) towards which minority students were measured up against. In this sense, equality was understood as sameness, as the students were expected to assimilate to this standard, to become invisible through their likeness to existing standards of ideal students. Furthermore, the participants of Chinga- Ramirez' (2015) study reported that their ethnicity, religion and skin color were the factors of their subjective position, which were highlighted and noticed the most by the majority school population. These factors made them visibly different from what was understood as "the silent and invisible notion of being Norwegian" and therefore they became

an important social marker (Chinga- Ramirez, 2015, p. 320). Thus, Chinga- Ramirez (2019) concluded that the Norwegian school system was grounded on the fundamental paradox: the school system, while being socially inclusive, in reality was culturally exclusive, as the cultural and linguistic capital of minority students was expected to be invisible.

The six studies presented in this chapter indicate that there is a need for more research on multicultural matters in the Norwegian educational discourse. The present paper contributes to this field of research by examining what shapes the teachers' attitudes towards the principles of multicultural education today and to which extent the concept is integrated into the teachers' daily practices. The present study takes the discussion of multicultural matters one step further and investigates perceptions of multicultural education among the teachers with various cultural, linguistic, ethnic and educational background. Furthermore, the paper offers an insight into how teachers ensure equality in EFL classrooms by examining to what extent the teachers take students' backgrounds into consideration when planning the lessons and choosing materials for their classes.

5. Methodology

5.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to provide the methodological procedures that were implemented for data collection and analysis. The chapter is organized as follows: first, the methodological approach will be presented. Further, the procedure of data collection and analyses will be addressed. Finally, the chapter will address the issues of validity and reliability, followed by the ethical considerations.

5.2 Qualitative approach

Hennink et al. (2011) state that qualitative research is used for "providing in-depth understanding of the research issues that embrace the perspectives of the study population and the context in which they live... for exploring new topics or understanding complex issues; for explaining people's beliefs and behavior; and for identifying social and cultural norms of a culture or society" (p. 10). In comparison to quantitative research, which aims to clarify phenomena, qualitative research seeks to understand them (Cropley, 2015). Defining the nature of qualitative research, Cropley (2015) claims that the purpose of qualitative research is often emic: "to describe and analyse the world as it is experienced, interpreted and understood by people in the course of their everyday lives" (p. 40). Further, qualitative research is usually micro-analytic and it aims to illuminate a specific problem or situation (Cropley, 2015).

Furthermore, in qualitative research, the meanings people bring to the certain phenomena are studied and interpreted in their natural settings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). In this sense, qualitative research is an "interpretative and naturalistic approach to the world" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p.3). It starts with an idea, a point of view, an assumption and a possible use of theoretical framework, inquiring to capture the individuals' perspectives on a certain human or social issue (Creswell, 2007). In order to investigate this issue, a researcher applies a qualitative approach to inquiry, the data collecting in a "natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis that is inductive and establishes patterns or themes" (Creswell, 2007, p. 37). Creswell claims that the final draft of a research study includes not only the individuals' various perspectives on certain issues and the researcher's reflections upon the participants' ideas, but also "a complex description and interpretation of the problem, and it extends the literature or signals a call for action" (Creswell, 2007, p. 37). In this sense, qualitative research, and the practices a researcher

applies in order to study phenomena, have an ability "make the world visible" and, eventually, transform it (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3).

In the present study a qualitative approach will serve to understand the complexities of teachers' understandings of multicultural education, and their reflections upon both the benefits and challenges of implementing the core principles of multicultural education at the Norwegian lower- and upper secondary school level. By employing a qualitative method, the author of this study aims to investigate the teachers' experiences of teaching multicultural classes and their attitudes towards multicultural education. Furthermore, the study aims to investigate teachers' evaluation of their preparedness to teach culturally diverse classes and provide minority students with differentiated instruction.

5.3 Phenomenological approach

The present study uses Moustakas (1994) phenomenological approach to collect and analyze the data. Moustakas (1994) defines Phenomenology as the one that "is concerned with wholeness, with examining entities from many sides, angles, and perspectives until a unified vision of the essences of a phenomenon or experience is achieved" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 54). Moustakas (1994) claims that phenomenology aims to depict experiences, rather than explaining or analyzing them.

Lester (1999) claims that the phenomenological approach is used "to illuminate the specific, to identify phenomena through how they are perceived by the actors in a situation" (Lester, 1999, p. 1). He further states that the main purpose of this approach is to collect "deep" data and experiences with the help of qualitative research methods such as interviews, observation or discussions. Lester (1999) claims that the phenomenological approach aims to illuminate the participants' experiences and opinions they have towards a specific issue from their own individual perspectives and thus to challenge "structural or normative assumptions" (p. 1).

Creswell (2007), states that the distinctive feature of the phenomenological approach is that it aims to investigate "… the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept" (p. 57). Thus, the aim of phenomenological approach is to describe what the participants of a study have in common, as they perceive a certain phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). The role of the researcher is then to "develop a composite description of the essence of the experience" for all the participants of the study, which consists of "what" has been experienced and "how" it was experienced (Creswell, 2007, p. 58).

The phenomenon that is investigated in this study is multicultural education. The main objectives of the present research are teachers' experiences and attitudes towards implementing multicultural education in teaching culturally diverse students. In this sense, multicultural education is the phenomena shared by all the participants of the present study. However, the perceptions and experiences of implementing multicultural education will differ from one participant to the other. Thus, phenomenological research approach is considered as the most appropriate tool that will provide an insight into different perspectives and attitudes towards the same phenomenon.

5.4 Oral in-depth interviews as data collecting tool

This study uses qualitative in-depth interviews as a data collection tool. Scholars like Coughlan (2009) and Sandelowski (2002) claim that oral in-depth interviews are the most commonly used tool for data collection in qualitative research. Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) define interviewing as "attempts to understand the world from the subjects' point of view, to unfold the meaning of their experience, to uncover their lived world" (p. 3). Padilla-Días (2015), cited in Iamroz (2018, p. 43), claims that semi-structured or open interviews are the most appropriate data collection methods in a phenomenological research, as they give an insight into the participants' experiences, meanings and beliefs. Jackson et al (2007) state that semi-structured interviews allow greater flexibility in the interview process: "The flexibility of semi-standardized interview allows the interviewer to pursue a series of less structured questioning and also permits an exploration of spontaneous issues raised by the interviewee to be explored" (p. 310).

For this study oral in-depth semi-structured interviews were employed as the data collection method. The present study will make use of discovery interviews, a variant of semi-structured/standardized interviews. Discovery interviews are based on open-ended questions and allow the interviewee to control the interview process (p. 310). The main goal of discovery interviews is to give a participant the possibility "to tell his/her own story rather than answer a series of structured questions" (Jackson et al., 2007, p. 310).

An interview guide was written to facilitate the semi-structured interviews. Firstly, the core topics for the interview were defined. Those were based on the theoretical framework of the present study. Based on these topics, the author of this paper developed the specific questions. The author of this paper used the interview guides, developed by Iamroz (2018) and Tosic (2012) as a reference point and further adapted them to the needs and aims of this study. The questions were

grouped into two main categories: the background questions, and "Teachers' experiences of teaching multicultural classes". The first section of the interview consisted of the questions about the participant's ethnic, linguistic and educational background, as well as working experiences. The section "Teachers' experiences of teaching multicultural classes" contained questions about the teachers' experiences with and attitudes towards multicultural education.

Prior to the data collection, the author of this paper conducted two pilot interviews with two teachers. The main purpose of the pilot interviews was to examine whether the interview guide questions were clearly defined and therefore, easily understood by the participants, as well as which of the questions might need a follow-up. Yet another reason was to investigate what kind of answers the author of the study might expect.

Further, one-to-one in-person interviews were conducted with five of the six participants, while the interview with teacher 5 was conducted via Skype. All the participants of the study were informed about the nature of the study prior to the interviews. They were informed about the main objectives of the present study, as well as the main topics of the interviews. It should be noted that the participants of the study were not provided with the interview guide beforehand, as the author of the study was particularly interested in spontaneous, not retouched or well-planed answers. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. The interviews lasted from 45 to 80 minutes. During the data collection period, a total of six hours of interviews were collected. The notes, made during the interviews, were further structured in a separate document, which was eventually considered while analyzing the data.

5.5 The choice of participants

The main purpose of the present study was to examine teachers' experiences of implementing multicultural education at Norwegian secondary schools. The main criteria, thus, was that the participants of the study should have had previous or current experience of teaching multicultural classes. All the participants for the present study were recruited through the researcher's personal network, and they were informed about the nature of the study and its requirements for participation. Since the study aimed to explore the teachers' attitudes towards multicultural education in Norwegian educational context, another requirement was that the teachers should have worked in Norwegian secondary schools. Furthermore, due to the scope of the study, the author of this paper

was particularly interested in interviewing the teachers working in lower- and upper secondary schools.

In addition, the study aimed to investigate whether the attitudes towards multicultural education would vary among the younger and less experienced teachers and their older and more experienced colleagues. Thus, for this study six teachers were recruited, aged between 23 and 43 years old. All the participants of the study were female. Furthermore, the teachers, recruited for the study, were of various ethnic backgrounds and five of them had experience living and studying abroad. It should be further specified that the participants of the study worked at both state and private schools in different municipalities in Norway. Five teachers were interviewed in person, while one of the participants was interviewed via Skype.

The teachers' profiles are presented in the table below. The names of the teachers were anonymized due to ethical and privacy considerations. All the participants of the study will hereinafter be referred to as "Teacher 1"- "Teacher 6".

Table 1: Teachers' profiles

Participants	Age	Educational degree	Teaching experience	Linguistic background
Teacher 1	26 years old	One year of Elementary school Teacher Training program at UIS, one year of English Teacher Training Program in Poland, Bachelor's degree in Teacher Education that includes two teaching subjects: English and Norwegian. Formal title: Adjunct	4 years as an English and Norwegian Language teacher at a private upper secondary school	Norwegian (mother tongue), English and Polish (B1)
Teacher 2	33 years old	Bachelor's degree in English, one year course in History and one year of PPU (Praktisk Pedagogisk Utdannelse: Practical Pedagogic Education). At the	8 years' working experience as a teacher at a private upper secondary Norwegian	Norwegian (mother tongue), English

		moment the teacher is at the second year of Master program in English literacy. Formal title: Teacher with further education	school.The subjects that she teaches are English and History.	
Teacher 3	36 years old	Bachelor's degree in teaching English language and literature from a university in Ukraine, Master degree in English from the University of Oslo, one year program in Special needs Education, one year program in Math and 20 credits in Russian. The participant's formal title is Lector with additional education. The participant teaches English and Math at lower secondary school. Formal title: Further education Lecturer	10 years' working experience as a teacher at a state lower secondary school. The subjects that she teaches: English and Math	Ukrainian (mother tongue), Russian, English, Spanish and Norwegian
Teacher 4	36 years old	Bachelor's degree in teaching English and Spanish language and literature from Ukraine, Master's degree in English language from the University of Oslo; One year program in Math and ICT; one year program in Russian. Formal title: Further education Lecturer	11 years as an English, Math and ICT teacher at a state lower secondary school	Ukrainian (mother tongue), Russian, English and Norwegian
Teacher 5	43 years old	Teacher training education in English and Russian language and literature from a university in Ukraine; Master's degree in	12 years as an English teacher at a state upper secondary school	Russian (mother tongue), Ukrainian,

		English language and culture from the Inland University of Applied Sciences. Formal title: further education Lecturer.		English and Norwegian
Teacher 6	23 years old	Bachelor's degree in English language from the University of Stavanger, one -year program of Sociology and one -year English studies from the UK. Formal title: Adjunkt	3 years' working experience as an English at a state lower secondary school	Norwegian (mother tongue), English

5.6 Data analyses

According to Cropley (2015), the main purpose of qualitative data analysis is to extract "general abstract meanings" out of a group of statements the respondent had about the phenomena of the study (p. 128). In this sense, "meaning" according to Cropley (2015), is not the content of the specific quote from the participant's statement, rather, it is deduced from the overlaps of the respondents' various statements. It aims to answer the question: "What more general – but not directly observable – structures in the person's mind (such as attitudes, values, feelings, wishes, judgments, understandings of the world) generated this group of related specific statements?" (Cropley, 2015, p. 129).

This study uses Moustakas' (1994) approach to data analysis procedure in phenomenological research. Cresswell (2007) builds on Moustaka's (1994) approach to data analysis and provides a description of each of the steps (Creswell, 2007, p. 61-62):

- *Horizonalization:* to go through transcribed raw data and highlight "significant statements", quotes or sentences which help to understand the participants' understanding and experience of phenomena.
- The next step is to develop *clusters of meanings:* to reduce the highlighted "significant statements" to the concrete themes.
- Further, *to develop a textual- and a structural description.* The significant quotes and themes are then reduced to a description of what a participant has experienced (a textual

description) and a description of settings and context that influenced the way a participant has experienced phenomena (a structural description).

- To *develop an essential, invariant structure*: to report the "essence" of the studied phenomena by using a "composite description" which focuses on common experiences of all the participants.
- *Present the understanding of the experience in written form.*

Based on the theoretical framework of the study, the author of this study predefined eight themes prior to data collection process:

- teachers' understanding of the phenomena of multicultural education
- teachers' experience in working with culturally diverse classrooms
- strategies of working with culturally diverse classrooms
- the use of minority students' backgrounds when planning the lessons
- content integration: the choice of texts and other visual materials to be taught in multicultural classrooms
- teachers' training in multicultural classrooms
- the impact of students cultural and linguistic background on his/her motivation to study and academic achievement
- the response of culturally diverse students to the texts and other visual materials, which are used in the multicultural classes.

After the data had been collected and transcribed, the author applied Mouskakas' (1994) approach to data analysis and went through participants' textual descriptions of their experiences of multicultural education and highlighted the most essential and significant statements. Further, based on the collected data, the eight themes, found prior to data collecting, were reduced to four essential themes:

- teachers' understanding of and the attitudes towards the concept Multicultural education
- teachers' methods and strategies to address students with culturally diverse background
- cultural incorporation (content integration)
- minority students' response to the materials used in class.

5.7 Validity and Reliability in Qualitative research

A valid study, according to Brink (1993), should indicate a phenomenon as it exists in reality and a valid measure or instrument "should actually measure what it is supposed to measure" (p. 35). Brink (1993) states that there are many forms of validity. Campbell and Stanley (1966), as cited in Brink (1993), define two main forms of validity that comprise several existing types: "internal" and "external" validity. Internal validity refers to the degree to which the findings of the study are an accurate depiction of the phenomena as it is, rather than "being the effects of extraneous variables" (Brink, 1993, p. 35). External validity, according to Brink (1993), is the extent to which the representation of a certain phenomenon is legitimate and applicable to other research studies. External validity "deals with the problem of knowing whether study's findings are generalizable beyond the immediate case study" (Yin, 1994, p. 37, cited in Tosic, 2012, p. 37).

Qualitative reliability, on the other hand, refers to the researcher's check for the consistency and reliability of his approach "across different researchers and different projects" (Cresswell, 2007, p. 176). There are several procedures to check for reliability in the study. This study employs Gibbs' (2007, p. 97) reliability procedures:

- check the transcripts for obvious mistakes made during transcription
- make sure that there is not a drift in the definition of codes, a shift in the meaning of the codes during the process of coding
- coordinate the communication among the coders by regular documented meetings and by sharing the analysis.

For the concerns of validity, this study incorporates the validity strategies offered by Cresswell (2007, p. 177). *Use rich, thick description to convey the findings.* Detailed description of the participants' experiences or the settings contributes to more realistic and richer data. In this study it is achieved through the verbatim quotations of the participants' statements. As stated in Iamroz (2018, p. 46), participants' exact words presented in direct quotations help the reader to understand the participants' experiences and the meanings they convey.

Clarify the bias the researcher brings to the study. In order to provide an objective and accurate analysis, the research should be aware of the biases, personal points of view and experiences she brings into the study. It is thus important that the researcher is critical and honest in the self-reflection and exposes the biases that may influence the trustworthiness of data (Cresswell, 2007, Brinks 1993). Brinks (1993) states that the very presence of the researcher may cause the

participants' abnormal behavior, so that the participants will try to present themselves in better light or try to hide certain information. In other words, the very presence of the researcher creates "social behaviors in others that would normally not have occurred" (Brinks, 1993, p. 35-36). Being aware of the potential risks of bringing in personal biases and experiences, the author of this study has included the information about her personal linguistic and cultural background, as well as motivation to conduct the research.

5.8 Ethical considerations

According to Cresswell (2007) ethical consideration should be addressed in qualitative research studies. He states that "the researcher has an obligation to respect the rights, needs, values, and desires of the informant" (p. 183). First of all, before any data can be collected, the researcher needs to seek an approval for the inquiry. Based on this, the author of this study sent an application of approval of the research project to the Norwegian Social Science Data Service (NSD). The approval of the research project is to be found in the Appendix. Further, the following safeguards, adapted from Cresswell (2007, p. 183), were employed in this study to protect the participants' privacy and anonymity.

All the participants of the study were informed about the nature of the project, its aim and the information they would need to provide and that the participation is voluntary. The participants of the study were further informed both orally and in writing that they can withdraw their participation without any explanation at any point. The consent form of this project is attached in the Appendix. All the participants were informed about data collection method and that the interviews would be recorded. The participants of the study were notified that they could get both the audio recording of the interview, verbatim transcription of it, author's written interpretations of their statements, as well as the final draft of the paper at any point of the research process. The participants' wishes and rights were considered the first priority during the entire research process. The participants were informed that their names would be anonymous and changed with numbers. The names of schools they worked at, as well of the cities/towns they lived and worked in were anonymized.

6. Findings
6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the interviews with the teachers that were conducted during the research period. The purpose of the interviews was to gain the insight into the teachers' attitudes towards the concept multicultural education and their experiences of teaching minority culture students. The data collected from the interviews will be presented in four categories based on the themes that emerged during the process of data analysis: teachers' understanding of and the attitudes towards the concept multicultural education, teachers' methods and strategies to address students with culturally diverse background, content integration (cultural incorporation), minority students' response to the materials used in class.

Teacher 1

Teachers' understanding of and the attitudes towards the concept Multicultural education

When asked to explain and interpret the term multicultural education, the teacher admitted that she had not heard about this concept before the interview. Trying to interpret the term, the participant said:

> Multicultural education, I would say, is getting education together with people from different cultures. So, if I would be a student in a classroom, I would get an education based on the experiences of my peers.

> The participant pointed to her lack of knowledge or experience in implementing multicultural education. The teacher believed that it was important to receive training in how to address multicultural students. Specifically, she emphasized that the teachers should learn "…the way of thinking. We need a course where we will learn about how to address minority students, be aware of the challenges". She explains that the lack of training in multicultural education is due to the lack of competence and expertise in this field in Norway:

> I feel like nobody knows about it. If I were to hold a seminar about multicultural education, I wouldn't know more than the people, attending the seminar. It is just something we rarely talk about. I think that this is the reason: the lack of resources, the lack of answers.

Teachers' methods and strategies to address students with culturally diverse background

The teacher reported that she could see the difference in teaching Norwegian and minority students. She further perceived teaching multicultural students as more challenging, since she had to address various cultural or ethnic controversial issues, which she did not need to think of when teaching Norwegian students:

> There is a lot we have to discuss in class, because of all these different cultures that we have… and we need to have more focus on respect, not only in teacher-student relationships, but also student-student relationships, so that they understand how we are different. We have people with arranged marriage and homosexuals, like all of these huge issues, controversial issues that can create a lot of…. misunderstanding, judgment. We also have refugees, the people that come from two countries in war and you know … we need them to not start the war in the classroom. We have to spend a lot of time addressing these things.

The participant further elaborated on the challenges of teaching minority students, compared to Norwegian ones, and concluded that the main reason resided in the difference in her and her minority students' previous experiences:

> You see, my Norwegian students understand the things quicker. Maybe because that we have the same way of thinking, because we went through the same school system. My Norwegian students' knowledge is presupposed by what I know.

The participant continued her comparison of Norwegian and minority culture students by saying that while Norwegian students were used to working individually, her minority students required her presence, attention and instructions mainly because their lack of learning strategies:

> They are not used to work on their own. They are not used to computers, they are not used to googling. And we have to spend more time on the basic things, … to, basically, teach them how to do things. You can't simply give them a grammar task and tell that that should do that at home. You need to show them how to do the task. You need to go much slower. It's like they are lacking learning strategies.

Moreover, the teacher stated that her minority students' English proficiency was poorer that her Norwegian students' and that she felt that she had to adjust how and what she said to them, as well as to spend more time than she actually wanted to on grammar and "explaining things".

When asked whether her own cultural background and experiences influenced the way she addresses her multicultural classes, she believed that they definitely did. For instance, she liked to

talk about her experience of being an exchange student in Poland and use it as an example for her minority students.

Content integration (Cultural incorporation)

The participant reported, that she tried to take her students' backgrounds into account when planning her lessons. She said that at the beginning of the school year the students usually had a project, where they had to take about their expectations to the school, as well as to tell about their previous experiences of schooling. The teacher used these presentations to provide examples and compare various topics, such as school system in Norway and other countries.

The participant stated, that as an authority figure for her students, she decided to address various cultural and religious issues. She believed, that when the students saw that she could speak openly about those issues, they would also feel comfortable discussing them in the class. The teacher said that she encouraged her students to influence the way their lessons were and what material would be chosen. The participant says that she discusses the topics that would be raised in the class and asked her students' opinion about them. However, she emphasized the importance of acknowledging that different people might have different opinions on the things:

> I tell them: "I was thinking about teaching this and this topic" and I also tell them that it is important that we respect each other and respect that we all are different and that it is important to learn about different topics and opinions. And the students are very supportive. They nod and say "Yeah, yeah, it's fine". I think that they understand that when they move to a new country they need to adapt to new opinions.

The teacher emphasized the importance of thinking about the students' backgrounds when choosing any material for the classes, however, she reported that she did not do it often, mostly due to the lack of time and the amount of other duties and tasks. She further reported that she had 6 classes with approximately 25-27 students in each class, and thus it was very challenging for her to adjust her teaching to every student individually. She said that when the text or the movie she had chosen for the class might offend someone, she warned her students about the controversial issues, brutal scenes in the text or movie but she still wanted to use the materials anyway.

Minority students' response to the materials used in class.

The participant stated that she experienced several times that her minority students reacted to the text and the movie she had chosen for her class:

> There was one time when we watched "Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close", about the Twin Tower. And suddenly, one of my minority students started crying and ran out of the classroom. It then started to worry me a bit whether it was something triggering in the movie, something that my student might have experienced.

However, she reported that at that time she did not think that the student's reaction was caused by something the student had experienced. She further concluded: "It shouldn't necessarily be culture-related. I have also experienced that everything can trigger the reaction today". The teacher reported that, though incidents like this had happened couple of times, the most frequent reaction of her minority students was to question her choice of material for classes:

> I think that most of the times they don't dare to react to the text, but they definitely ask me "Why? Why do we have to learn this? Why do we have to watch or read this".
>
> The interviewer: And do you have an answer for them?
>
> The teacher: No, I don't. There was one time. We had a book project and I gave all my students the book "Of Mice and Men" by John Steinbeck and asked to read it. It is a difficult book, with not that proper English, I admit it, however, this was the only book which we had as a class- set in our library. In approximately 4 weeks one of my minority students came to me and asked "Why, why do we read this? I don't understand it. Nobody under-stands it". And I said that it is better that everyone reads the same book, because then they can discuss it in the class. I don't think she understood that. But I cannot lower the stand-ards, the requirements of upper secondary school, just because they are minority students.

Teacher 2

Teachers' understanding of and the attitudes towards the concept Multicultural education

The participant showed good understanding of the concept of Multicultural education and defined it as "Adapting the teaching to the cultures in the classrooms and to be aware of different cultures and cultural differences and how different cultures and how different cultures might respond to different material". Although she understood the concept, teacher 2 expressed doubts as to whether multicultural education was a good thing to be implemented in Norwegian schools. On the one

hand, according to the participant, the principles of multicultural education might be adapted by educators in Norway, if done with extreme care and sufficient knowledge. However, the participant believed that: "it may cause more harm than good, because in my head, it is placing students in a box. In my head it is like 'Ok, you are different, you have different culture and you are different than me and should be taught differently', and that creates distance between us… And I don't want that". At the same time, the participant said that she would like to know more about teaching multicultural classes, as she acknowledged that she did not have enough knowledge in the field of multicultural education and she had not received any specific training in teaching multicultural classes. However, when asked about what she would like to know more about, the participant stated that she was interested in finding out more about challenges of being multicultural, but not about the concept of multicultural education itself:

> I would like to know about these differences, I don't know how it actually is to be multicultural. Because I am monocultural, I am 100% Norwegian, that's it. To put myself in their shoes… where I am divided between two cultures- that's completely foreign to me. And some of my students experience it every day and that may influence the way they perceive my teaching.

Teachers' methods and strategies to address students with culturally diverse background

When asked about the difference in teaching Norwegian and non-Norwegian students, the teacher answered that though sometimes she could clearly see the person is not ethnically Norwegian, she deliberately did not address him or her any differently than her Norwegian students, especially if her minority students had high proficiency in Norwegian language. She emphasized that if her multicultural students mastered Norwegian well enough, there was no reason to treat them any differently. She further expressed doubts about focusing on students' cultural and/or ethnic background. She claimed that:

> Why should I box my students according to their backgrounds. Because I want to get to know them, I want to teach them as individuals. I don't know how to say it without sounding wrong. But I think that we make ourselves a disservice by focusing too much that my class is culturally-mixed. Yes, we should be aware of the fact, but to me there are other more important things to focus on.

The participant further explained why she prefers avoiding asking culture or background related questions:

> I am a bit sensitive towards the Culture questions, because I have experienced outside the school, when I ask a person, who obviously is not Norwegian, "Where are you from?". And I ask this question because I can hear his dialect, so I want to pinpoint where that dialect is from… And that person is offended, because "How can you ask me where I am from? I am African, don't you see?".

The teacher said that normally she did not use different teaching methods with her minority students, except for she tried to adjust her language, if she knew that the person's English proficiency was not high. She also tried "to fill in the cultural gap", by sharing her experiences of being Norwegian with the rest of the class, that might help the students to understand the difference between their own cultures and Norwegian culture. The participant stated that her ethnic background influenced the way she addressed her multicultural students. For instance, she used the plural form "we": "We, Norwegians" or "We Scandinavians", though she realized that not everyone might identify as Norwegians.

Content integration (cultural incorporation)

The teacher stated that she did not draw on her students' background in her teaching, except for the classes when they talked about Typical Stereotypes, as she believed that a good discussion about stereotypes helped to understand a culture better. She further stated that she did not compare cultures to one another, though she felt that she should have done it. The only times she possibly did it, is when talking about India and Asian countries and the mindset, the way of thinking Asian people have, which she then liked to compare to a Norwegian and Western way of thinking:

> And some of my pupils like to talk about it. Because they actually experienced the gap: that they can be one person at school and another at home, because the culture at school and at home are two completely different things.

When asked about whether she took her students' backgrounds into account when choosing the material for her classes, the participant reported that she normally did not do that. The teacher said that she usually chose the materials which had been used by other teachers at a school she worked at. She explained her point of view, saying:

Coming from a school where we are free to choose and do anything we like… and we choose material we like. I choose material that I find fun teaching and that, I hope, will be interesting for students. When I choose novels, for example, I let them choose the books they like… in order to enhance the reading spirit, actually MAKE them read and like what they read. When it comes to short stories or movies, I choose the stories or movies that will be connected to the topic we do. For example, having about Multicultural society, I would choose to show "Bend it like Beckham", with the protagonist being drawn between English society and her Indian background.

The participant believed that a teacher should, to some extent, take students' background into account when choosing the material for the classes. At the same time, she reported, that acknowledging her students' backgrounds, would not change her choice of materials.

Multicultural students' response to the materials used in class.

When asked about whether she had ever experienced that her multicultural students reacted differently to the text or a movie that she had used in her classes, the teacher said that her minority students might have reacted to the material she had chosen, but she had never thought of those reactions as the result of the influence of students' background. Furthermore, she believed that her students found it interesting and rewarding to be exposed to the materials, they normally would not choose themselves, or the material they did not like or respond positively to. The participant then shared about one of the incidents in her class:

I did show one movie about illegal immigrants from Mexico. The movie was really sad and even I cried in the end. And there were two girls in my class, and I know that these girls were of foreign background, they started crying, but again, I believe that the movie was sad. Then I talked about this topic with one of my colleagues and said that I used this movie when talking about illegal immigration. She came back to me in couple of days and said that she would not use this movie in her class, because she had some students who were immigrants or even refugees. She said that the movie was horrible to be shown in a multicultural class.

Elaborating on the incident, the teacher reported that she did not agree with her colleague, as she believed, that though the movie included several violent and dramatic scenes, there was a

good learning potential in it. She concluded that regardless of the incident with her students and her colleague's perspective on this movie, she would still show it again the next year.

Teacher 3

Teachers' understanding of and the attitudes towards the concept Multicultural education

The teacher had never heard of the concept "multicultural education" and could only interpret it based on what the author of this paper had told about the nature of this study. After having the concept explained, the teacher stated:

> The concept, or rather, the thing it names, has always existed in my life and work, the only thing I have never used any name to describe it. We usually use it to refer to concrete situations. I work at a school for newly arrived immigrant children, although we have second or third generation of immigrants, for whom, Norwegian is not the mother tongue. This year we have three Polish students and they are like an "independent state" within a class and we usually talk about the ways of addressing and teaching them together with my colleagues.

The teacher explained that her three newly arrived Polish students clearly differ from the rest of the class. These students could not follow the same curriculum and the same class activities as the rest of the class and, according to the participant, had to be provided with the differentiated instructions and tasks. Therefore, the teacher referred to them as "an independent state within a class".

The teacher believed that multicultural education is a good thing to be implemented at Norwegian secondary schools, especially taking into account that Norway was a multicultural country. She stated that it should first start as a project on the school level, where all the teachers will cooperate to adequately address their multicultural students and do all possible measures to promote learning among them.

The participant stated that teachers should receive special training in how to teach multicultural classes, as usually teachers do not pay a lot of attention to the influence students' background might have on their learning or how the students perceive teaching. The participant herself had not received any special training and felt that she, as the rest of the teachers, should figure out how to address minority students on their own. She claimed:

As it is now… It is on the level of intuition: "I think that it might work, I think that this is the right way to address the students". But it is not something we know for sure and it is not something we have knowledge of. It is something we come across when starting to work as a teacher, so I think all the teachers will have different approaches of how to address their multicultural students.

Teachers' methods and strategies to address students with culturally diverse background

The teacher reported that she did not see any difference between teaching mono- and multicultural classes. She reported that she tried to see, what she called "an average student" and tried to adapt her teaching to that "average student" with basic skills and needs. She stated that her experiences of moving abroad (from her homeland, Ukraine, to Norway) had influenced the way she addressed her minority students: "I try to look at them through the lens of my own experience. I was an immigrant in Norway as well, so I know how it feels. I think that if I were a Norwegian, I would have cared less about that".

The teacher reported that she did not explain her student's low academic achievement with his or her background, but rather with the lack of knowledge. At the same time, the teacher stated that when she had students from Eastern Europe, she felt that it was more natural for her to address them, and she addressed them as equals.

Content integration (cultural incorporation)

The teacher normally did not draw on students' cultural background when teaching English. Furthermore, she stated that she rarely discussed her students' backgrounds with the colleagues. Moreover, the participant believed that one possible reason as to why culture was a rare topic was that in the Norwegian educational discourse the influence of student's background was disregarded:

I think that in Norway they don't like to talk about culture and cultural difference and that they hardly know anything at all about, for example, Eastern European culture and do not take into account different nuances. And the minority students suffer from it… from the fact, that the teacher does not know how to approach him… Does not know how to "extract the knowledge, because the teacher does not have the tools to do it. The whole system of education isn't suited to adapt to the needs of multicultural and multilingual students.

The teacher doubted that it was generally possible to adapt education to the needs of multicultural students, due to the lack of time and resources and she believed that the idea of adapted education only existed in various educational documents, such as Education Act and curriculum: "It is impossible to divide those 45 minutes of the class among 27 students. On the other hand, what I can do- is to adapt the tasks to the needs of my multicultural students".

The teacher did not take students' background into account when choosing texts or movies for her English classes. The most important criterion for her was that material was suited to the students' age. When asked whether a teacher should take students' background into account when choosing any material for the classes, the teacher replied:

> Now that you told me that, I feel like we should pay more attention to it. We should at least ask the student how she feels about the topic. If we use any movie that may offend the student's feelings we should warn him, and let him know that he can leave the classroom, when he will feel uncomfortable. But I have never done it.

Minority students' response to the texts covered in class

When asked about whether multicultural students reacted differently to the materials used in class, the teacher said that she had experienced that her minority students reacted to the whole topic, rather than to one specific text or a movie:

> We read a factual text about working immigration and my Polish students reacted to the definition of the concept "Work immigration". They dreaded the moment when we would start discussing it, because their parents came to Norway to work. And I saw, that, if that were up to them, they would rather skip this topic. They were uncomfortable all the time we discussed "Work immigration". One of them told me that after one of the classes his classmates discussed him and called "Polakker" (from Norwegian: Polish) and they had a harsh discussion about the immense immigration to Norway, he told me he felt very uncomfortable.

The teacher added that she informed the students' contact teacher, however she herself did not follow up the incident in her English classes. She explained that since the incident took place after the class, she thought it was a bad idea to initiate a discussion about the students' attitudes towards work immigration, and that incident in particular. Furthermore, she admitted that she did

not feel comfortable or prepared to have that discussion and therefore, decided to finish the topic as soon as possible and move to the next one.

Teacher 4

Teachers' understanding of and the attitudes towards the concept Multicultural education

The teacher reported that she had never heard of the term multicultural education but based on the information about the nature of the interview, she could interpret is as the "education that takes into account the interests of all the students, regardless their background".

The teacher stated that multicultural education might be a good concept to be implemented in the Norwegian context. However, she doubted whether the implementation of multicultural education would help students to improve their grades, rather it would help to improve school environment. At the same time, the teacher expressed concerns about its implementation into the Norwegian school system:

We are so over focused on adapting education, and that results in the fact that we help our weaker students to become better, while we don't have time to help those who are stronger. We don't help them to develop their potential and that is sad. The goal of education should be that every single student, and not only those with minority culture or language, should achieve or develop his potential.

The teacher believed that it was important to receive more training in multicultural education. She believed that teaching training programs did not provide teacher candidates with enough knowledge and experience in working with multicultural students:

I reflect on the years at the university. Even though I had my teaching practice in multicultural classes, there still were things I first explored when I started to work. We were so…protected by our supervisor as if she did not want to show us the "dark side" if you know what I mean. We were like guest speakers: we came to the class, held our speeches and went home. Even though, we might have used the material that some pupils might have found offensive, we didn't deal with their reaction. We didn't have any contact with the students.

Teachers' methods and strategies to address students with culturally diverse backgrounds

The teacher reported that she usually demanded and expected more of her minority students, as she believed that they are more motivated to study:

> From my own experience, I can say that my minority culture students are more hardworking, than my Norwegian students. I think it is the influence of home. I think that parents of multicultural students tell them "We had to work hard when we first came to Norway and you need to work hard here to have a good education, job and life". My Norwegian students are more relaxed. They know that no matter how bad they study- they would still have good life.

The teacher reported that she actually was more careful when addressing her Norwegian students as she believes that they do not tolerate any sort of pressure. On the other hand, when talking to her minority students, she did not have to adapt her language and could more freely express her opinion. She reported that this difference was especially visible when providing the feedback to the students:

> When I give the feedback (especially not the good one) to my minority students, I can easily say to them "I know you can do much better". And they will easily accept it and will even work harder the next time. While giving grades to my Norwegian students is definitely a challenge and it usually takes a lot of time, because I need to think twice what and how to write the feedback, because they easily get offended.

Content integration (cultural incorporation)

The teacher said that normally she did not take her students' backgrounds into account when planning her lessons. However, she stated that sometimes she had to do it anyway, for instance, when talking about different cultural or religious aspects of a culture, knowing that she had representatives of these cultures in the class. She stated that then she had to spend a lot of time thinking about how to present material to the class, practicing how and what she was going to say, so she would not offend her minority students. The teacher further stated that sometimes she asked her minority students to hold a short presentation about their culture, to tell how they celebrate different holidays and what kinds of traditions they had. She reported, that both her minority students and the rest of the class enjoyed these presentations, because they felt like their stories were valued.

However, the teacher states, that while her European students and students who practiced Christianity gladly talked about their cultures, the students who practiced Islam did not want to talk about their religious holidays or traditions. She believed that these students did not want to be any different than the rest of the class and they thought of their cultures as something that would not be accepted by their classmates.

Minority students' response to the texts covered in class.

The teacher stated that, though sometimes she had concerns about how her minority students might react to any material (especially, when they dealt with the topic Slavery), she still believed that "students' feelings should not be teacher's first priority. First and foremost, the teacher should think about the text in terms of informative component: whether the text matches the topic we work on".

Teacher 5

Teachers' understanding of and the attitudes towards the concept Multicultural education

The participant defined multicultural education as "an everyday occurrence for teachers in Norway, because, whether we like it or not we have students with various backgrounds. Multicultural education is then keeping it in background that you have students with different cultures in your class". The participant believed, that teachers would have benefitted from a course where teachers would be presented with different situations that might occur in multicultural classes, as well as possible solutions on how to solve these situations. The participant pointed out that she had not received any special training and felt like she had to find out and experience awkward and unexpected situations in her multicultural classes, which resulted in the fact that she sometimes was overly cautious. The participant explained that due to her lack of knowledge in how to address minority students and how to handle various difficult situations in culturally mixed classes, she sometimes felt overly protective towards those students. She reported that sometimes she practiced what and how she was going to say in her classes and tried to omit terms and certain materials that might have offended someone. She believed that this had been an exaggerated reaction.

Teachers' methods and strategies to address students with culturally diverse background

The teacher stated that she normally did not use different pedagogical methods for her minority students, unless their proficiency in English was low. However, in this case, it might concern not only minority students, rather, students with low English proficiency. The teacher then tried to find easier task for the students and adapt her language to the level, which would be understood by her students.

The teacher believed that her cultural background influenced the way she addressed her students. As a person who had experienced Soviet Union schooling she sometimes believed that the teacher was an authority figure, and that the students should learn whatever teacher said to. However, being aware that this approach would be inappropriate in Norwegian schools, she tried to adapt her teaching to the Norwegian standards, which according to the participant, meant to put students, their needs in the center.

Content integration (cultural incorporation)

The teacher reported that she took students' backgrounds into account when choosing material for her classes:

> Every year I show either "Blood Diamond" or "Desert flower" in the first year of upper secondary school. This year at health care program we have eleven girls and one boy. And the choice of the movie was, actually, pretty much straight-forward: «Desert flower», because it is such a powerful movie about female genital mutilation, and I think, every girl should watch it. However, this only boy I have in the classroom, his parents came from Somalia and I didn't know how he could react to this movie. So I chose to show "Blood diamond" instead… to avoid the discussion, I was not prepared to have.

> She further reported that when teaching about the conflicts around the world in the International English course, knowing that she had students who came from the countries in war, she had to adjust both her teaching and the materials she used to the needs of those students:

> I need to think more about what I am going to say and how I am going to do that in order to not evoke some images in their memories. I know very little about their background in their countries, I know very little about their stories.

> The participant believed that a teacher should take students' background into account when choosing material for the classes in order to avoid "unnecessary conflicts, misunderstandings and

harsh discussions". At the same time, it should be one of the factors that influence a teachers' choice, however, not decisive one. The participant emphasized the importance of receiving special training in order to teach multicultural classes.

Minority students' response to the material used in class.

The teacher reported that she had experienced several incidents, when her minority culture students reacted to the material she used in her classes:

> Every year we have a project at health care program called «What does it mean to be a good girl. I show my students 6 videos about 6 girls living in different countries. One of those girls is from Syria. And every time I show this video, I am a bit worried about the reception of it by the Norwegians, how they may comment on it and how my multicultural students may react to those comments. I am worried about the discussion we may have. So the challenge is not in teaching in itself, it's about not hurting people.

> At the same time, she reported that these discussions had great learning potential, as the students had a possibility to find out about other countries through discussion. The challenge, however, was to be able to lead a safe discussion, so that it would not hurt the feelings of its participants.

> The teacher claimed that it was difficult to predict possible reactions of her students to the materials she used. The teacher stated that she chose the materials she had good experience of using. However, she stated that, while some students would like her choice, some students might find the materials she decided to use offensive or evoking undesirable memories:

> Every year, when we discuss Africa, I show my VG1 students (the first year of upper secondary school) the movie "Blood diamond". Last year I had a student from Algeria. She was visibly older than the rest of the class… When we watched the movie, I saw that she was shaken by it. As I later found out, it awoke some bad memories from her past. She stood up and said "There is no way I would watch this movie" and left the classroom for an hour. She didn't enjoy it, to say the least.

Teacher 6

Teachers' understanding of and the attitudes towards the concept Multicultural education

The participant understood the concept of multicultural education as adapting teaching to the needs of minority students. The teacher emphasized that she had not heard the term before and had interpreted it based on the information she had received from the author of the study prior to the interview.

The participant believed that many teachers nowadays lacked cultural awareness and that it would have been a good idea to receive special training or a course on how to address minority students. However, she reported that she had not received any special training in how to teach minority students, but she would have liked to find out about different cultures represented at Norwegian secondary schools, as well as what challenges minority students faced.

Elaborating more on the concept, the participant claimed the main focus when teaching multicultural classrooms should lay in assuring equal opportunities to each and every student, regardless of ethnic background. Securing equal rights and opportunities for every student included addressing everyone equally and providing everyone with the same amount of attention. The teacher was against exaggerated focus on ethnic and cultural background of students as she believed it might lead to the fact that students with minority cultures feeling excluded and different, which contradicted the principles of inclusive education. The teacher concludes:

> Multicultural students or minority students are not the biggest challenge nowadays. They are really strong and learn quickly how to fit in. Today, students struggle from other problems such us: mental disorders, social anxiety. I have students who prefer to sit under the desk the whole class and I need to ask them each time, whether they would like to participate. And I would say, that Norwegian students are more exposed to psychological disorders than minority students. Because multicultural students have other priorities and challenges, they don't have time to sit under the desk. They work hard to fit in.

Teachers' methods and strategies to address students with culturally diverse background

The teacher stated that she differentiated between students who had come to Norway as children and, thus, could be addressed and treated as Norwegians, and the students who had come to Norway couple of years ago. Though trying to address everyone equally, she tried to adjust her teaching, activities in the class, as well as her language to the needs of newly arrived immigrants. The

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participant stated that in fully Norwegian classes she could easily compare different cultures to the Norwegian one, and she usually talked about "us" referring to Norwegian, and "them" speaking of other nations and cultures. She reported:

> But in multicultural classes, it is not right to say "us" and "them", you need to include everyone, and everyone's point of view. When I know I have minority students in my class, or even students who were born here, but whose parents were immigrants, I need to be careful about what I am saying and how I am saying it.

The participant said that the biggest challenge in teaching minority students resided in the lack of knowledge of students' backgrounds and experiences. Usually, she stated, the teachers made assumptions based on prejudice or stereotypes:

> I have one student in the ninth grade. At the beginning of the year students had to say something about themselves. And one of my students, he looked like he was from Pakistan and I asked him "You are from Pakistan, right". And he said "No, I am Norwegian". That was the most awkward moment.

The teacher concluded that after that incident she had been sensitive towards various culture assumptions, and thus, the best solution for her had been to not differentiate students based on their ethnic or cultural background.

Content integration (cultural incorporation)

The participant reported that she tried to think about her students' background, when planning her classes. However, it did not influence the choice of material she would use, rather, she thought how she might justify her choice in the class:

> We have had about Slavery this week. And I knew I had to use terms such "Africans", "African slaves", "The Blacks, and even "Negroes". I feel really uncomfortable about this topic and about using these expressions, especially the last one. However, I feel like I kind of have to, because it is not my personal opinion, it is a historical fact. So, at the beginning of the class I said that we would read the text about slavery and would then watch the videos, which might be harsh. And that they (students) should understand that it was not my personal opinion, it was just a topic we had to go through I felt really awkward. I wanted to go through this topic as quickly as possible.

The participant further stated that a teacher should take student's background into account when planning the classes. However, it was not that easy to do, unless a teacher was a contact teacher of those particular minority students. She claimed that being just a subject teacher, she knew very little of students' backgrounds and the things they might find challenging or offensive. The teacher emphasizes that it was important that students informed her if they found a particular subject offensive.

Minority students' response to the texts covered in class

The teacher reported that, when teaching about slavery to a fully monocultural class the last year, she showed the movie "Twelve years a slave", something she decided not to do this year, knowing that she had students with minority background. The participant claimed:

> My Norwegian students last year did not react to the movie. They didn't care. While I almost cried on some scenes, they were like "We watched "The Games of Thrones"- you can't surprise us anymore". This year, I would not show the movie to my minority students, because I am afraid of their reaction to it. I am afraid that I wouldn't be able to cope with this reaction.

7. Discussion
7.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings, obtained from the interviews with the teachers. The teachers' perspectives will be analyzed through the lens of the theoretical strands presented in Chapter two. The discussion of the findings includes four main categories: Teachers' understanding of and the attitudes towards the concept Multicultural education; Teachers' methods and strategies to address students with culturally diverse background; Cultural incorporation (content integration); and Minority students' response to the materials used in class.

7.2 Teachers' understanding of and the attitudes towards the concept Multicultural education

This section presents the analysis of the teachers' understanding and attitudes towards the concept multicultural education. The teachers' responses will be discussed in light of research on multicultural pedagogy and culture awareness in the Norwegian educational discourse.

The analysis of the teachers' responses indicated that they lacked understanding of the concept multicultural education. The teachers defined the concept as "facilitating education to the needs of minority students", which was most closely linked with one dimension of multicultural education, namely equity pedagogy. None of the participants mentioned the other four dimensions of the concept: content integration, knowledge construction, prejudice reduction and empowering school culture. Furthermore, none of the teachers actually explained how they would facilitate education to the needs of minority students. Five out of six participants reported that they had never heard the term before and could only interpret it based on the information they had received prior to the interview.

These findings indicate and reinforce the point made by Tosic (2012), Krakhellen (2011) and Isaksen (2019) that teachers in Norway lack competence and understanding of the concept multicultural education. The possible explanation of the lack of understanding of multicultural education, according to Tosic (2012), may reside in not having a common and clear definition of what the concept represents, as scholars usually bring in their own interpretations, when defining the term. Furthermore, the main principles of multicultural education are embodied in several concepts, including culturally responsive teaching, intercultural education, equity pedagogy and adapted teaching. In the Norwegian education discourse, the concepts tilpasset opplæring (adapted

education), inkludering (inclusion), and flerkulturell pedagogikk (multicultural pedagogy) are grounded on the idea of facilitating education to the needs of all students in a classroom, regardless of their ethnicity, race and linguistic background. Therefore, due to the absence of a commonly accepted definition of multicultural education and the existence of several terms that refer to the same phenomenon, one cannot expect the teachers to clearly define the term.

Furthermore, though multicultural classes are now an everyday occurrence in Norwegian secondary schools, the results of this paper indicate that the teachers do not feel confident and competent to design teaching for multicultural classes. All the participants reported that they did not have the necessary training to adequately address the needs of minority students. Thus, the teachers report that they had to learn to adjust their teaching to the needs of minority students in their first years of teaching.

Teacher 4, for instance, pointed to the insufficiency of teacher-training practice during the course of her study. According to the participant, she felt like a "guest speaker", when having her teaching-practice. By claiming so, the teacher reported that her main duties were related to the content of the classes. She stated that she had not gained any experiences of what it actually meant to be a teacher in a multicultural class, and that she eventually had to learn that in her first year of teaching.

Similar results can be found in the studies of Šurkalović (2014), Iversen (2016), and Krulatz and Torgersen (2016), among others. As stated in Krulatz and Torgersen (2016), while some teachers are unaware of the challenges their minority students may face, other can clearly see the needs of their students but do not have the competence of how to address those needs:

> English teachers working with culturally and linguistically diverse students feel unprepared to face the challenges brought about by the new classroom demographics. The teachers we have been working with are fully aware of the gaps in their knowledge and skills and are motivated to improve their classroom practices (Krulatz & Torgersen, 2016, p. 66).

According to Teacher 1, this might be explained by insufficient knowledge in this field in the Norwegian educational context. The participant claims that: "If I were to hold a seminar about multicultural education, I wouldn't know more than the people, attending the seminar. It is just something we, teachers, rarely talk about. I think that this is the reason: the lack of resources, the lack of answers".

The participant's perspective is interesting for several reasons. First of all, it points to the fact that multicultural education has never been a dominant approach in Norwegian educational context (Aasen, 2012), and it has only been studied through the lens of adapted education and inclusion in school as an institution, without questioning the premises laying behind such approach (Chinga-Ramirez, 2015). During the recent years, however, the improvement of competence in multicultural areas, as well as the development of inclusive multicultural environments at all levels of education have received considerable attention in Norwegian academia. The studies of Pihl (2010), Aasen (2012), Iversen (2016), Jortveit (2014), Chinga- Ramirez (2015), Šurkalović (2014), Dahl and Krulatz (2016), and Krulatz and Torgersen (2016) among others, have shed light upon the phenomenon of multicultural education and inclusion in Norway.

Additionally, the work of the NAFO (Nasjonal Senter for flerkulturell opplæring) has greatly contributed to the development and promotion of multicultural and multilingual education in Norway. The center has initiated several projects all over Norway aiming to enhance school employees' knowledge within multicultural education. Additionally, Inland Norway University of Applied Science held several conferences on multicultural education, for instance "Teacher education and diversity" (2018) and "Multilingual childhoods: education, policy and practice" (2019), to name a few, which has also contributed to the increasing competence in multicultural education matters. Furthermore, today several universities and colleges across the country (University of Oslo, University of Stavanger, OsloMet and Inland Norway University of Applied Science, among others) provide various courses which aim to develop an intercultural perspective in teacher education.

Hence, the author of this study will argue that the participant's claim about the lack of competence in multicultural education in the Norwegian context, is not up to date since the field indeed is being gradually explored and several research studies, projects, conferences and courses contribute to better understanding of the state of multicultural matters in Norway. However, none of the resources mentioned above were available to the participants when they took their education. The main reason for this was the absence of multicultural curriculum in the teacher-training programs in Norwegian universities at the time when the participants of the study fulfilled their education. Moreover, based on the interviews with Teachers 1, 2 and 6, who now are in the final semester of their studies, it could be argued that multicultural education and cultural competence

preparation of the teacher-candidates are still not prioritized teaching-training programs in Norway.

This leads us to the second and more complex issue behind the teachers' lack of competence and understanding of the concept multicultural education, namely, that there is "no tradition for multicultural pedagogy in Norwegian schools, nor in the curriculum" (Iversen, 2016, p. 73). Instead, the Norwegian educational system has long been dominated by "the sentiment of equality as sameness" (Iversen, 2016) or "imagined sameness", as stated in Gullestad (2002). This dominant tradition, according to Iversen (2016), has resulted in the fact that the teachers use the same instructions and resources to approach both culturally and linguistically diverse classes and more homogenous classes. Thus, according to Iversen, "Rather than adapting the instruction to the cultural and linguistic diversity, it seems that minority students who do not easily adapt to the egalitarian classroom are excluded, and provided with special education" (Iversen, 2016, p. 74).

In this sense, one can question the fairness of the Norwegian school system. Several studies (e.g., Iversen, 2016; Chinga- Ramirez, 2015; Aasen, 2012) conclude that minority students are excluded from the equality of Norwegian school, as the teaching does not make use of their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Furthermore, the studies indicate that there seems to exist a standard or an ideal to which all the minority students are compared and measured up against. This standard is defined as the "ideal student" (den idealtypiske eleven), to which all the minority students are expected to assimilate (Chinga- Ramirez, 2015; Iversen, 2016). In this sense, equality and equity transform into sameness, since the students are expected to become invisible through their likeness to other, which usually means giving up who they really are (Rugkåsa, 2012; Chinga-Ramirez, 2015). Therefore, it can be argued that, due to the dominant approach of equality, there has been insufficient focus on multilingual pedagogy in teacher- training programs. The absence of multicultural pedagogy training has resulted in the fact that teachers today do not adopt multicultural approaches when teaching English in culturally mixed classes. Hence, according to Iversen (2016) there is "an inadequacy in the dominant perception of equality as sameness, which is also present in Norwegian curriculum and legal documents" (Iversen, 2016, p. 74).

However, when it comes to the teachers' attitudes to multicultural education, the results of the study indicate that, though the dominant philosophy of equality as sameness definitely influences the way the teachers perceive the concept, it is not the most influential factor. Applying the

assumption that the dominant approach would affect the way ethnically Norwegian teachers perceive multicultural education, one may assume that Norwegian participants would have a negative attitude towards the concept. Further on, one may conclude that ethnic minority teachers, in contrast to their Norwegian colleagues, would have a positive attitude towards multicultural education, due to the fact that, first and foremost, this tradition is foreign to them, but also because they might themselves have experienced being unfairly treated by the Norwegian educational system. However, having analyzed the findings of the present study, it can be noticed that this is not the case, as there is a difference in attitudes towards multicultural education among Norwegian teachers, as well as among ethnical- minority teachers. Analyzing the responses of ethnically Norwegian teachers (Teacher 1, 2 and 6), one will see that, while Teacher 2 and 6 seem to support the dominant tradition of "sameness", claiming that implementing multicultural education "may cause more harm than good", Teacher 1 expresses a positive attitude towards the concept. Similarly to their Norwegian colleagues, ethnic minority teachers (teachers 3,4 and 5) express conflicting ideas about multicultural education and its implementation in Norwegian schools. Therefore, it may be argued that the reasons behind the teachers' conflicting attitudes towards multicultural education are very complex and multifaced, and they are influenced by a number of factors. Thus, in order to gain a better understanding of the teachers' attitudes towards multicultural education it is important to take into consideration factors such as age, ethnic and linguistic background, work experience, and education. A similar approach was used by Aktoprak et al. (2018), who reported that teachers' perceptions of multicultural education differed with respect to gender, age, ethnic and educational background, as well as professional seniority.

The paper of Aktoprak et al. (2018) revealed that younger teachers were generally more positive towards multicultural education compared to their older colleagues. The findings of the present study, on the other hand, indicate that there is no significant effect of the age on the attitudes toward multicultural education. Being the youngest participant of the study, Teacher 6, for instance, expressed concerns about what she called an "exaggerated focus on culture". She believed differentiating students by their ethnic or cultural background might lead to students with minority cultures feeling excluded, which, according to the participant, contradicted the principles of inclusive education. In contrast to Teacher 6, Teacher 1, who also was one of the youngest participants of the study, expressed positive attitudes towards multicultural education. Comparing the teachers' profiles, one can see that Teachers 1 and 6 are of the same age group, and both are

ethnically Norwegian. The participant graduated from the same university at the same period of time and had a formal title Adjunct. Furthermore, both participants had experience of living and studying abroad. Thus, these findings contradict the results of the Aktoprak et al.'s (2018) study, which indicate that younger and less experienced teachers are more positive toward multicultural education compared to teachers working for a longer period.

Based on the responses obtained from the interviews, as well as the analysis of the participants' profiles, the author of this study argues that neither the dominant tradition of equality as sameness, age, ethnic, cultural and linguistic background, nor educational background and working experience alone, can determine the teachers' attitudes towards multicultural education. Rather, the teachers' perceptions are multilayered and seem to be influenced by all or several perspectives at once.

7.3 Teachers' methods and strategies to address students with culturally diverse background

The findings of the present study indicate that all of the participants, except for Teacher 1, normally did not use different teaching methods to reach the needs of their minority students. One of the reasons behind the absence of teacher provided differentiated approach was that the participants did not have time or resources to provide individually differentiated instruction, since they usually had several minority students in one class. Teacher 3, for instance, claimed that she tried to see "an average student" and tried to adapt her teaching to an "average student" with basic skills and needs. Another argument given by Teacher 2 was that differentiating teaching methods to the needs of any particular student group would make them feel different and excluded. She addressed everyone as "We, Norwegians" and tried "to fill in the cultural gap" by sharing her experiences of being Norwegian with the rest of the class that it might help the students to understand the difference between their own cultures and Norwegian culture. The latter statement is reinforced in Bjørnsrud (2014) and Chinga-Ramirez (2015), who state that the Norwegian school system emphasizes the importance of various adaptation and inclusion mechanisms that will make it easier to understand Norwegian culture and to assimilate to it. This, according to Engen (2014), results in the raising of a so-called "Undifferentiated community" (udifferensiert fellesskap). This means that equality and inclusion in school is organized through assuring everyone the same access to the same school and instruction, so that all children regardless of ethnic and cultural background

should acquire equal opportunities for education. However, this equality usually is attained on the expense of the minority students' cultural backgrounds and needs (Engen, 2014, cited in Chinga-Ramirez, 2015, p. 221).

Furthermore, having analyzed the statements of Teacher 2 and 3, one can notice that the participants place strong emphasis on equalizing their students, likening them to their ideas of average and normal students. These findings are concordant with Chinga- Ramirez' (2015) and Rugkåsa' (2012) that many minority students are currently met with the expectation to be like and assimilate to the existing standard of a typical and normal student- "the ideal student".

Similarly, the teachers' perception of multicultural education, the absence of differentiating instruction, stem from the absence of multicultural pedagogy and the dominant tradition of equality as sameness in Norwegian education. According to the teachers' perspectives, they provided everyone with the same instruction and teaching to assure equality in education. Laugerud et al. (2014), as cited in Iversen (2016), claim that insufficient knowledge and the absence of multicultural education have resulted in the fact that teachers use the same strategies and methods in both homogenous and culturally diverse classes. Furthermore, according to Laugerud et al. (2014), the students who fail to adjust to the homogenous classes usually are excluded and provided with special education (Laugerud et al., 2014, p. 10, cited in Iversen, 2016, p. 74). Moreover, Iversen (2016) claims, that since this approach is dominant in the Norwegian school system "the students accept that teachers ignore their diverse linguistic backgrounds in the classroom, and treat all students the same, without regard to their right to differentiated instruction" (Iversen, 2016, p. 80). Thus, according to Iversen (2016), the following approach will not result in equality in the EFL classroom.

The results of the present study reinforce the findings of Burner et al.'s (2017) study, which shows that the teachers, though emphasizing the importance of facilitating teaching to the needs of culturally diverse students, rarely do that in their everyday teaching. The study of Burner et al (2017) shows that the teachers, while emphasizing the "campaigns to reduce xenophobia", "work with mother tongue teachers", "increase understanding of each other, tolerance, respect, empathy, openness", "put diversity into the school's plans", do not actually explain how they realize these measures in practice. The findings of the present study confirm this phenomenon: even the teachers who seem to have a positive attitude towards multicultural education and emphasize the importance of adapting their teaching to the needs of their culturally diverse students, do not actually

facilitate their teaching to meet the needs of their minority students. The only example of differentiated instruction provided by the participants, was adapting their language and providing the tasks with different levels of difficulty. However, in this sense, the differentiated approach may concern all students with insufficient English proficiency, rather than catered specifically for the needs of minority students.

7.4 Content integration (cultural incorporation)

The overall results obtained from the interviews, reveal that the participants of the study did not make use of their students' backgrounds and did not implement multicultural content into curriculum. Out of the six participants, only three reported that they took their students' backgrounds into account when planning the lessons. However, by claiming so, the teachers mostly referred to excluding certain material, which they find inappropriate to be taught in culturally diverse classes. Teachers 1, 5 and 6, for instance, reported that they felt uncomfortable discussing the issues of religion, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, controversial political and social issues (e.g., gun ownership in the US, gay marriages). Therefore, the teachers stated that they tried to avoid discussing those topics or to briefly cover the topics and move to more "neutral" ones.

On the other hand, Teacher 2 reported that though having concerns about how certain material would be perceived by her minority students, she still used them in her multicultural classes. Compared to the other participants, Teacher 1 offered the most encompassing perception of content integration. The participant stated that she sometimes let her students influence the choice of topics and material covered in class. However, the teacher emphasized that this did not occur often and normally she used the material she intended to use, because it still was important that the students were exposed to various topics, even though they might not agree to them.

Based on the teachers' responses it can be argued that the choice of texts and visual materials was biased by the teachers' own life experiences, values and beliefs. None of the participants provided any examples of how they actually took their students' cultures into consideration, when planning the lessons. Teacher 2, for instance, reported that the decisive factor when choosing material for her classes was her own preferences, as she usually chose the material she found "fun to teach". She further reported that her students found it rewarding to be exposed to the materials they would not normally choose themselves. Teacher 6 said that though she tried to think about

her students' backgrounds when choosing material, her choice was primarily determined by her own preferences.

Moreover, the findings of the present study have not shown any evidence of the connection between teachers' ethnic background and the degree of provided multicultural content. Ethnic minority teachers who participated in the present study did not report higher levels of multicultural content integration, compared to their Norwegian colleagues. Thus, the findings of the present study contradict the results presented in Agirdag et al.'s study (2016), which reported that ethnic minority teachers implemented multicultural content to a greater degree, compared to their majority culture colleagues.

One possible explanation is that being aware of their different background, the ethnic minority teachers tried to adapt the mainstream teaching practices and assimilate to the Norwegian Education system. For instance, Teacher 5 claimed that her experiences of the Soviet Union school system and working experience in a post-Soviet country would be irrelevant and even inappropriate in the Norwegian educational context and therefore, she had decided to assimilate her teaching methods to the Norwegian ones. A similar point was made by Teacher 4, who reported that she adjusted her teaching to the needs of her Norwegian students as she clearly could see the cultural gap between herself and them. At the same time, she reported that she related culturally to the students from Eastern European countries and, therefore, she could address them as equal to her.

Analyzing these findings through the lens of socio-cultural approach to literacy, it may be argued that by ignoring the students' cultural backgrounds, the participants of the present study did not exploit the potential these students brought to the classroom. By choosing the materials based on their own preferences and without providing the students with possibilities to influence this choice, the participants practiced a monocultural approach to education, which did not lead to equality of opportunities in the EFL classroom. Thus, the teachers' everyday classroom practices contradicted the Government's initiatives to secure equality of opportunity for everyone, regardless of the backgrounds, which recognizes "the personal aptitude, social background, and local origin of the pupils themselves" (Core Curriculum, 1994) as a point of departure for schooling. Furthermore, being guided by their own preferences when choosing materials for the classes, the teachers did not provide the students with the opportunities to "acquire knowledge on different cultures and experience of a wide range of forms of expression" (The Quality Framework, 2011), as they disregard students' cultures as the resource for their lessons. Hence, the findings of the

present study prove the point made by Pihl (2003) that Norwegian education, while trying to be socially inclusive in reality is culturally exclusive. As an example, the participants of the present study emphasized the importance of exposing minority students to the materials they would not necessarily react positively to, which would help them to broaden their horizons and develop respect and tolerance towards various conflicting points of views. At the same time, no such actions were reported to be undertaken in relation to Norwegian students, as the teachers used only mainstream curriculum. Thus, it is reasonable to argue that this approach does not assure equal opportunities to all the students, as it seems to privilege one group of students over the others. Further, except for excluding certain materials in a multicultural class, the teachers did not actively choose any material for the multicultural students or from their perspective. Thus, it can be argued that the teachers took the Norwegian culture perspectives as a sole point to choosing materials for the classes, and by doing so, they disregarded their minority students' experiences and heritage and thus, did not "invite all voices and experiences to be heard" (Iversen, 2016, p. 77).

In this case, a possible solution is to make the students aware of the fact that the attitudes, policies and practices they face as a cultural and linguistic minority are the outcomes of the policies and decisions in the educational sector (Iversen, 2016, p. 78-79). Iversen suggests that only through the questioning of the existing structures and policies the students "will be enabled to confront potential discrimination, lack of equality, or limited possibilities" (Iversen, 2016, p. 79). Iversen's (2016) point of view echoes the main principles of critical literacy, which emphasize "the skills and ability to identify the creators of knowledge and their interests, to uncover the assumptions of knowledge, to view knowledge from diverse ethnic and cultural perspectives, and to use knowledge to guide action that will create a humane and just world" (Banks, 2003, p. 3). Making students aware of the existence of "the creators of knowledge and their interests" could be done through inviting students to the discussions of the choice of the material and encouraging students to critically approach materials used in class (Iversen, 2016).

However, the interviews with the participants of this study suggest that teachers felt unprepared and incompetent to lead discussions of the materials used in class. Teacher 5 stated, for instance:

Every year we have a project at health care program called "What does it mean to be a good girl". I show my students 6 videos about 6 girls living in different countries. One of those girls is from Syria. And every time I show this video, I am a bit worried about the

reception of it by the Norwegians, how they may comment on it and how my multicultural students may react to those comments. I am worried about the discussion we may have. So the challenge is not in teaching in itself, it's about not hurting people.

Further, similarly to teacher 5, teacher 3 reported that she decided to not follow up the incident of racial harassment, experienced by one of the Polish students after the discussion of Work Immigration in one of the classes. The teacher stated that she informed the students' contact teacher about the incident, however she did not feel prepared or confident to address the issue in the class. This leads us to a paradox: all the participants reported that there was a great learning potential in exposing students to various conflicting ideas, they did not necessarily agree to. The teachers believed it could be used in debates or critical discussions in the classes. At the same time, none of the participants felt prepared to facilitate these discussions and they either avoided to hold a debate about the materials used in class or used this as a possibility to justify their choices, without providing their students with the opportunities to speak up.

Thus, the findings of the present study reinforce the point made by Enciso (1997) who states that the teachers need to have competence in how to encourage the students to question their own and their peers' ideas, as well as ideas, values and ideologies that appear in the material used in the class. It can, therefore, be argued that only when the students are able to read the world, will they, as pointed by Iversen (2016) experience a true equality of opportunity in the EFL classroom.

7.5 Minority students' response to the material used in class

The minority students' responses to the material used in class should be viewed in relation to the previous subsection, as those reactions are the results of the use of mainstream curriculum materials, the lack of the incorporation of students' cultures and integration of multicultural content into the teachers' daily practices. As a result, "when no cultural cues are familiar, students have difficulty identifying with and understanding literary text" (Blue, 2012, p.2).

The findings from the current study support Blue's (2012) statement. For example, teacher 1 reported an incident she had in one of her multicultural classes when watching "Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close". The teacher stated that, while watching the movie, one of her students left the classroom crying. However, the teacher believed that the main reason for this reaction was that the movie was sad. She further added that "It shouldn't necessarily be culture-related. I have also experienced that everything can trigger the reaction today". Similar incidents have been reported

by teachers 2, 3 and 5. Teacher 2 reported that, though she had also experienced a minority students' different response to the text or a movie that she had used in her classes, she has never thought of those reactions as the result of the influence of students' background. The participant expressed skepticism towards over-exaggerated focus on culture and believed that her students found it rewarding to be exposed to materials they not necessarily like or would choose themselves. A similar point of view was reported by teacher 4, who stated that students' possible negative response should not be the teachers' priority.

Analyzing these findings through the lens of socio-cultural approach to literacy, it can be concluded that some of the students' reactions to the materials used in the class emerged from "what they brought" to the classroom: their cultural and linguistic capital, their past experiences, beliefs and cultures. It can be further claimed that the fact that the students' cultural capital and backgrounds are disregarded and ignored, results in a cultural mismatch between the teacher's and minority students' understanding of the material used in class, mainly because the students' reading of the world may be quite different from their teachers'. On the other hand, one cannot expect that teachers are able to always anticipate the students' perspectives, however, they should be open and inclusive to it by encouraging the students to present their views, their backgrounds and their experiences.

Furthermore, the findings of the present study can be analyzed applying the theory of reader response theory. According to Rosenblatt's (1985) theory of reader response, as cited in Hartwick Dressel (2005), the reader interprets the text on the basis of his own personal experience, previous knowledge and beliefs in the social context in which the reading has been done. Thus, one may assume that the students' reactions, reported by the teachers, emerged from something they might have experienced in their lives. Therefore, it is reasonable to question the approach of teacher 2, who stated that her students should find it rewarding to be exposed to the materials of her own choice, as, according to Hartwick Dressel (2005) "When ideas offered in a text conflict with an entrenched worldview, readers often reveal intense struggles to either reshape or reject the text material" (Hartwick Dressel, 2005, p. 752). The teacher's task, therefore, is not only to expose the students to the worldview they do not relate to, but rather to encourage them to critically reflect over and discuss them: "Rather than directing students toward a single approved reading, teachers

need to engage them in discussions designed to encourage an examination of assumptions, incon-sistencies, or illogical conclusions that might otherwise remain unchallenged" (Hartwick Dressel, 2005, p. 752).

However, as it has been argued in the previous sections, the participants of the study did not feel prepared to lead critical discussions in multicultural classes and therefore, students' responses to material remained silenced by the teacher. Thus, these findings question the premises lying behind the idea of equality in the Norwegian education system, as the learning of one group of people cannot be achieved at the expenses of another one.

7.6 Summary

This thesis has shown so far that the Norwegian lower- and upper secondary schools teachers in this study lacked understanding and knowledge of multicultural education. Furthermore, the re-sults have indicated that the teachers expressed skepticism towards implementing multicultural education into the Norwegian school system. One of the main reasons behind the participants' perspectives is that multicultural education has never been a dominant approach in Norway (Aasen, 2012), due to the so-called "sentiment of equality as sameness" (Iversen, 2016), according to which all students were expected to become invisible through their likeness to each other (Chinga- Ramirez, 2015). Due to the dominant tradition of equality and sameness, as well as the lack of multicultural pedagogy, the participants of the study did not apply a multicultural approach in their classes. Furthermore, the participants of the study were against providing their students with differentiated instruction, as they believed that by doing so, they would make their students feel different and excluded. Thus, the idea of equality as sameness, resulted in what Pihl (2003) defines as a fundamental paradox of Norwegian education system: while being socially inclusive, the school today remains culturally exclusive.

Moreover, the participants reported that, due to inadequate teacher training, they felt un-prepared and unqualified to teach multicultural classes. The participants stated that they would like to acquire more knowledge in multicultural matters. However, their interest resided in receiving more information about various cultures, presented in the Norwegian school, and not about the concept multicultural education itself. The findings of the present study indicate that there is a need for revised curriculum both in the Norwegian secondary school and teacher-training pro-grams.

8. Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to investigate how Norwegian lower- and upper secondary school teachers addressed their minority language and culture students. A further aspiration of this project was to investigate how teachers defined multicultural education and what attitudes they had towards the concept. The study aimed to examine whether the teachers provided their minority students with differentiated instruction and whether they believed that it was something worth doing. The paper also aimed to look at the extent to which teachers incorporated their students' backgrounds into teaching English.

Three main findings have emerged after the analysis of the qualitative interviews with the participants of the study. First, the teachers lacked knowledge and understanding of the concept multicultural education. The teachers reported that they could only interpret the term, based on the information, provided by the author of the study prior to the interviews. Furthermore, the participants reported that they had not received any special training in how to facilitate their teaching to the needs of minority students. One of the main explanations of these findings resides in the fact that multicultural education has never been a dominant approach in the Norwegian education system (Aasen, 2012), due to the so called "sentiment of equality as sameness" (Iversen, 2016), an idea of an imagined community, through which equality is perceived as sameness (Chinga-Ramirez, 2015). Therefore, it can be argued that, due to the dominant approach of equality, there has been insufficient focus on multilingual pedagogy in teacher- training programs.

Second, the findings of the present study indicated that the teachers did not use different teaching methods and strategies to address their minority students. The participants of the present study believed that differentiating teaching methods to the needs of any particular student group, would make them feel different and excluded. Thus, the participants addressed everyone as "We, Norwegians" and helped their minority students to "fill in the cultural gap", or they tried to see and adjust their teaching methods to the needs of an "average student". These findings reinforce the point made by Chinga- Ramirez (2015) that equality of opportunity in the Norwegian school is organized through providing everyone with the same access to the same school and instruction, so that all children regardless of ethnic and cultural background should acquire equal opportunities for education. However, this equality usually is attained at the expense of the minority students' cultural backgrounds and needs (Engen, 2014, cited in Chinga-Ramirez, 2015, p. 221).

Third, the interviews with the teachers revealed that they did not make use of their students' backgrounds and did not implement multicultural content into their classroom practices. The participants of the study stated that they tried to think about their students' backgrounds when choosing the materials for the classes. However, by claiming so, the teachers mostly referred to excluding certain material, which they find inappropriate to be taught in culturally diverse classes (e.g., gun ownership, gay marriage, religious holidays). Furthermore, all the participants of the present study emphasized the importance of exposing minority students to the materials they would not necessarily respond positively to, which would help them to broaden their horizons and develop respect and tolerance towards various conflicting points of views. The participants reported that, exposing students to various conflicting cultural expressions was a great possibility for arranging class debates and critical discussions. At the same time, none of the participants felt prepared or qualified to lead these discussions and tried to avoid controversial topics which might have led to the discussions the teachers were not prepared to have. Furthermore, due to the fact that the students' cultural capital was disregarded and ignored, this resulted in a cultural mismatch between the teachers and minority students', which led to several incidents of minority students' negative response to the materials used in class.

Thus, the findings of the present study indicate that there is a need for a multicultural approach to teaching English, which will acknowledge and exploit the cultural capital of all students in the class. As stated in Iversen (2016, p. 83): "With a clear message to teachers and institutions that educate future teachers, to promote multiculturalism and multilingualism in the classrooms, one can expect a change in the current situation". Similarly to Iversen (2016), the author of the present paper argues that there is a need for a revised curriculum both in the Norwegian secondary school and teacher- training programs.

8.2 Limitations

The reader should bear in mind, that this study only deals with teachers' own experiences and practices of teaching multicultural classes. However, the author of this study believes that further research on the pupils' own experiences of multicultural education would provide a deeper and much needed context for the study of multicultural education practices in Norway. Further, the relevance for this project resides mainly in the Norwegian school context, as the results of the

study are discussed through the lens of various Norwegian Education documents (e.g., the Norwegian Education Act, the Norwegian National Curriculum, the English Language Curriculum), and therefore, might not be applicable to the rest of the world.

Moreover, the results of the present study do not apply to all teachers working in Norwegian secondary schools. First of all, due to the scope of the study, the Norwegian primary school teachers were excluded from the participation in the project. Secondly, one of the main criteria for participation was that the participants had acquired Norwegian education, either as their main degree or as additional education to their main education fulfilled abroad. Thus, the present study does not include teachers who received their teacher- training qualification abroad.

8.3 Further research

The author of the present study believes that there is a need for more research on the culture incorporation in EFL teaching. The present study indicated that the classroom practices that did not take advantage of the students' cultural capital and were biased by the teachers' own backgrounds, beliefs and preferences, could easily lead to a cultural mismatch between the teacher and the student and cause a negative response to materials used in class. Thus, one of the possible directions for further research is to investigate whether there is a connection between the use of mainstream curriculum and low academic achievement among the minority students. Furthermore, one can also examine students' own perspectives on the materials used in class. The latter is particularly interesting to investigate in the light of the new National Curriculum, which places strong emphasis on ensuring equity in education, as well as the development of culture awareness and critical skills in students.

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Appendix 1
Interview Guide

Background questions

1. What is your ethnic and linguistic background?
2. How old are you? a. 25-34 years old.   b. 34-44years old.   c. 45-55years old
3. What is your educational background?

<u>Follow-up questions:</u>

Which degree do you have?

What have you studied?

4. How long have you been working as a teacher?
5. What subjects do you teach?
6. What grade(s) do you teach?

Teachers' experiences of teaching multicultural classes

1. How do you understand the concept of multicultural education?
2. Do you think there is a difference between teaching multicultural and monocultural classes? Please explain your point of view.
3. Do YOU find it challenging to teach multicultural classes? Please give an example. <u>Follow-up:</u> *Do you find it challenging to teach students with the minority culture background? Please explain your point.*
4. To what extent do you draw on minority students' cultural and linguistic background in your teaching? Please give an example.
5. Do you use different pedagogical methods when teaching English and/or other subjects to students with minority culture background? If yes, which and why? If no, why not? Please explain your point.
6. To what extent do you take your students' backgrounds into account while choosing the texts and other visual materials for your classes? Please explain your point.
7. In your opinion, should a teacher take into account student's cultural background, when choosing various texts and visual materials? If yes, why? If no, why not?

8. Do you think that your own cultural background influences the way you address the students with minority culture backgrounds?

9. In your opinion, should a teacher receive specific training in order to teach multicultural students *(students with the minority culture backgrounds)*? If yes, can you explain why?
   <u>Follow-ups:</u> *What kind of training do you think that should be?*
   Have you received any special training?

10. Do you think that you need more knowledge or training in teaching multicultural classes? If yes, what do you want to know more about?

11. Have you ever experienced that students with minority culture backgrounds react differently to the same text/audio recording/ movie than their majority culture (Norwegian) peers? Please give an example.

12. In your opinion, what should be considered most important issue when teaching students with the minority culture backgrounds?

Are you interested in taking part in the research project "Multicultural education: teachers' experiences of teaching multicultural classrooms"?

This is an inquiry about participation in a research project where the main purpose is to investigate teachers' experiences with multicultural classrooms and find out what shapes teachers' understanding of multicultural education. In this letter we will give you information about the purpose of the project and what your participation will involve.

Purpose of the project

The thesis is an investigation of teachers' perception and experiences of teaching multicultural classrooms. The overall aim of the thesis will be to answer the following research question: *How do teachers in Norway address pupils with diverse cultural and language background?*

Furthermore, in order to get a bigger picture and a deeper understanding of the proposed research question, the following five sub-questions will be addressed in the thesis:

- How is the concept of multicultural education understood by the Norwegian lower- and upper secondary school teachers?
- What teaching methods and strategies do the teachers use to teach multicultural classes?
- How and to what extent do teachers integrate the minority students' cultures into teaching English in multicultural classes?
- To what extent do teachers take into consideration the knowledge of student's background while choosing the texts and other visual materials for EFL teaching in Norwegian secondary schools?
- What are the possible challenges of using the mainstream curriculum in culturally diverse classes?

Who is responsible for the research project?

University of Stavanger is the institution responsible for the project.

Why are you being asked to participate?

You have been kindly asked to participate because you meet all the criteria for this thesis:

- you work in lower or upper secondary school
- you have acquired Norwegian education, either as your main degree or as additional education to their main education fulfilled abroad
- you have experience of teaching multicultural classrooms.

What does participation involve for you?

If you chose to take part in the project, this will involve that you will be interviewed by the author of this thesis- Olena Yurchenko. The interview will take approx. 45-60 minutes. The interview includes questions about your experiences of teaching multicultural classrooms. Your answers will be audio recorded.

Participation is voluntary

Participation in the project is voluntary. If you chose to participate, you can withdraw your consent at any time without giving a reason. All information about you will then be made anonymous. There will be no negative consequences for you if you chose not to participate or later decide to withdraw.

Your personal privacy – how we will store and use your personal data

We will only use your personal data for the purpose(s) specified in this information letter. We will process your personal data confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation (the General Data Protection Regulation and Personal Data Act).

Only the author of this thesis- Olena Yurchenko and her supervisor- Rebecca Anne Charboneau Stuvland will have the access to the recordings.

You do not need to provide any personal data such as: name, age, nationality, sex, your workplace. The recording would be given a number, and it will be saved as «Participant #». The recording will be delated in April 2020.

What will happen to your personal data at the end of the research project?

The project is scheduled to end in June 2020. All the data will be then anonymized.

Your rights

So long as you can be identified in the collected data, you have the right to:

- access the personal data that is being processed about you
- request that your personal data is deleted
- request that incorrect personal data about you is corrected/rectified
- receive a copy of your personal data (data portability)
- send a complaint to the Data Protection Officer or The Norwegian Data Protection Authority regarding the processing of your personal data.

What gives us the right to process your personal data?

We will process your personal data based on your consent.

Based on an agreement with University of Stavanger, NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project is in accordance with data protection legislation.

Where can I find out more?

If you have questions about the project, or want to exercise your rights, contact:

The author of this project: Olena Yurchenko via yurchenkolena9@gmail.com

The project supervisor: Rebecca Anne Charboneau Stuvland via rebecca.a.stuvland@uis.no

NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS, by email: (personverntjenester@nsd.no) or by telephone: +47 55 58 21 17.

Yours sincerely,

Olena Yurchenko

Consent form

I have received and understood information about the project "*Multicultural education: teachers' experiences of teaching multicultural classrooms*" and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give consent:

to participate in *(an oral interview)*
To be audio recorded

I give consent for my personal data to be processed until the end date of the project, approx. *June, 2020*

(Signed by participant, date)

NSD NORSK SENTER FOR FORSKNINGSDATA

NSD sin vurdering

Prosjekttittel

Multicultural education: teachers' experiences of teaching multicultural classrooms

Referansenummer

617057

Registrert

13.11.2019 av Olena Yurchenko - o.yurchenko@stud.uis.no

Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon

Universitetet i Stavanger / Fakultet for utdanningsvitenskap og humaniora / Institutt for kultur- og språkvitenskap

Prosjektansvarlig (vitenskapelig ansatt/veileder eller stipendiat)

REBECCA ANNE CHARBONEAU STUVLAND, rebecca.a.stuvland@uis.no, tlf: 51831577

Type prosjekt

Studentprosjekt, masterstudium

Kontaktinformasjon, student

Olena Yurchenko, yurchenkolena9@gmail.com, tlf: 96812847

Prosjektperiode

18.11.2019 - 17.06.2020

Status

03.02.2020 - Vurdert

Vurdering (2)

03.02.2020 - Vurdert

NSD has assessed the change registered on 31.01.2020. This assessment replaces the old one.

Our assessment is that the processing of personal data in this project will comply with data protection legislation, presupposing that it is carried out in accordance with the information given in the Notification Form and attachments dated 03.02.2020, as well as in dialogue with NSD. Everything is in place for the processing to continue.

NOTIFY CHANGES

If you intend to make changes to the processing of personal data in this project it may be necessary to notify
NSD. This is done by updating the Notification Form. On our website we explain which changes must be notified. Wait until you receive an answer from us before you carry out the changes.

TYPE OF DATA AND DURATION

The project will be processing special categories of personal data about ethnicity, and general categories of personal data, until 17.06.2020.

LEGAL BASIS

The project will gain consent from data subjects to process their personal data. We find that consent will meet the necessary requirements under art. 4 (11) and 7, in that it will be a freely given, specific, informed and unambiguous statement or action, which will be documented and can be withdrawn.

The legal basis for processing special categories of personal data is therefore explicit consent given by the data subject, cf. the General Data Protection Regulation art. 6.1 a), cf. art. 9.2 a), cf. the Personal Data Act § 10, cf. § 9 (2).

PRINCIPLES RELATING TO PROCESSING PERSONAL DATA

NSD finds that the planned processing of personal data will be in accordance with the principles under the General Data Protection Regulation regarding:

lawfulness, fairness and transparency (art. 5.1 a), in that data subjects will receive sufficient infor-
mation about the processing and will give their consent

purpose limitation (art. 5.1 b), in that personal data will be collected for specified, explicit and
legitimate purposes, and will not be processed for new, incompatible purposes

data minimisation (art. 5.1 c), in that only personal data which are adequate, relevant and necessary
for the purpose of the project will be processed

storage limitation (art. 5.1 e), in that personal data will not be stored for longer than is necessary
to fulfil the project's purpose

THE RIGHTS OF DATA SUBJECTS

Data subjects will have the following rights in this project: transparency (art. 12), information (art.
13),
access (art. 15), rectification (art. 16), erasure (art. 17), restriction of processing (art. 18),
notification (art. 19), data portability (art. 20). These rights apply so long as the data subject can
be identified in the collected data.

NSD finds that the information that will be given to data subjects about the processing of their
personal data will meet the legal requirements for form and content, cf. art. 12.1 and art. 13.

We remind you that if a data subject contacts you about their rights, the data controller has a duty
to reply within a month.

FOLLOW YOUR INSTITUTION'S GUIDELINES

NSD presupposes that the project will meet the requirements of accuracy (art. 5.1 d), integrity and
confidentiality (art. 5.1 f) and security (art. 32) when processing personal data.

To ensure that these requirements are met you must follow your institution's internal guidelines
and/or consult with your institution (i.e. the institution responsible for the project).

FOLLOW-UP OF THE PROJECT

NSD will follow up the progress of the project at the planned end date in order to determine whether the processing of personal data has been concluded.

Good luck with the project!

Contact person at NSD: Karin Lillevold

Data Protection Services for Research: +47 55 58 21 17 (press 1)