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**Master's Thesis**

**Using texts to teach about and promote intercultural  
competence in the English subject: Teachers' perspectives  
and experiences from Norwegian lower secondary schools**

Å bruke tekst til å undervise om og promotere interkulturell kompetanse i  
engelskfaget: Læreres perspektiver og erfaringer fra norsk  
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Hamar, May 2023

Regine Porsvik Forfang

## Abstract

**Title:** Using texts to teach about and promote intercultural competence in the English subject: Teachers' perspectives and experiences from Norwegian lower secondary schools.

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In this master's thesis *intercultural competence* is understood as the combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes that are essential components of intercultural competence and necessary for pupils to develop to be able to succeed with appropriate and respectful intercultural interactions (Byram, 2021; Deardorff, 2006; Sercu 2005). This thesis explores teachers of English in Norwegian lower secondary schools' perceptions on using different types of texts to teach about and promote their pupils' intercultural competence. The method used to gather data for this thesis was the semi-structured interview, and the findings are discussed in relation to relevant theory (e.g., Byram, 2021; Lund, 2020; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013), previous research (e.g., Lyngstad, 2019, Cornei & Dina, 2014; Heggernes, 2021) and the English subject curriculum (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020).

The results in this thesis imply that the teachers understanding of the term intercultural competence is in accordance with what is written in the English subject curriculum (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020). The teachers express that they consider different aspect, such as *tolerance* and *understanding of others* to be important to intercultural competence. They also emphasize the ability to critically evaluate one's own culture and the willingness to change one's perspective as essential. Even so, the data imply that the teachers work with the component of *knowledge* explicitly, while teaching *skills* and *attitudes* implicitly. The data suggest that the teachers use a variety of different types of texts in their intercultural teaching, including textbooks and authentic texts, such as novels, films and picture books. The data show further that the teachers consider the authentic text to be a useful tool, when trying to develop different components of their pupils' intercultural competence.

# Norsk sammendrag

**Tittel:** Å bruke tekst til å undervise om og promotere interkulturell kompetanse i engelskfaget: Læreres perspektiver og erfaringer fra norsk ungdomsskole.

**Forfatter:** Regine Porsvik Forfang

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I denne masteroppgaven er *interkulturell kompetanse* forstått som kombinasjonen av kunnskap, ferdigheter og holdninger som er essensielle komponenter innenfor interkulturell kompetanse og nødvendige for elever å utvikle for å kunne lykkes med passende og respektfulle interkulturelle interaksjoner (Byram, 2021; Deardorff, 2006; Sercu 2005). Denne oppgaven utforsker engelsklærere i Norsk ungdomsskoles oppfatninger av å bruke ulike typer tekster til å undervise om og utvikle deres elevers interkulturelle kompetanse. Metoden brukt til å samle data i oppgaven var semi-strukturert intervju, og funnene er diskutert i forhold til relevant teori (f.eks., Byram, 2021; Lund, 2020; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013), tidligere forskning (f.eks., Lyngstad, 2019, Cornei & Dina, 2014; Heggernes, 2021) og Læreplan I Engelsk (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020).

Resultatene i oppgaven indikerer at lærernes forståelse av begrepet interkulturell kompetanse er i tråd med det som er skrevet i Læreplan i Engelsk (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020). Lærerne uttrykte at de vurderer ulike egenskaper, slik som *toleranse* og *forståelse av andre*, som viktige for interkulturell kompetanse. De fremhevet også evnen til å kritisk evaluere egen kultur og viljen til å endre sitt eget perspektiv som essensielt. Likevel, antyder funnene at lærerne underviser kunnskap eksplisitt, mens de underviser ferdigheter og holdninger implisitt. Funnene tyder på at lærerne bruker en rekke ulike typer tekster i sin interkulturelle undervisning, inkludert lærebøker og autentiske tekster, som romaner, filmer og bildebøker. Funnene viser videre at lærerne anser den autentiske teksten som et nyttig verktøy til å forsøke å utvikle ulike komponenter av elevenes interkulturelle kompetanse.

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# 1. Introduction

This MA thesis explores teachers of English in Norwegian lower secondary schools and their perspectives on using different types of texts to teach about and promote intercultural competence. This chapter introduces the topics and terms relevant to the research, as well as an outline of the structure of the thesis. In addition, this chapter presents the research questions and their relevance to the topics and scope of the thesis.

## 1.1 Topic and contextual background

Society has for the last two decades been characterized by the increase of globalization, migration, and technological progress (Hoff, 2020, p. 69). Today, Norwegian classrooms are diverse in terms of pupils' cultural background, language and religion (Meld. St. 20 (2012-2013), p. 12). Diversity in the population leads to interactions between people from different cultures and social groups. This place demands on the schools' ability to stimulate good relationships based on human individuality and equality (ibid.). To foster a harmonious co-existence, each person in society has a responsibility to treat others with respect and tolerance, to counteract prejudice and ensure that no one feels discriminated against. Therefore, the schools must provide the pupils with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes, to communicate appropriately and respectfully with others. These attitudes, knowledges and skills constitute *intercultural competence*. This thesis explores teachers of English in Norwegian lower secondary schools and their perceptions on using different types of texts to teach about and contribute to develop their pupils' intercultural competence.

With the renewal of the curriculum (LK20), intercultural competence was introduced as a central learning outcome, and even though not formally specified, the concept has influenced the English subject curriculum (The Norwegian Directorate of Education and Training, 2020). To communicate, interact and participate are competence fields that the Norwegian Public Investigations (NOU) evaluate as important to function socially, cooperate in a workplace and to participate in the democracy (NOU 2015:8, pp. 27- 30). The ability to interact across different backgrounds, values and points of view are of great worth to a society with diversity in religion, culture, and values (NOU 2015:8, pp. 27- 30). The pupils therefore need to acquire methods and strategies to be able to cooperate, complete tasks and reach goals with each other and with people outside of Norwegian borders who have different cultural backgrounds, points of view and values than themselves (NOU 2015:8, pp. 27- 30). Therefore, the pupils would need to

work on their ability to listen, acknowledge someone else's point of view and see things from different perspectives (NOU 2015:8, pp. 27- 30). In addition, it is important that they can evaluate and reconsider their own points of view when encountering new perspectives and accept that there are differences in opinions (NOU 2015:8, pp. 27- 30).

With English increasingly becoming a global language with many speakers from all over the world (Crystal, 1997), the English subject has a particular responsibility when it comes to promoting intercultural competence. It works as a natural gateway to give access to the knowledge, skills and attitudes that the pupils need in order to succeed with respectful communication with people who have mindsets, beliefs and perspectives that differ from their own. Teachers of English in Norwegian schools should therefore teach and contribute to promote intercultural competence in their pupils.

## 1.2 Reason and purpose of research

For this thesis I wanted to explore teachers' perspectives on using different types of texts to teach about and contribute to develop their pupils' intercultural competence. Intercultural competence is quite complex with several different components, which are all essential in a society that is still colored by discrimination and everyday racism (Engblad, 2021). It is my understanding that these different components such as the knowledge, skills and attitudes that constitute intercultural competence, can contribute to diminishing these less fortunate attributes that contaminate today's society. As a soon-to-be-qualified teacher, I see it as an important responsibility to equip my pupils with the necessary tools for them to be able to function as world citizens in a global society (The Education Act, §1-1; The Norwegian Directorate of Education and Training, 2017, p. 5-6). I interpret intercultural competence as a tool that enables respectful communication with others. I also consider the ability to see things from different points of view and reconsidering one's own opinions and perspectives, as important aspects of this competence. To be able to meet others with respect and value their opinions even though they might differ from one's own, is in my opinion one of the most important skills to contribute to diminishing prejudice and discrimination, and therefore also essential to teach and develop with my pupils.



With LK20 came new and broad competence aims, which opened for more autonomy for the teachers. In the English subject curriculum, several of the competence aims mention “text”. They state that the pupils are supposed to be able to produce, read and interact with different types of texts. In the core elements of the subject curriculum, it is stated that “the concept of text is used in a broad sense: texts can be spoken and written, printed and digital, graphic and artistic, formal and informal, fictional and factual, contemporary and historical” (The Norwegian Directorate of Education and Training, 2020). This means that the teacher is free to choose whichever type of text they want when teaching in the English-language classroom.

The purpose of this thesis is to explore teachers’ perceptions on using text to teach and promote their pupils’ intercultural competence. One of the reasons for choosing the scope, is that LK20 is the first curriculum in Norwegian educational history, to specifically highlight intercultural competence when defining the cultural aspects of the English subject (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020, p. 3). One finds evidence of intercultural competence’s influence in several sections of the subject curriculum, but it is explicitly mentioned in the core elements section, in regard to working with texts. The curriculum says that by engaging with texts on different levels, the pupils will develop their intercultural competence (*ibid.*). Therefore, I found it interesting to investigate teachers’ perceptions on and experiences with using text for this specific purpose.

I was introduced to intercultural competence in the second semester at university. I found the concept interesting since it also is an integral part of my other subject specialization, Social Science. LK20 introduced interdisciplinary topics, where one of them is Democracy and Citizenship. This topic is central to both subjects, and I saw an opportunity to connect the two through this interdisciplinary topic and intercultural competence. In our education we were introduced to intercultural competence through working with children’s and young adult literature. The idea that reading fictional literature could contribute to the development of empathy, which again is an essential part of intercultural competence, really intrigued me. As a result, my interest in exploring teachers’ perceptions on using different types of texts in the classroom, and how these texts could serve to develop their pupils’ intercultural competence.

### 1.3 Research Questions

The aim of the research in this thesis is to elucidate teachers of English in Norwegian lower secondary school and their perceptions on using different types of texts to develop their pupils' intercultural competence. Therefore, it was necessary to design research questions that enable the exploration of teachers' interpretations and opinions on intercultural competence and its components, and which types of texts the teachers evaluate as useful to teach about and promote the competence. This led to the main research question:

***What are teachers of English in Norwegian lower secondary schools' perceptions on using text to teach about and promote their pupils' intercultural competence?***

This research question is quite broad. Therefore, it was necessary to develop sub-research questions to help narrow the scope and guide the research:

- How do the teachers define intercultural competence?
- Which components of intercultural competence do they consider important in their teaching?
- Which types of texts do they choose to teach about and promote intercultural competence?
  - How do the teachers evaluate the usefulness of a text in relation to its intercultural competence affordances?
- What are the teachers' experiences of working with intercultural competence in the English subject?

To answer these research questions, the research design was developed from a qualitative research approach, with interview as the main method to collect data. The interview guide was designed, based on the research questions to investigate teachers' choices when deciding on source material to teach and promote intercultural competence. The interviews were semi-structured, which enabled follow-up questions to further clarify or elaborate on the topic, if necessary.

## 1.4 Defining terminology

This thesis explores teachers of English in Norwegian lower secondary schools' perceptions on using texts to develop their pupils' intercultural competence. Therefore, definitions on intercultural competence, its components and intercultural teaching will be explored in the following chapters. This section presents definitions of intercultural competence and text, as they are interpreted and used in this thesis.

### 1.4.1 Intercultural Competence

Intercultural competence is a fundamental term to this thesis, which makes it necessary to define. The concept is complex and does not have an agreed upon definition, which is explored further in chapter 2. In this thesis, intercultural competence is understood as “Knowledge of others; knowledge of self; skills to interpret and relate; skills to discover and/or to interact; valuing others' values, beliefs, and behaviors; and relativizing one's self. Linguistic competence plays a key role” (Deardorff, 2006, p. 247). Deardorff (2006) explains that the “lack of specificity in defining intercultural competence is due presumably to the difficulty of identifying the specific components of this complex concept” (p. 241).

Byram (2021) is one of the theorists who has created a model of *intercultural communicative competence*, to break down the concept and distinguish its components. In his model, Byram presents and describes five different *savoirs*: *knowledge (savoirs)*, *skills of interpreting/relating (savoir comprendre)*, *skills of discovery/interaction (savoir apprendre/faire)*, *attitudes (savoir être) – curiosity/openness*, and *critical cultural awareness (savoir s'engager)* (Byram 2021, p.62, 96, see Chapter 2, Section 2.2, figure 2-1). He describes intercultural competence as a combination of specific knowledges, skills and attitudes a person needs to successfully interact with people from different cultures and social groups (Byram, 2021, p. 61-62).

### 1.4.2 Text/Literature/Literacy

Another central term in this thesis is “text”. As the scope of the thesis is related to Norwegian lower secondary schools and the English subject, the definition of the term is retrieved from the national curriculum and represents how the term is understood in Norwegian education. It is presented as follows: “The concept of text is used in a broad sense: texts can be spoken and written, printed and digital, graphic and artistic, formal and informal, fictional and factual, contemporary and historical” (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020, p.

3). It is further explained that a text can contain different modes such as “writing, pictures, audio, drawings, graphs, numbers and other forms of expression that are combined to enhance and present a message” (ibid.). Hence, when referring to text throughout this thesis, it is inclusive in terms of modes, formality, purpose and genre, which this definition allows.

## 1.5 Intercultural competence in the English Subject Curriculum

Intercultural competence is referred to in several sections of the English subject curriculum. The section *Relevance and Central Values* explains that the subject’s overall goal is for the pupils to be competent users of the language, which prepares them for further education and participation in society (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020, p.2). It is stated that the subject shall “give the pupils the foundation for communicating with others, both locally and globally, regardless of cultural or linguistic background” (ibid.). This implies that the teachers must aim to develop their pupils’ knowledge about different cultures, linguistic and communication skills, so they can communicate appropriately with people around the world. The section further explains that “English shall help the pupils to develop an intercultural understanding of different ways of living, ways of thinking and communication patterns” (ibid.). “Intercultural understanding” indicates that when working with “different ways of living, ways of thinking and communication patterns” the teacher must encourage the pupils to suspend belief in their own ways of living and thinking, to make room for other perspectives.

Intercultural competence is also evident in the interdisciplinary topics *Health and life skills* and *Democracy and citizenship* (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020, p.3). *Health and life skills* aims to develop the pupils’ ability to express themselves, which includes the ability to “express their feelings, thoughts, experiences and opinions” (ibid.). Additionally, the topic aims to assist the pupils in developing their linguistic and cultural competence to prepare them for future encounters where these competences are needed (ibid.). As for the topic *Democracy and citizenship*, the English subject shall aim to widen the pupils’ scope of mind, by developing “their understanding of the fact that the way they view the world is culture dependent” (ibid.). Moreover, the topic shall help the pupils communicate with people around the world with different linguistic or cultural backgrounds, which “can open for new ways to interpret the world, and promote curiosity and engagement and help to prevent prejudices” (ibid.).

One can also find reference to intercultural competence in the *Competence Aims* after Year 10 (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020, p.8-10). Several of the competence aims are relevant for the pupils' interaction with texts, such as "read, interpret and reflect on English-language fiction, including young people's literature" (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020, p.9). As explained in the theoretical framework (see Chapter 2), engaging with different types of texts can contribute to promote intercultural competence. Another example is "explore and describe ways of living, ways of thinking, communication patterns and diversity in the English-speaking world" (ibid.). The teacher must in relation to this, engage the pupils in exploring cultures and social groups from different parts of the world, and promote the willingness to see other perspectives than their own. Lastly, "explore and reflect on the situation of indigenous peoples in the English-speaking world and in Norway" is a competence aim related to intercultural competence, which describes specific cultures the teachers must include in their teaching. Through these and several other competence aims, it is evident that teachers of the English subject should teach and contribute to developing the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for their pupils to develop their intercultural competence.

## 1.6 Overarching limitations

The empirical basis for this thesis is found in the qualitative interviews conducted with three teachers in Norwegian lower secondary schools. Therefore, the findings are not representative and generalizable in terms of it uncovering trends in teachers' choices of source material to develop their pupils' intercultural competence. Qualitative research would always result in different findings because of the variables in each individual teacher's educational background, classroom environment and the teacher's personal interests and individual characteristics. These interviews are simply samples which offer three different perspectives on the matter and the findings only reflect their views.

## 1.7 Outline of thesis

This chapter has introduced the topic of the thesis and presented the research questions that are essential in guiding the research. Chapter 2 presents the theoretical framework for this thesis, which mainly consists of Byram's (2021) model of intercultural communicative competence and theory regarding the intercultural affordances of different types of texts, in addition to previous research related to the study. Chapter 3 presents the design of the research, which

includes the sample of informants, the chosen method and outline of the data analysis. Further, chapter 3 discusses reliability and validity, ethical considerations and limitations of the research. Chapter 4 presents the data collected and chapter 5 discusses the findings in relation to the theoretical framework and previous research. Finally, chapter 6 provides the concluding remarks.

## 2. Theoretical framework and previous research

Today's foreign language learners grow up in a culturally diverse society. Intercultural competence is an essential response to this diversity (UNESCO, 2013, p.22). Defining the concept has proved to be a challenge, since it relates to a variety of different contexts and situations. UNESCO (2013) ties the different concepts of intercultural competence together and places "culture" and "communication" as the mutual core of the term (p. 22-23). In UNESCO's report *Rethinking Education. Towards a global common good?* the authors explain that:

There is no more powerful transformative force than education – to promote human rights and dignity, to eradicate poverty and deepen sustainability, to build a better future for all, founded on equal rights and social justice, respect for cultural diversity, and international solidarity and shared responsibility, all of which are fundamental aspects of our common humanity. (UNESCO, 2015, p.4).

UNESCO is one of the international bodies, which has influenced the development of the new curriculum LK20 (Karseth et al., 2022, p.32). This comes to show in the English subject as well, where concepts such as "culture" and "communication" which UNESCO highlights as core elements of intercultural competence, are central. In other words, through the English subject, the pupils can gain necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to develop their intercultural competence.

This chapter firstly defines *intercultural competence* in section 2.1 and proceeds with presenting Byram's (2021) conceptual framework for teaching intercultural communicative competence in section 2.2. Section 2.3 presents intercultural competence in relation to the English subject and the intercultural affordances of different types of texts. Section 2.4 explores the concept of teacher cognition and lastly, Section 2.5 presents an outline of previous research relevant for the thesis and topic.

### 2.1 Intercultural competence

The concept of intercultural competence is researched and discussed in a variety of different contexts (Polyakova, 2016; Hamilton, 2009; GarretRucks, 2016). Therefore, an agreed-upon definition of the concept does not exist. Dervin et al. (2020) argue that "any discourse on IC is ideological" (p. 4). They explain further that "any perspective on the concept relies on (amongst

others) political, sociological, personal, glocal ideologemes (bits and pieces of ideology) that are passed onto us by the media, decision-makers, glocal curricula, research, etc.” (Dervin et al. 2020, p. 4). When deciding upon which definition and theoretical perspective to include in this thesis, it was therefore necessary to consider to which extent it related to the research questions, which in turn led to the field of education and how intercultural competence is represented, taught, and assessed in school.

Teaching intercultural competence in the English-language classroom requires that the teacher has knowledge of the different components that constitute intercultural competence (see section 2.2). For a learner to be able to succeed with intercultural experiences they need to possess these intercultural components and characteristics (Sercu, 2005, p.2). Sercu (2005) points to some of these characteristics and competences:

the willingness to engage with the foreign culture, self-awareness and the ability to look upon oneself from the outside, the ability to see the world through the others’ eyes, the ability to cope with uncertainty, the ability to act as a cultural mediator, the ability to evaluate others’ points of view, the ability to consciously use culture learning skills and to read the cultural context, and the understanding that individuals cannot be reduced to their collective identities (Sercu, 2005, p.2).

These characteristics correlate to Darla Deardorff ‘s (2006) research project, where she sought to determine an overarching definition of intercultural competence and appropriate assessment methods (p. 241). Twenty-three scholars participating in Deardorff’s project, were asked to decide upon which out of nine different definitions they found most applicable (Deardorff, 2006, pp.245-247). The scholars preferred a more general definition that is suitable in a variety of contexts, which was summarized as “Knowledge of others; knowledge of self; skills to interpret and relate; skills to discover and/or to interact; valuing others’ values, beliefs, and behaviors; and relativizing one’s self. Linguistic competence plays a key role” (Deardorff, 2006, p. 247). This definition corresponds with Byram’s conceptual framework of intercultural competence (2021), which works as a foundation for the analysis and discussion in this thesis.



## 2.2 Conceptual framework of intercultural competence

Michael Byram created a model for intercultural communicative competence in 1997, based on foreign language teaching and the pedagogical purposes connected to this (Byram 2009, p.322). The model's purpose is to help teachers to create learning objectives and deliberately include intercultural competence in more specific pedagogical aims, that can contribute to develop the intercultural speaker (Byram, 2009, p.324). The model describes the main aspects of intercultural competence and places these aspects in relation to one another in a complex model of intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 2009, p.325).

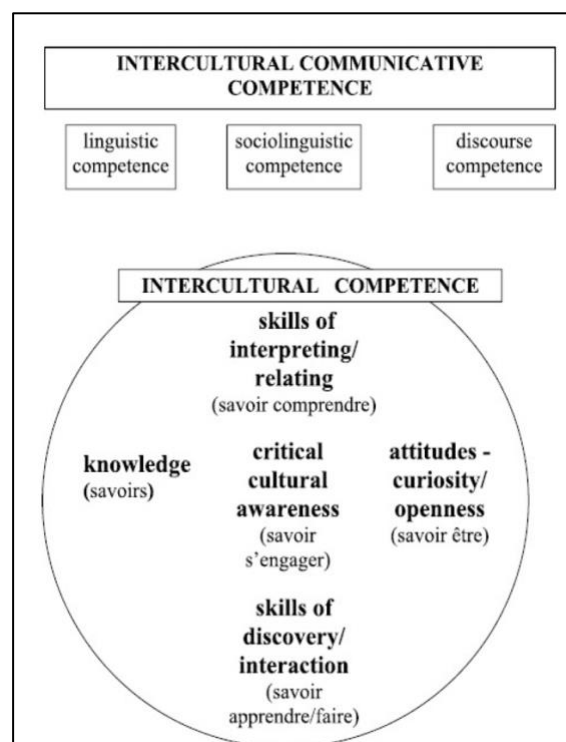


Figure 2-1: BYRAM'S MODEL OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

(Byram, 2021, p, 62).

The term *intercultural speaker* describes a person who does not value the native speaker as the ideal and stands in contrast to "the notion of intercultural competence from the cultural competences of a native speaker" (Byram, 2009, p.326). Byram argues that one should not expect a learner to master a language at the same level as a native speaker, because the conditions under which learners and native speakers acquire the language are different (Byram, 2021, p. 17). In addition, he argues that the competence gained with the native speaker as the

ideal would not be intercultural competence, because the communicator would have to leave their own cultural background and social group behind, to try to blend into a new linguistic environment and be accepted as a native speaker by other native speakers (Byram, 2021, p. 17).

He argues that:

the more desirable outcome is a learner with the ability to see and manage the relationships between themselves and their own beliefs, values, behaviors and meanings, as expressed in a foreign language, and those of their interlocutors, expressed in the same language – or even a combination of languages – which may be the interlocutors’ native language, or not. (Byram, 2021, p. 17)

### 2.2.1 The five saviors

Michael Byram has created a model related to foreign language teaching where he describes five different *savoirs* of intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 2021, p.62). The different *savoirs* consist of the attitudes, knowledges, and skills the pupils need to achieve to develop their intercultural competence and become intercultural speakers (Byram, 2021, p.62). These are *attitudes – curiosity/openness, knowledge, skills of interpreting/relating, skills of discovery/interaction* and *critical cultural awareness* (Byram 2021, p.62, 96). The *saviors* create a holistic model that can help foreign language learners to develop their intercultural communicative competence.

Byram divides the *savoir* of *knowledge (savoirs)*, which is the knowledge a person brings to an interaction, into two broad categories (Byram, 2021, p. 46). The first category contains the knowledges about one’s own and the interlocutors’ social groups and their cultures (Byram, 2021, p. 46; Byram & Doyé, 1999, pp. 142-143). The knowledges the individual have of the different social groups’ common beliefs, values and behaviors create a conscious awareness of two categories of characteristics; what is characteristic for the group and what differentiates the group from other groups (Byram, 2021, p. 46). This can also be referred to as their cultural identity, which UNESCO (2013) describes as aspects of identity shared by a culture that separates them from other cultures (p.10). Knowledge is also related to historical events and people that represent national memories in one’s own and other cultures (Byram, 2021 p.85-86). The second category of the *savoir* of knowledge is “knowledge of the *processes* of interaction at individual and societal level” (Byram, 2021, p. 47). This category covers a

person's knowledge about; how their social identities have been developed, how they themselves are representative of the other members of the same group, how they perceive an interlocutor from another group, and how the process of communication and interaction itself contributes to diminish former perceptions of a group and creates new ones (ibid.). The learner needs to know that the differences between their and the interlocutor's beliefs, values, habits and perspectives can lead to misunderstandings and rejection (Byram & Doyé, 1999, p. 143).

Byram (2021) describes the savoir of *Skills of interpreting and relating (savoir comprendre)* as the ability to interpret and explain documents or occurrences from another culture or social group and relate these to documents and occurrences from one's own culture and social group (p. 87-88; Byram & Doyé, 1999, p. 142). The pupils need to be able to identify different ethnocentric perspectives in these documents or occurrences, which includes to read and analyze them, point to its origins/sources, and understand the meanings and values it has (Byram, 2021, p.87-88). This includes the ability to recognize stereotypes (ibid.). This savoir also encompasses the pupil's ability to identify causes of misunderstanding in an interaction and explain the dysfunctions and their causes from each participating cultural system (ibid.).

The savoir of *Skills of discovery and interaction (savoir apprendre/faire)* is one's ability to gain new knowledge of different cultures and their practices and using the knowledge, attitudes, and skills one already has in an interaction (Byram, 2021, p.88-90; Byram & Doyé, 1999, pp. 142; Rindal et al. 2020, p. 220). The pupils need to be able to generate questioning techniques to elicit information from an interlocutor that she/he, usually does not mention (Byram & Doyé, 1999, pp. 142-143; Byram, 2021, p.88-90). Through these questions the pupils could gain further understanding of the interlocutor's culture, which they can use in later interactions with other people from the same social groups and/or other social groups. This savoir also covers a person's ability to use their knowledge, attitudes, and skills in real-time interactions (ibid.). This includes considering the familiarities and differences between one's own and the interlocutors' country, culture and language when communicating, identifying similarities and differences in the verbal and non-verbal communication processes between one's own and the interlocutors, and using the knowledges, attitudes, and skills to mediate between different interlocutors (Byram, 2021, p. 88-90).

The savoir of attitudes (*savoir être*) concerns the prejudices one has towards people who one perceives as different to oneself, in terms of cultural background, religion, values, and behaviors

(Byram, 2021, p. 42). To be successful in an interaction the intercultural speaker should aim to adopt attitudes that counteract prejudice. These attitudes need to be attitudes of curiosity and openness, that have the ability to counteract judgment and disbelief of other's values, beliefs and behaviors (Byram, 2021, p. 42; Byram & Doyé, 1999, p. 142). In intercultural encounters it is essential to meet the interlocutor with openness, welcome differences and willingly try to adapt one's behavior to be able to act appropriately in relation to the specific culture of whom one is engaging. The intercultural learner should show curiosity towards other's perspectives and views of life, and know that one's own perspectives are colored by the social processes of the culture oneself grew up in. This implies that there is a variety of different perspectives on a matter and the learner should therefore be curious and open towards these perspectives. Another important attitude is the ability and willingness to change one's own perspectives and suspend belief in one's own interpretations, perceptions, values, and behaviors, in addition to the ability to analyze these perceptions, interpretations, values, and behaviors through the eyes of the person with whom one is engaging (Byram, 2021, p.42; Rindal et al, 2020, p. 220-221). The learner should be eager to learn new perspectives on different phenomena, from their own and other cultures, and also question their own culture and cultural products and understand that their culture is not neutral (Byram, 2021, p.96; Rindal et al., 2020, p. 220-221).

Rindal et al. (2020) describe attitudes as difficult to teach, but that “the attitudinal aspect of intercultural competence can be facilitated by developing *critical cultural awareness*” (p.221). *Critical cultural awareness (savoir s'engager)* is the educational dimension of intercultural competence (Byram & Doyé, 1999, p. 143). This *savoir* encompasses a person's ability to “evaluate, critically and on the basis of a systematic process of reasoning, values present in one's own and other cultures and countries” (Byram, 2021, p. 90). The learner should be able to recognize and interpret values in documents or occurrences in their own culture and others, consciously evaluate and analyze these documents or occurrences, and engage and mediate in intercultural interactions in relation to the analysis (Byram, 2021, p. 66). In a normal classroom there are in excess of twenty-five different personalities, with potentially different perspectives on a matter. Therefore, one might encounter learners that condemn different behaviors or customs from another culture as something negative (Byram, 2021, p. 66). As a teacher one might not want to interfere in the learner's perspectives and views, but one can encourage them to explain their reasoning and make them aware of the criteria they are evaluating their own and other cultures after (Byram & Doyé, 1999, p. 144; Byram, 2021, pp. 66-67). The learners

need to be able to direct their critical eye not only towards other cultures, but also towards their own (Byram & Doyé, 1999, p. 144).

### 2.2.2 Critique of Byram's model

Dervin et al (2020) argue that intercultural competence in research and education is worrying, because the research and views on the concept has stagnated and that we are still clinging to westernized ideas (Dervin et al. 2020, p. 1-4). Byram's model has been criticized by different scholars, such as Dervin et al. (2020), Dervin (2016), Hoff (2014) and Kramersch (2011). Dervin (2016) highlights *savoir être* – attitudes and *savoir* – knowledge, as particularly problematic (p.76). He argues that *savoir être* “can be misleading and too easily lead to self-congratulating” (ibid.). He explains that in Byram's model (2021) *savoir être* says that one must show curiosity and openness, which he argues is not enough and unstable, because one can show and at the same time not believe in what one is showing (ibid.). Hoff (2014) also criticizes *savoir être* and explains that the *savoir* promotes “the transposition of Self as a goal in itself” (p.514) instead of as a momentary technique to understand others. She argues that it is counterproductive in relation to *Bildung*, to promote approaching others with an uncritical willingness to demonstrate tolerance and acceptance, because it would result in neither the pupils' nor other cultures' perspectives being taken adequately seriously (Hoff, 2014, p.514).

The *savoir* of knowledge is criticized for using terms as ‘countries’ and ‘cultures’, which might be limiting and questionable in the glocal world we live in (Dervin, 2016, p.76). Kramersch (2011) argues that “culture today is associated with ideologies, attitudes and beliefs, created and manipulated through the discourse of the media, the Internet, the marketing industry, Hollywood and other mind-shaping interest groups” (p.355-356). It is no longer just composed of institutions, historical traditions and communities, culture is now a subjective discourse from which one makes meaning of the world through symbolic systems (ibid.). Kramersch (2011) further explains that by defining culture as a discourse, the interculturally competent learner is seen as a symbolic self, composed by symbolic systems like language, systems of thought and their symbolic power (Kramersch, 2011, p.356).

Even though critical, both Dervin (2016) and Hoff (2014) highlight *savoir s'engager* as an essential dimension to counter Byram's model's superficial and counterproductive affairs (p.76; p.515). This *savoir* promotes independent and critical thinking and relates to the idea of intercultural citizenship (Hoff, 2014, p.515; Dervin, 2016, p.76). Hoff (2014) explain that the

objective of this *savoir* is not to change the pupils' perspectives or to inspire a specific way of thinking, but to develop their ability to use rational and sensible arguments (p.515).

## 2.3 Teaching intercultural competence

This section presents the responsibility of Norwegian schools and the English subject to foster intercultural competence in the learners. It also sheds light on intercultural teaching and the intercultural affordances of different types of texts.

### 2.3.1 The school as a responsible arena

*The Act relating to Primary and Secondary Education and Training* (The Education Act) specifies areas of responsibilities Norwegian schools must maintain when educating pupils. It emphasizes several aspects of intercultural competence, such as “knowledge and understanding of the national cultural heritage and our common international cultural traditions” (The Education Act, 1998, § 1-1), “provide insight into cultural diversity and show respect for the individual’s convictions” (ibid.), “develop knowledge, skills and attitudes so that they can master their lives and can take part in working life and society” (ibid.) and “learn to think critically and act ethically” (ibid.). These are all aspects that relate to intercultural competence and show that the values intercultural competence espouses have a central role in the Norwegian school system. It is therefore the teachers’ legal obligation to ensure that the pupils gain these necessary knowledges, skills and attitudes for them to be able to participate in society.

### 2.3.2 Intercultural competence in the English subject

Sercu (2005) argues that foreign language education in itself is intercultural, because by exposing the pupils to a foreign language one connects them to a culturally diverse world (p.1). One can find traces of intercultural competence in several parts of the English subject curriculum as the objective of the subject is to “give the pupils the foundation for communicating with others, both locally and globally, regardless of cultural or linguistic background” (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020, p. 2, see section 1.5). These references are often connected to language learning. For instance, in one of the core elements *Working with texts in English* it is stated that through reading and working with English texts, the pupils will gain both language skills and knowledge of other cultures and societies (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020, p. 3). Furthermore, the

core element presents that by reflecting, interpreting, and critically assessing these texts, the pupils shall develop intercultural competence (ibid.).

The English subject curriculum says that “English is an important subject when it comes to cultural understanding, communication, all-round education and identity development” (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020, p. 2). One can therefore argue that the subject has two main purposes regarding intercultural competence. On one hand there is the linguistic aspect, teaching the pupils a language to communicate with people from other countries, cultures, and social groups. On the other hand, there is a cultural aspect, where the pupils should get an insight into other cultures, from different parts of the world. In addition, there is an emphasis on the pupils’ identity development in the section of the interdisciplinary topic Health and life skills where it is stated that the pupils should “develop a positive self-image and a secure identity” (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020, p. 3). This can be linked to the German term *Bildung*, which Schneider (2012) explains as “the ideal of the autonomous, self-determined, and self-reflected personality in its full realization, a ‘becoming oneself’” (Schneider, 2012, as cited in Horlacher, 2016, p. 1). In other words, *Bildung* is strongly related to the development of one’s identity and the ability to critically reflect on one’s own culture, cultural products, and social groups, as well as others’. The term is today commonly used in debates regarding education programs and policy reforms, and express moral aspirations and social hopes (Horlacher, 2016, p.1). In Norwegian education *Bildung* is a fundamental aim, and the English subject is seen as one of the *Bildung* subjects (Fenner, 2020, p.18).

### 2.3.3 Language learning and intercultural learning

Bland (2020) explains that “an important goal of intercultural learning is the building of confidence to communicate with different cultural groups with sensitivity and interculturality” (p. 69). Interculturality means to be able to engage in and promote understanding and dialog between a variety of cultural identities and develop bonds based on mutual respect (ibid.). One medium through which the pupils can communicate with different cultural groups, is language. Lund (2020) writes that “language learning and intercultural learning are interdependent and mutually beneficial” (p.26). Both language learning and intercultural learning requires the learner to be open to new perspectives, ways of thinking, understanding and interacting (ibid.). Lund further explains that as the pupils’ language proficiency increases, they can use it as a device to learn about and explore new cultures and intercultural issues (ibid.). Therefore, it is

important that the teachers of English in Norwegian lower secondary schools practice teaching activities that can help to develop their pupils' intercultural competence as well as linguistic competence. These activities need to derive from the English subject curriculum, where several of the competence aims communicate that the pupils should gain both intercultural competence and linguistic competence. One example is "read, interpret and reflect on English-language fiction, including young people's literature" (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020, p. 9). "Fiction" and "literature" represent a wide range of expressions, which correspond with the curricula's definition of text (see Section 1.4.2). Reading texts can contribute to develop the pupils' reading and writing skills, which is central aspects of language learning. In addition, the competence aim includes intercultural learning through the words "interpret" and "reflect", which corresponds with Byram's *savoir comprendre* in his model of intercultural communicative competence (see section 2.2.1).

Liddicoat and Scarino (2013) have created a model for intercultural language teaching and learning. They explain learners' engagement with "experiences of languages, cultures, and their relationship" (p.59) as a cycle of four interrelated processes. The first process is *noticing*, which is when a learner notices cultural differences and similarities through encounters with a new language (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013, p.60). When the learners identify these similarities and differences they *compare* them to their own language, which is the second process (ibid.). Liddicoat and Scarino (2013) explain that the process of comparison is multilayered and includes both comparisons between the interlocutor's culture and the learners' culture, and comparisons of the knowledge the learner already encompasses about the interlocutor's culture and language and the new input the learner is noticing (p.60). The third process is *reflection*, which Liddicoat and Scarino (2013) consider the most important element of intercultural learning. This process regards the learners' "way of making sense of experience and understanding the experience from multiple possible perspectives" (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013, p.61). This includes the learners' reflections on what their experiences of cultural and linguistic diversity mean to them, how they react to diversity, their perceptions, and feelings about diversity, and how they can engage constructively with diversity (ibid.). "Interculturality is not a passive knowing of aspects of diversity but an active engagement with diversity" (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013, p.61). This means that a learner needs to *interact* with different interlocutors based on their knowledge and experiences of diversity to be able to develop personal opinions on their experiences, communicate and explore these opinions, and alter them when encountering differing opinions (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013, p.61).



These four processes of intercultural language teaching and learning correspond with language learning in general. When a learner is introduced to a new language they firstly observe and *notice* different linguistic elements of the language they will need to learn (Schmidt, 1993, cited in Lund, 2020, p.27). Then, when they try to use the language to communicate, they will *compare* what they want to communicate with what they are able to (Swain & Lapkin, 1995, cited in Lund, 2020, p. 27). Becoming aware of their proficiency level, might spark their motivation to learn more (Manchón, 2011, pp. 74-75). The learners' *reflection* comes in play when they develop an awareness of language as a system and the role it plays in society (Lund, 2020, p. 27). Van Lier (1995) defines language awareness as “an understanding of the human faculty of language and its role in thinking, learning and social life. It includes awareness of power and control through language, and the intricate relationships between language and culture” (van Lier, 1995, p. xi). For the learner to develop functional language skills and language awareness they need to practice a lot, which is best done by using the language in *interaction* with other people (Lund, 2020, p. 27).

As explained, learning a new language is strongly connected to intercultural competence. “Language learning has to do with the ability to deal with diversity and different interpretation patterns” (Lund, 2020, p. 28). In this lies the differences in speech sounds, intonation patterns, grammatical structures, and vocabulary (ibid.). Different interlocutors from different cultures and social groups also have different communication styles (ibid.). If the learner is aware of the differences in the language and the language use, it might contribute to the development of intercultural insights (ibid.). For instance, working with vocabulary and words that, because of cultural connotations, do not translate well from one language to another creates opportunities to reflect on these cultural differences (Lund, 2020, p. 30). Since English is a language spoken all around the world, the variety in vocabulary to explore, is infinite (Lund, 2020, p. 31). For instance, one could investigate words such as *bairn* and *kirk* in Scottish English, where the learner gains new knowledge of the meaning of these words, their origin and explore their uses (ibid.).

#### 2.3.4 Intercultural competence promoted through different types of texts

As established in the previous section, intercultural learning is closely connected to language learning. Lund (2020) argues that “all intercultural learning activities can be linked to the development of the learners' language skills” (p.26). Working with different types of texts, especially authentic texts, is a good place to start when trying to promote intercultural

competence in the learner. The term authentic is inexplicit and can be understood in different ways. Ciornei and Dina (2014) explain that in an educational setting, it is used as “a reaction against the prefabricated patterns of the textbooks” (p.275). Authentic texts can therefore in this context be defined as “any materials that are not developed specifically for teaching purposes, such as news articles, literary texts, historical documents, films, YouTube videos, blog posts or drawings” (Brevik & Rindal, 2020, p. 221). These types of materials have a lot to offer and are especially well suited for culture-specific learning, which Dypedahl (2020) explains “is because they give students the chance to put themselves in other communication situations that the typical learner situation, and this can help them decenter mentally to another context” (p. 65).

Reading has many benefits when it comes to language learning and has the ability to promote intercultural competence, especially if the learner can engage in *extensive* or *deep* reading. Bland (2020) explains that deep reading of literature “can promote all aspects of cognition and engagement with text, including emotion, empathy, ethics, knowledge of the world, ideology and social justice issues” (p. 73). The learner can develop their reading and listening skills as they work with different types of both information-focused texts as well as literary texts, while films and video clips can be used to expose the learner to a lot of oral input (Lund, 2020, p.26). When working with these texts the teacher can create several activities related to the specific text that develop the learners’ writing and oral skills, such as writing a summary and oral presentations, but they can also facilitate tasks that challenge the learner’s reflection, perceptions, and empathy, for instance discussions where the learner argues for and against and role plays (ibid.). In other words, working with different types of texts can contribute to both language learning and intercultural learning, as long as the teacher uses her or his professional judgment and chooses a suitable text.

For teaching materials to be suitable for intercultural learning, it needs to be *inclusive* in the sense that it has the ability to appeal to every pupil in the classroom (Heggernes, 2020, p. 113). This is a challenge and might not be possible at all, as pupils have different backgrounds, interests, perspectives, and beliefs. Even so, for the text to be useful for intercultural learning, the pupils should be able to relate to it to some degree. The texts should also *challenge* the pupils, for instance by showcasing a variety of perspectives and views that differ from their own (ibid.). Lastly, the teaching materials should be *adaptable*, so that they are usable for every pupil in a classroom, regardless of their proficiency level (ibid.).

Literature is a commonly used authentic text type to foster intercultural competence in the classroom. Fenner (2020) explain that traditionally literature was used to provide the learners in upper secondary school with texts that represented the “highly valued” culture of the English-speaking society, which provided the learner with insight into this culture and the ability to gain material *Bildung* (p.243). Today, the use of literature in the classroom is closely related to promoting intercultural competence, where the term culture is viewed as dynamic, “and the learner exists in an interrelationship with the foreign culture and his or her own culture” (Fenner, 2020, p.243). In other words, reading literature can contribute to the development of intercultural competence in the reader.

Reading can contribute to both linguistic knowledge and knowledge of the world (Bland, 2020, p. 72). Brevik and Rindal (2020) write that “teachers lay the foundation for students to become lifelong learners” (p.163). They further explain that the joy of reading is a central component when it comes to this (ibid.). Teachers are central role models for their pupils and should aim to promote useful learning strategies that the pupils will need as lifelong learners, such as the joy of reading. Nussbaum (2009, as cited in Bland, 2020, p. 72) explains that stories and narratives are useful sources when trying to promote empathy and interculturality. She says that “In working and grappling with a novel, you’re brought into the inner world of people of many different kinds, and those skills of mind become more sophisticated and more refined” (ibid.). In other words, fictional literature challenges the reader both affectively and cognitively, by stimulating every element of mental processes, for example, attention, memory, empathy, inference-making, and imagination (Nikolajeva, 2014, p. 227). Brevik and Rindal (2020) explain that “encounters with texts offers new perspectives on the world and ourselves” (p. 164). Reading literature helps the reader to develop their communication skills as well as improving their understanding of their own and others’ perspectives, views, and beliefs (Brevik & Rindal, 2020, p. 163). The learner should “gain insight into and develop understanding of literary, cultural and linguistic diversity and use this competence in interaction with others” (Brevik & Rindal, 2020, p. 164).

Even though the language is scripted, films and video clips are considered authentic texts, because they are not specifically created for pedagogical purposes (Villanueva, 2020, p. 90). Film has the ability to promote both linguistic competence and intercultural competence in the learners. This is because audiovisual texts present the learners with authentic language in context, as well as expose them to a variety of different phenomena and occurrences

(Villanueva, 2020, p. 90-91). Films also have the ability to convey meaning through other means than written or spoken text, such as “the setting, the characters’ appearance, body language, gestures, as well as tone of voice and intonation” (Villanueva, 2020, p. 90). These are all aspects of communication that the learner must actively interpret and reflect on, and it might also make the content more available to pupils with a lower proficiency-level in the English language.

Audiovisual texts as well as literature provides the reader with glimpses into a character’s motivations, beliefs, and lives (Bluestone, 2000, p. 144). Roell (2010) presents “immigration, xenophobia, adjusting to a new culture, or the dilemmas faced when one belongs to two cultures” (p.3) as themes frequently portrayed in the film genre and useful in intercultural teaching. Films can therefore provide valuable preparations for intercultural encounters, as these themes can foster understanding of other people’s actions and develop sensitivity and empathy towards other people, including members of minority groups (ibid.).

In addition, films vividly portray themes like “intercultural misunderstandings and the roots of racism (Roell, 2010, p. 3). Summerfield (1993) argues that experiencing intercultural contact through seeing and hearing a film can be a more inspiring and explicit way of learning about topics such as stereotypes, discrimination, ethnocentrism and acculturation, in contrast to the more abstract approach of theoretical texts (p.1). This can be especially productive when trying to promote the learner’s empathy and critical thinking as the pupils are presented with perspectives that might differ from their own (Villanueva, 2020, p. 106). Some films and documentaries even present the viewers with contrasting perspectives on the same occurrence, which the learners can analyze and reflect on (Villanueva, 2020, p. 106).

Picture books are a third example of authentic text that can be used to develop the pupils’ linguistic competence as well as their intercultural competence. Picture books are multimodal and include traditionally both written text and pictures. The reader can therefore be challenged cognitively and emotionally through both of these modes, in addition to the books’ content (Heggernes, 2020, p. 114). One might argue that picture books are more suited for younger pupils, but as Heggernes (2020) points out, most classrooms consist of a diverse group of learners in terms of reading level, as well as cultural background (p.115). Picture books can help the teacher to accommodate the different needs of each pupil in the diverse classroom, because the “pictures allow the students to use their visual literacy to make sense of even

complex verbal text” (ibid.). In other words, by using picture books in the classroom the teacher makes the content accessible for readers at all proficiency levels (ibid.).

Nikolajeva (2018) argues that “Since pictures are particularly effective when it comes to representing something that deviates from the readers’ previous experience, analyzing the iconotext may engage the readers’ tolerance of ambiguity (Nikolajeva, 2018, as cited in Heggernes, 2020, p. 117). Therefore, reading picture books can provide the reader with an intercultural experience (Heggernes, 2020, p. 117). “Readers must engage both visually, cognitively and emotionally to make sense of the iconotext, and differences in schemata will affect their interpretations” (Heggernes, 2020, p. 118). This process might contribute to promote “empathy, and the ability to see other perspectives and voices represented” (ibid.).

Poetry is another form of authentic text, and “represents authentic and personal voices in society” (Pande-Rolfsen, 2021, p. 62). Fenner (2013) argues that a learner needs to learn *through* culture and not only about the culture, in order to develop their intercultural competence (p.377). She explains that this can happen when the pupils no longer see the text only as an object to analyze, but instead as “a cultural language item which the learner interprets as an individual and as a member of a cultural community” (Fenner, 2013, p. 379).

Fenner (2013) explains that fictional texts allow for the development of knowledge about “Self and Other, intercultural competence, and for personal growth, which are all important aspects of *Bildung*” (p.379). Pande-Rolfsen (2021) explains that poetry can make the reader question the world and the people and culture in it (p.61). The text often conveys meaningful content, that can connect us to others and promote self-reflecting (Coats, 2013, p.134). The meaning can be communicated explicitly through words in the poem but can also come from the experience of emotions when reading it (ibid.). In addition, the rhythm of the poem is contagious, the rhymes are predictable (Coats, 2013, p.134) and together with emotional engagement, it makes the reader, in a way, a participant of the creative dialogue (Fenner, 2013, p.379).

## 2.4 Teacher cognition

This thesis explores L2 teachers in Norwegian lower secondary schools’ perceptions on using text to promote intercultural competence. Simon Borg defines language teacher cognition as “what know, believe and think” (Borg, 2003, p. 81). Teachers’ perceptions and beliefs

“represent a complex, inter-related system of often tacitly held theories, values and assumptions that the teacher deems to be true, and which serve as cognitive filters that interpret new experiences and guide the teacher’s thoughts and behavior” (Mohamed, 2006, p. 21). This system consists of different variables that influence each other and originate from the teachers own socialization processes in school and society in general (Haukås, 2018, p. 344). As the teachers’ perceptions work as filters through which they see the world and interpret new experiences, these perceptions affect the teachers’ pedagogical decisions, and their future personal development as teachers (ibid.). Therefore, the language teaching and intercultural teaching is to a certain degree influenced by the teachers’ perceptions. Changing the teachers’ perceptions can prove to be difficult, as it is common to assume that one’s own beliefs reflect reality, and that awareness of one’s beliefs, might not exist (ibid.). Haukås (2018) says that “for teachers to be able to change the way they teach and to be receptive to new thinking and new expertise they must be made aware of the beliefs they hold” (p.344). She argues that this can be done, for example through reflection over their own beliefs and perceptions and in discussion with others, where they can gain new perspectives (ibid.).

## 2.5 Previous research

When it comes to teachers’ perceptions on using text to promote intercultural competence in their learners, it seems that in a Norwegian lower secondary school context it could benefit from further research. Nevertheless, intercultural competence has been researched in relation to education in other contexts. This section presents relevant previous research to serve as a backdrop for this thesis, place it in a larger environment, and create a greater understanding of the field. Lyngstad (2019) and Heggernes (2021, 2021) have explored intercultural competence and its aspects in relation to teaching in a Norwegian context. Ciornei and Dina (2014) and Davcheva and Sercu (2005) have researched aspects of teaching intercultural competence outside of Norway.

In her doctoral dissertation, Lyngstad (2019) studied which literary texts English teachers in Norwegian upper secondary schools found suitable to use in the classroom (p. iii). She wanted to investigate the teacher’s beliefs about literature and how these beliefs affected their choices (Lyngstad, 2019, p. iii). By using a mixed method approach, with both quantitative and qualitative methods, namely a questionnaire and interviews, she investigated which literary texts teachers use, why they choose these texts, and how they choose them (Lyngstad, 2019, p.

1). Lyngstad's (2019) research shows that teachers found a variety of different types of texts suitable for didactic purposes (p. 271). She did not find specific texts used by all the teachers, but she found some patterns that emerged from a list of texts that she generated from the questionnaire results, which showed a literature selection consisting of mostly contemporary and "dominated by male, Anglo-American authors" (Lyngstad, 2019, p.272). When it came to genre, the research showed that classic and young adult literature were more frequently used than genres such as, graphic novels and comics (Lyngstad, 2019, p.272-273). Lyngstad (2019) argues that using the latter genres might have helped to solve the issues concerning adaptability (p.273). Some of the teachers pointed out the lack of availability of material as a challenge, which indicates that "even though the curriculum allows teachers to choose literature freely, the selection of texts in the school and in libraries restricts their actual choices" (Lyngstad, 2019, p.273). Another important finding is that textbooks play a central role for many teachers when choosing texts to use in the classroom (ibid.). Lyngstad points out that the most popular short stories mentioned in the survey can be found in several of the textbooks used in classrooms today (ibid.). This specific genre included a greater cultural variety in the texts, which indicates that the textbooks interpret the curriculum, which in turn will steer the teachers towards a more global-English approach to choosing literature (ibid.).

Heggernes (2021) explores in her doctoral dissertation "how reading literature, and in particular picturebooks, can foster English language (EL) students' intercultural learning" (Heggernes, 2021, p. 9). To do this she did a literature review based on three self-written articles, that together synthesized "knowledge of research from English Language Teaching (ELT) targeting intercultural learning through students' engagement with texts" (Heggernes, 2021, p.9). She found that the challenging picture book is a particularly useful resource when it comes to fostering the pupils' intercultural competence, which she relates to reasons within three different factors:

- (1) the interaction of multiple modes to convey meaning, which can foster critical skills;
- (2) the brevity of the format, allowing for immersion and repeated readings; and (3) the challenges and support provided for readers by the picture-text interaction. (Heggernes, 2021, p. 105)

She concludes by explaining that the challenging picture book can be an inclusive format to develop the learners' intercultural competence as long as they work in dialogue with the text,

their teacher and their peers (Heggernes, 2021, 105). She argues that the educational sector has to make challenging picture books suited for all age-groups available to the teachers, and ensure that the teachers are educated “to facilitate intercultural learning through picturebook dialogues” (Heggernes, 2021, 105). Heggernes, argues that this “could improve EL students’ ability to bridge difference, which is a vital capability in an increasingly intercultural world” (2021, 105).

One of the articles Heggernes bases her doctoral dissertation on, critically analyzes the role of text to foster intercultural competence in the English language learner (Heggernes, 2021, p. 1). The method for the study was to scrutinize 36 peer-reviewed articles reporting on this issue (Heggernes, 2021, p.3). She found in this study that fiction was more frequently represented than non-fictional texts in the data (Heggernes, 2021, p. 9). She explained that there was a strong focus on texts where the reader can recognize their own culture, or learn about other cultures, which was also the main argument to use fictional texts (*ibid.*). She concluded by explaining that “an array of text types, media and activities that engage students with multiple perspectives is essential to the emotional and cognitive transformations necessary to foster ICC” (Heggernes, 2021, p.10).

Davcheva and Sercu (2005), investigated the potential of textbooks as pedagogic tools for the teachers to use when teaching towards intercultural competence (p.91). They collected information on how widely spread the use of textbooks is and how teachers evaluate the quality of the cultural dimension of the textbooks, when deciding on which material to use in the classroom (*ibid.*). They found that the teachers participating in the study used textbooks in their teaching extensively, which makes the textbook an important component of the teaching/learning process (Davcheva & Sercu, 2005, p.106). Davcheva and Sercu explain that the reasons for the wide use of textbooks can be found in the fact that by using them the teachers reduce their preparation time and that it allows them to approach the teaching in a systematic way (*ibid.*). Even so, the data also proved that the teachers had means to counterbalance excessive use of textbooks, by supplementing with other sources when the textbook is not adequate (*ibid.*). Additionally, the data indicated that the teachers had a strongly critical attitude towards the textbook in regard of its cultural dimension (*ibid.*).

Ciornei and Dina (2014) sought to investigate the relation between the use of authentic texts and the improvement of communicative abilities (p. 274). The data showed a number of



arguments in favor of using authentic text to improve communications skills and cultural acquisition (Ciornei & Dina, 2014, p.279). They explain that the “students become acquainted to the current language and issues, they become more confident in their language abilities, they develop a sense of cultural belonging” (ibid.). However, the materials are useful only in accordance with the pupils’ proficiency level (ibid.). They conclude that helping the pupils to comprehend the authentic texts, can contribute to develop their language skills and cross-cultural and literacy proficiencies (ibid.).

## 3. Method

This chapter presents the design of the research in this thesis. Section 3.1 presents and explains the research design. Section 3.2 introduces the sample and section 3.3 describes the specific method used in the research to collect data. Section 3.4 elaborates on the reliability and validity of the thesis and section 3.5 discusses the ethical considerations. Lastly, section 3.6 presents the limitations of the scope.

### 3.1 The design of the study

Postholm and Jacobsen (2018) describe qualitative methods as methods that gain information about reality through words or language (p.89). As this thesis aims to explore teachers of English in Norwegian lower secondary schools and their perspectives on using different types of texts to teach about and promote intercultural competence in their pupils, a qualitative method was deemed most suitable for the study. Qualitative researchers explore and interpret different phenomena from the perspectives of other people (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p.3). This thesis explores teachers' perspectives on which types of texts they value as useful when trying to promote the different components of intercultural competence in their pupils. In addition, this study explores teachers' own interpretation of intercultural competence, their opinion about the concept and how it influences their didactic choices in the classroom.

To get access to teachers' thoughts and beliefs the qualitative interview is a suitable choice of method, as interviews are commonly used to study opinions, attitudes, and experiences (Tjora, 2021, p.128). Kvale and Brinkmann (2015) explain that the qualitative research interview tries to understand phenomena from the interviewee's point of view, to explore the meaning of their experiences (p.3). Using a qualitative research interview as a method therefore provides access to the teachers' personal thoughts and experiences on working with intercultural competence in the English-language classroom, and promoting intercultural competence through different types of texts, in addition to their own reflections on intercultural competence.

## 3.2 Sample

### 3.2.1 Plan and process

The main aim of this thesis was to get an insight into teachers' thought processes and beliefs when selecting material to teach about and promote their pupils' intercultural competence. Therefore, it was not necessary for the sample of participants to be of a large scale, but rather more beneficial for the research to accumulate a small group of qualified teachers of English, to provide data on the process of choosing material to work with intercultural competence in the classroom. The aim was to recruit a small sample of three teachers of English from Norwegian lower secondary schools to explore their perceptions, thoughts and beliefs on intercultural competence and how they choose and evaluate a text as useful to teach about and promote the competence in the classroom. The participants needed to be qualified to teach English at lower secondary education with at least 60 credits in the English subject, and work as English-language teachers at the current time. Finding informants that met the criterion and had the time to participate proved to be a challenge. However, three teachers found the time, and constitute the sample of this thesis.

### 3.2.2 Convenience sample

The table below outlines the interviewees' educational background, years in the profession and some practical information on the interviews conducted. It shows that all the teachers participating have 60 credits or more in the English subject and that they have worked as teachers for several years. In addition, two of the interviewees are currently teaching English in Year 8 and one of the interviewees is teaching English in Year 10.

<b>Informants</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Teaching experience</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Interview time</b>
<b>T1</b>	Master	19 years	8	32 minutes
<b>T2</b>	60 credits	15 years	10	43 minutes
<b>T3</b>	60 credits	15 years	8	26 minutes

Table 3-1: Overview of the interview subjects

### 3.2.3 Confidentiality and informed consent

Before contacting any informants to ask for participation in the study, the project needed to be approved by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD), which is now a part of Sikt (Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research). Since the plan was to record the interviews, it was important to secure the informants' anonymity in accordance with privacy laws, and to ensure that the data gathered do not lead to negative consequences for the informants. The application of the research project was approved in November 2022 (see Appendix 2) and was a necessary step in the research process to preserve the confidentiality of the research and secure that the participants' identities stay anonymous.

In addition, the participants should be informed of the aims and procedures of the project before agreeing to participate in the research (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, p. 104). *Informed consent* is an important part of the research process and ensures that the informants participate voluntarily and that they are informed about their right to withdraw their contributions at any given time (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, p. 104). The participants of the sample in this research project, were given a letter that included all the practical information on the project's aim and design, and information on the participants rights. The document also included a form of consent, which the participants were asked to sign, to agree to being interviewed and provide data to the research project. Additionally, they consented to allow the data to be kept until the research project is finished. All participants of the sample were informed of the project and their rights and signed the form of consent before taking part in the interviews.

## 3.3 Interview

As this research project aims to explore teachers' perceptions, thoughts and beliefs on using text to teach about and promote their pupils' intercultural competence, it was necessary to use a method that accesses each teacher's perceptions and thought processes behind their teaching practices. The interviews provide data on teachers' perceptions, knowledge, and definitions of the concept of intercultural competence and what they value as important aspects of the field. They also provide information on the teachers' thoughts on using different types of texts in the classroom and their thought processes behind choosing the text. This includes the criteria they use to evaluate a text as useful to promote intercultural competence. Additionally, they provide insight into the teachers' experiences of teaching about and promoting intercultural competence through different types of text, but also in general. It has also been of interest to gain access to

the teachers' perspectives on benefits and challenges of teaching about and promoting intercultural competence in the English subject.

### 3.3.1 Interview instrument

Kvale and Brinkmann (2015) explain that the semi-structured interview is used to research themes and topics from the interviewee's perspectives (p.46). Therefore, to explore teachers' perspectives on using text to teach about and promote intercultural competence, the semi-structured interview seemed suitable. The goal of the semi-structured interview is to create a relatively free dialog, centered around themes or topics which have been predefined by the researcher (Tjora, 2021, p.127-128). This creates a relaxed environment where the interviewee is allowed to reflect and elaborate on her or his thoughts and experiences, related to the questions asked by the interviewer (ibid.). It also allows the interviewer to ask follow-up questions to gain clarity or to further elaborate on the themes explored. The semi-structured interview is neither an open conversation nor a strict close-ended questionnaire, but rather something in between, where the conversation evolves around predefined topics, presented through questions in an interview guide (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015 p.46). It was important for the questions to be open-ended, because as Tjora (2021) explains, open-ended questions allow for the informants to dive deep into the topics and elaborate and reflect on their perceptions and experiences (p.127-128).

The questions in the interview guide (see Appendix 3) are designed to investigate the teachers' knowledge and understanding of intercultural competence and the components that constitutes the competence. They further explore how the teachers plan their teaching, which types of texts they choose for teaching about and promoting their pupils' intercultural competence, and which criteria they use to evaluate the intercultural affordances of a text. In addition, they investigate the teachers' thoughts and experiences on the benefits and challenges of teaching intercultural competence in the English subject. As mentioned, the questions are open-ended, which allows for digressions by the informants. Such digressions might lead to topics and themes that the interviewer might not have intended to explore, but can prove to be important to the interviewee, and therefore relevant to the research (Tjora, 2021, p. 127-128). One topic that occurred, which was not explicitly implemented in the interview guide, was the teachers experiences of the pupils' motivation for reading. This proved to be an important factor for the teachers' choices of teaching methods and an interesting finding. The questions in the interview guide proved to be useful when trying to answer the research questions, because they explored

central themes and topics that contributed to an understanding of teachers' perceptions on using text to teach about and promote intercultural competence in the lower secondary classroom.

### 3.3.2 Interview procedure

The interviews were conducted as one-on-one conversations with the interview guide (see Appendix 3) acting as a guideline for the dialog. This allowed the interviewees to ask questions regarding the interview questions as they occurred during the conversation. As the interviews were semi-structured the questions asked in each interview varied, because of follow-up questions and digressions. This considered, the data gathered from the interviews are still in accordance with the topic and research questions of the thesis.

To create a safe environment for the informants, the interviews were conducted in Norwegian. This way the conversation flowed more naturally, and the answers given were more authentic as the teachers could speak in their native language. However, one of the teachers does not have Norwegian as her native language but was comfortable with speaking it, nonetheless. The data presented in this thesis (see section 4) is therefore a translation of the participants' answers. The first set of questions asked were related to the teachers' experiences, education, subjects and Years they are currently teaching in. These questions worked as conversation starters and helped the interviewees and interviewer to get comfortable in the situation. In addition, all of the interviews took place at the teachers' workplace as this also contributed to the participants' confidence. One of the participants asked to have a look at the interview guide before taking part in the interview. So, to ensure that all the participants had the same starting point, they were all given the interview guide before the interviews were conducted. This allowed them to reflect on the questions and feel more prepared for the interviews, which again could contribute to their overall confidence in the interview situation.

The teachers were informed, before starting the interviews, that the conversation would be audio recorded with the help of the application *Nettskjema*, created by the University of Oslo. *Nettskjema* is approved as a safe platform to contain data gathered from the interviews, to secure the informants' privacy. Recorded interviews allow the researcher to pause and listen to the recording several times, which made the process of transcribing and analyzing a lot easier.

### 3.3.3 Interview analysis and techniques

As one of the aims of the thesis is to explore teachers' perceptions on the concept of intercultural competence, the theoretical framework contributes to define the foundation for the research. However, when it came to analyzing the data concerning other areas of the research question, such as text types, the theory emerged after analyzing the material. Therefore, the collected data were analyzed by both the directed and conventional content analysis approaches, within the qualitative content analysis method (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Qualitative content analysis is used to search for underlying themes in the gathered data (Clark et al., 2021, p. 516). The conventional approach to content analysis aims to describe a phenomenon, while the directed approach aims to confirm or extend a theoretical framework (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1279-1281).

The first step of the process of analyzing is transcribing the data gathered from the interviews. *Transcription* is the act of converting the audio recording of the interviews into written text (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, p. 206). This makes the material more manageable and easier to analyze and structure, which is why transcription is considered to be the first step of the analyzation process (ibid.). The transcriptions were carried out in short time after each interview was completed. This enhances the reliability of the data, as it was written from a fresh memory. The transcriptions were written word for word but left out any unnecessary sounds such as "eh", to leave a cleaner slate, which made the process of analyzing easier as well.

In the directed content analysis approach, the theory can help to determine initial codes (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p.1281). The codes of this thesis are outlined in Figure 3.1 below and are derived from components of Byram's model of intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 2021), different types of texts (Fenner, 2013, 2020; Brevik & Rindal, 2020; Nikolajeva, 2014; Villanueva, 2020; Roell, 2010; Heggernes, 2020; Pande-Rolfsen, 2021) and teacher cognition (Borg, 2003; Haukås, 2018). As mentioned earlier, the codes based on the theoretical framework of Byram (2021) were predetermined, the other codes emerged through the process of carefully reading through each transcription, which corresponds with the conventional approach to content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1279).

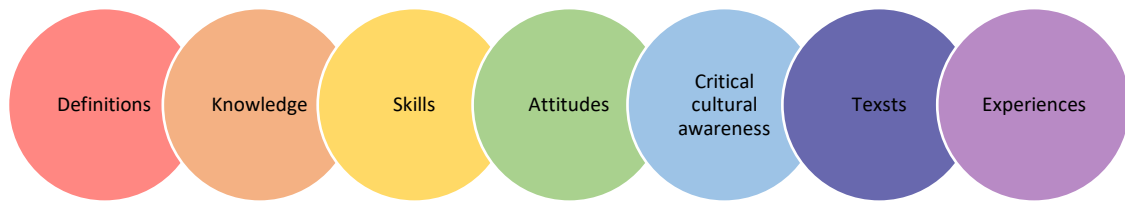


Figure 3-1: Codes for interview analysis

One of the strategies within directed content analysis is to begin coding immediately, using the predetermined codes (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1282) and was the next step in the analyzation process in this thesis. The application NVIVO was used in the process of coding and analyzing. NVIVO is a program that can help the researcher to organize and systematize their findings into different codes. This application made the analyzation process a lot easier, as one can easily click on a code and see all the highlighted quotes from each transcription grouped together in the same area, while at the same time distinguish between which codes belongs to which informant.

The different transcriptions were thoroughly read through and the data that fit into each code were accumulated and systematized. Some of the data collected lay outside of the predetermined codes and needed to be analyzed to determine if they constitute new codes or sub-categories to existing codes (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1282). The questions in the interview guide provided the codes related to different types of texts and additional codes were created from the emerged themes that occurred in the conversations with the informants. However, some of the data did not fit into any of the codes and were then closely examined and broken down into smaller scales, and either put into existing codes or discarded as not relevant.

### 3.4 Reliability and Validity

The research's reliability concerns whether the research can be re-tested by other researchers in another time-period (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, p.276). A qualitative study could prove quite difficult to replicate, both because of the circumstances of the meeting between the researcher, field of research and the people participating in the study will be different every time, but also because the research method revolves around humans, who constantly change (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018, p.223-224). Even so, this thesis uses an objective research instrument to explore objective research questions. Hence, it should be possible to use the same research questions and method at a later time, and still be able to present results regarding



teachers of English in Norwegian lower secondary school and their perceptions on using text to teach about and promote intercultural competence. Though, as mentioned, the results would never be exactly the same, because of the differences in background, thoughts and opinions of the participants and the researcher, and the contextual circumstances. For instance, the interview guide uses open-ended questions, which is central in the semi-structured interview method (see section 3.3.1). Because the semi-structured interview opens for reflections and elaborations on themes and topics outside of the questions in the interview guide, the conversations that happens in each interview would differ every time and be difficult to replicate and get the exact same results.

The reliability of the study also depends on the trustworthiness of its results (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, p.276). Tjora (2021) explains that relevant connections between empiricism, analysis and theory contributes to the trustworthiness of the research (p.263). The research questions, the data gathering instrument and methods of analysis in this thesis are all generated with the theoretical framework in mind, thus strengthening the reliability of the results. Nevertheless, one has to consider how the researcher might have affected the results (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018, p.224). When conducting interviews and analyzing collected data, the researcher's subjectiveness will always in some way alter the results. The context, follow-up questions asked and the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee, all in some way affect the data. Analyzing the data in this thesis required connections to be drawn between the theory and the findings, which includes breaking down and interpreting the informant's utterances to fit into predetermined codes generated from the theory. Even though the researchers' interpretations are in accordance with the theory, the interpretations are still subjective and will always vary from researcher to researcher.

As the research in this thesis is closely connected to the terms and theories used to describe the themes explored, the thesis has proven internal validity (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018, p.229). The validity of the study also concerns whether the result of the research reflects the questions the researcher is trying to answer and how effectively this is done (Tjora, 2021, p. 260). The research questions in this thesis regards how the teachers understand the concept of intercultural competence; their perceptions on using different types of texts to promote intercultural competence; and to which criteria they evaluate a text as useful to promote intercultural competence. One of the measures to ensure that the research would provide relevant data to answer the research questions, were having the questions in the interview guide read through

and approved by the supervisor. In addition, the questions were tried out in pilot interviews on fellow students to ensure that the instrument would be successful in providing relevant data to the research project.

Another aspect of the validity of the research is whether the chosen method and instruments are suitable to investigate the phenomena it is supposed to investigate (Cohen et al., 2008, p. 245; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, p.276). Tjora (2021) explains that the semi-structured interviews are used to explore what the participants think about their own practice and their own experiences (p.262-263). As the aim of this research project is to investigate teacher's perceptions, thoughts and beliefs on using text to teach about and promote intercultural competence, the semi-structured interview is a fitting method, which has the ability to provide relevant data on research questions.

Additionally, Postholm and Jacobsen (2018) explain that the validity of the research is connected to in which degree the questions asked, and the themes explored are relevant to both the empirics and the readers of the thesis (p.230). The sample of this study consists of three teachers with variations in education, experience, and background. It is difficult to argue that the results are valid for all teachers of English in Norway as the study's sample is quite small in comparison. Even so, all teachers of English in Norway operate within the same curriculum and by the same laws in the Education Act. Therefore, one can assume that the results can reflect how teachers perceive the concept of intercultural competence and that they have similar experiences of using text to teach about and promote intercultural competence, because of the shared foundation of practice.

### 3.5 Ethical considerations

When conducting research of any kind, there are several different ethical considerations that need to be kept in mind. Postholm and Jacobsen (2018) present three main requirements connected to the relationship between the researcher and the subject of research in Norway: informed consent, the requirement of privacy and the requirement to be correctly reproduced (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018, p.247). These three areas will be presented and explained in relation to how they were handled in this thesis.

The precondition to informed consent is that the informant participates voluntarily in the study, and that this consent is based on the fact that the participant is informed of which benefits and inconveniences participation in the study might bring (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018, p.247). To ensure this, all research subjects received an information letter (see Appendix 1) with a detailed explanation of the aim of the research and what they were to participate in. In this information letter the teachers were also asked to sign a consent slip, where they would agree to take part in the research.

Equally important as informed consent is the informant's right to privacy (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018, p.249). As a researcher one should consider the level of sensitivity of the information one gathers, through the eyes of the informant (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018, p.249). The level of sensitivity needs to be considered in relation to each individual informant (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018, p.249). Confidentiality is therefore highly important as a breach of privacy happens when it is possible to identify individuals through the data provided in the thesis (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018, p.250). The odds of recognizing someone increases when the selection of people decreases (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018, p.250). This makes it extra important for a qualitative researcher to ensure the confidentiality of the participants, as the selected group is usually relatively small (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018, p.250). In this study, the anonymity of the participants has been secured by using pseudonyms for the different teachers. The information obtained through the interviews has been collected and treated according to the Personal Data Act.

After the process of gathering the data, it is important to correctly reproduce the information when writing the thesis. The researcher should also remove all information that could possibly harm the research subject (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018, p.251). Therefore, the researcher might have to withhold information or data that is relevant to the research, in order to ensure that the research subjects, that willingly spent their time to participate in the project, will be ethically justifiably represented (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018, p.251). In the degree that it is possible, a researcher should strive to reproduce the data as accurately as possible and in the right context (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018, p.251).

### 3.6 Limitations of research

The empirical basis of this research lies in the interviews conducted on a small group of teachers of English in Norwegian lower secondary schools. Hence, the research is not a general representation of teachers' choices of texts to teach and promote intercultural competence. However, since the goal of this thesis was not to explain all teachers of English in Norwegian lower secondary schools' perceptions on using text to teach and promote intercultural competence, but rather investigate these teachers' thoughts and opinions on the topic, it can be a valuable contribution to the field of research. The research could have benefited from including observation as a method to further elaborate on the effectiveness of the texts in the classroom when teaching and promoting intercultural competence. However, as the thesis focus is directed towards teachers' interpretations, opinions and perspectives on the topic and not towards the chosen text's actual effectiveness, it was not found necessary.

## 4. Findings

This chapter presents the findings generated from the analysis of the data, collected through the conducted interviews. The results are presented thematically, categorized in the codes used in the analyzation process. Additionally, the results from each participant are distinguished from the others. Some of the data are presented in more than one code. This is because the data were considered to fit into several categories and are therefore double-coded. The questions in the interview guide sought to answer the research questions in this thesis. As the interviews were semi-structured, the data collected vary from teacher to teacher. Therefore, some of the categories might lack data from a specific teacher. All quotes in this chapter are translated, as the interviews were conducted in Norwegian.

### 4.1 Definitions

One of the first questions asked in the interviews was how the teachers understand the term intercultural competence. The results from each interview show that the teachers have a similar understanding of the term, but with certain variations. They all highlight knowledge about other cultures, diversity and understanding as important aspects of the concept.

T1 said “I understand intercultural competence as developing an understanding of the fact that people are different, and that there are different ways of thinking and ways of acting than one’s own. In addition, it concerns the development of thought processes and acceptance.” She also pointed out “the ability to see perspectives from different cultures” as an important aspect of intercultural competence.

T2 was first very brief in her answer: “Simply, the ability to understand other cultures. For instance, the ability to understand the dynamics in an interaction between different people from different cultures or religions”. In order to dive deeper into the topic, T2 was asked to describe how she understood the term culture. She responded with:

That is a very broad term. As a social science teacher, I can discuss the term on both macro and micro level. On a macro level, one has for instance religion, which is a huge part of different cultures across countries and social groups. On a micro level, there is within the borders of Norway, one culture in the North, one in the South, one in the

West and one in the East that are different from one another. So, culture includes the manner of being, habits, music, clothes... It is a broad term.

She was then asked to describe intercultural competence again with the understanding of the term culture in mind. T2 elaborated further on the concept and explained that “It has to be the ability to tolerate and respect and have a certain knowledge about why people do what they do, react the way they do, have the traditions they have”. She also added that intercultural competence includes “understanding that we are different on many levels, even on levels one does not realize”.

T3 found the term more complex and difficult to grasp. She pointed out that the globalization process has led to a more diverse society and that different cultures have gathered in the same societies. She further highlighted aspects that were important for the pupils to learn regarding intercultural competence:

The pupils need to learn that there are different perspectives and ways of understanding a matter. They need to learn that because we have different backgrounds, we have different perspectives, we perceive matters differently, and react differently. The competence is probably gained when this is integrated enough for them to be able to know, that even though other people perceive an occurrence different from themselves, both perspectives are equally accurate and important.

T3 was then asked again to define the term intercultural competence and explained it as “The ability to understand different cultures and how the culture affects people’s behavior”.

## 4.2 Knowledge

The gathered data show that the teachers emphasize both knowledge about one’s own and other cultures, but also knowledge about interactions as important aspects of intercultural competence. T1 points out that she uses books related to certain topics to teach about a culture or occurrence. For example: “With Year 10 we travel to Krakow, and in relation to this I selected some books I have bought on an earlier trip there, and read them together with the class, to gather the pupils’ perspectives on the topic”. She explains that reading books with the pupils have many benefits, “like promoting their English language skills and at the same time

developing their understanding of different cultures”. T1 also emphasizes the usefulness of using literature written by younger authors:

I believe it would be useful to read texts written by teens, as most of the texts we read in class are written by adults. It might help to develop their perspectives on the world and themselves. For instance, texts written by African American 17–18-year-olds or other minorities, where they write from their own perspectives, could be a useful resource to teach the pupils about that culture and thus develop their understanding of other people’s perspectives.

She explains that “it is important to choose suitable reading material, for instance texts where the story is about minorities and people from foreign cultures I, for instance have learned a lot about the culture in South Korea by watching South Korean movies. So, if the pupils would read something written by a younger author, the story might be more believable to them”.

In T2’s definition of intercultural competence she highlights both aspects of knowledge: “Simply, the ability to understand other cultures. For instance, the ability to understand the dynamics in an interaction between different people from different cultures or religions”. She further points out that it is important in intercultural competence to “have a certain knowledge about why people do what they do, react the way they do, have the traditions they have”. Her example of greetings is also related to knowledge:

Greetings are a good example. There were for instance, immense reactions in 2019 when three Muslim women did not shake the hand of the Crown Prince of Norway Håkon Magnus. The reactions were massive, without keeping in mind that the act of shaking a hand is not common in for instance Islam and the Muslim cultures. They greet each other in other ways, which is their way of showing respect.

T2 further explains that the important thing to understand regarding this is why we greet each other differently and have different customs.

T2 later touched on specific historical topics, like for instance the Middle East conflict, and was asked to explain how teaching about topics like that can help to develop the pupils’ intercultural competence. She answered that they at least “hope that the pupils gain an equal understanding

of why conflicts happen, why someone is not able to cooperate and why some religions are not able to live within the same country”. She explained that “reflecting around themes like these together with the pupils to create some thought processes, contributes to greater understanding and tolerance”.

One question the teachers were asked, was if there are any competence aims that they consider to be relevant to teach about and promote intercultural competence. T2 chose:

“explore and present the content of cultural forms of expression from various media in the English-speaking world that are related to one's own interests”, “read, interpret and reflect on English-language fiction, including young people’s literature” and “explore and reflect on the situation of indigenous peoples in the English-speaking world and in Norway”.

She explained that “the last plays a big role in a country’s culture, the Sami in Norway for instance”. T2 also added: “I also consider ‘explore and describe ways of living, ways of thinking, communication patterns and diversity in the English-speaking world’ to relate to intercultural competence”. She was then asked to explain why she considered these specific competence aims to be useful in relation to intercultural competence. T2 answered:

The English-speaking world is one thing, but ways of living, ways of thinking, communication patterns and diversity are all aspects related to intercultural competence. In my opinion one can use the term English-speaking country generously and say that most countries in the world can be considered English-speaking. This is because of the high number of inhabitants that can communicate in English. This gives an opportunity to dive into cultures from a specter of countries around the world, also in Africa and Asia. Indigenous people are also relevant to intercultural competence, one must not forget about the indigenous people, because they represent a huge part of the culture of the country they belong to.

To further elaborate on T2’s explanation, she was asked to explain why she considered indigenous people an important topic to teach about in relation to intercultural competence. T2 explained that:



In every country's history the indigenous people were there first and have often in one way or another been oppressed. This, in some way influences the society we live in today. We Norwegians are still ashamed of how we treated the Sami, which have resulted in them being implemented in a larger degree in the curriculum and taught about more in Norwegian schools. The same goes for Kvens, Romany, all of the minorities in Norway have influenced the culture and our history. History is also important when it comes to intercultural competence. One has to know something about where we have been, to know where we are now.

T3's definition of intercultural competence also relates to knowledge (see Section 4.1). She explained further that intercultural competence includes "The ability to understand different cultures and how the culture affects people's behavior". Another point T3 considered valid related to intercultural competence is that the pupils "live in a more diverse society, where different cultures meet, than their parents did". She explained that this might contribute to develop a more inclusive society in the future.

Through the interviews the teachers were asked to present texts that they considered to be useful to teach about and promote intercultural competence. One of the texts T3 mentioned was *The Karate Kid* (Smith, 2019). She explained that "We recently read an excerpt from *The Karate Kid* in English. This could be used to promote intercultural competence, since the child in the story moves to Beijing and experiences a clash of cultures". T3 was then asked why this was useful in relation to intercultural competence, to which she answered: "Because it is so obvious that he meets another culture and that he experiences trouble since his intercultural competence is lacking. One can discuss why things happen the way they do in the story with the pupils". T3 was asked to explain this in more detail and said:

We live in a world where a lot of things are happening and there is a lot of people that cannot live in their countries. The pupils will meet people that have experienced having to move from their country and one can never know what is going to happen. Suddenly something happens here too, and we must move somewhere else. So, it is about teaching the pupils to understand other people and adapt their behavior accordingly, to avoid unnecessary conflict.

## 4.3 Skills

This section is divided into the two different *savoirs* relating to skills, namely *Skills of Discovery and Interaction* and *Skills of interpreting and relating* (Byram, 2021, see Section 2.2.1).

### 4.3.1 Skills of Discovery and Interaction

As Skills of discovery and interaction includes a person's ability to discover new knowledge about other cultures, the gathered data in this section relates to the data in the previous section, knowledge (Section 4.2). The data show that all of the teachers emphasize that the pupils should be able to gain new knowledge about their own and other cultures through their education. Additionally, the data show that the teachers consider interactions with people from other cultures relevant in relation to intercultural competence.

Throughout the interview with T1, she mentioned several times that reading books is useful for the pupils in order to gain new knowledge about other cultures: "It is important that the pupils develop a liking for reading books. It has several benefits, like developing their English language skills and at the same time developing their knowledge about and understanding of other cultures". She mentioned different examples of texts that she found useful, one of them being *Miracle's Boys* (Woodson, 2000, see Section 4.6.1).

Again, T1 stressed the importance of reading texts written by younger authors, as this might make the text more relatable to the pupils (see Section 4.2). She argued that "having discussions with the pupils about how the lives of someone their age from other parts of the world, their day-to-day lives and what challenges they experience, will contribute to develop the pupils' understanding of other humans".

In addition to stressing that the pupils gain new knowledge about other cultures and social groups through their education, T2 also highlighted the importance of understanding how an interaction works. She, for instance, explained in her definition on intercultural competence that it is about "the ability to understand the dynamics in an interaction between different people from different cultures or religions". Her example of greetings (see Section 4.1) is also relevant to skills of discovery and interaction. Additionally, as mentioned in Section 4.2, she emphasized

the importance of understanding the dynamics in a conflict “I hope that the pupils gain an equal understanding of why conflicts happen”.

T3 also emphasized new knowledge gained from the pupil’s education about other cultures and the knowledge about interactions as important in intercultural competence (see Section 4.2), but unlike the other two, she also expressed that this knowledge can come in handy when interacting with others. She explained that this knowledge affects the way the pupils react in an interaction: “With the intercultural competence they might be able to reflect on the situation, instead of starting an argument”. She stressed that intercultural competence “is about teaching the pupils to understand other people and adapt their behavior accordingly to avoid unnecessary conflict”.

#### 4.3.2 Skills of interpreting and relating

Skills of interpreting and relating is about interpreting documents and occurrences in the interlocutor’s culture and relating these to documents and occurrences in one’s own. All of the teachers mention texts as useful for the pupils to gain insight into different cultures. In relation to indigenous people T1 explained that one of the teaching methods used at her school in a cross-disciplinary project was to compare the Sami with the Innuits and their cultures. In addition, she mentioned using the film *Rabbit-Proof Fence* (Noyce, 2002) in relation to teaching about Australia and the Aboriginals (see Section 4.6.2).

T2 and T3 also use different types of texts to educate the pupils on different cultures and social groups (see Section 4.6.2). T2 uses for instance the movie *A Time to Kill* (Schumacher, 1996) to educate the pupils on American history. She explained that “this movie has several provoking scenes concerning the racial thinking in the southern states”. She further explained that “if we forget our history, we repeat ourselves, and we need to be able to avoid making the same mistakes. A lot of the horrible occurrences like terrorist attacks and genocides happen because people do not know their history”. T3 mentions using *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* (Kinney, 2007) with her pupils and that one of the activities she liked to use when reading books like this, is character studies. In the activity, the pupils are supposed to interpret the characters’ personality, behavior, thought processes and actions, and relate these to their own lives in Norway.

## 4.4 Attitudes

One theme that reoccurred throughout all of the interviews was “the understanding of other people”. The teachers emphasized that the pupils need to develop an understanding of other people, to develop their intercultural competence. Other attitudes that are highlighted by the teachers include empathy, tolerance, respect, curiosity, openness, and the willingness to change perspectives. T1 and T3 both mentioned that it is important to develop the pupils’ empathy, to better their understanding of other cultures and social groups.

T1 stressed that it is important for the pupils to be able to see others’ perspectives on the world, which she explained can be done through the use of different types of texts. Texts from a young person’s or teen’s perspective would be the most effective:

The texts should be from a young person’s perspective written by a young adult or a teen with a minority/lesser fortunate background, for the pupils to understand how lucky Norwegian teens are and to build empathy towards the lesser fortunate, to prevent bad attitudes, generalization and stereotyping.

T2 highlights tolerance and respect as important aspects in relation to intercultural competence: “That the English subject also contributes to the development of the pupil’s tolerance and respect, is in my opinion very positive”. She also explained that using texts that provokes the pupils to a certain degree, tends to spark their curiosity and engagement:

If one can find texts that provoke the pupils’ mindset a little, make them wonder, one can start several thought processes in them. To provoke them a little on purpose because there is a motive behind, can be useful to spark some engagement and curiosity. Challenging their way of thinking can be an exciting way of doing this.

T2 further explained that some of the pupils in her class have strong opinions about certain topics and using texts that contradicts their opinions, beliefs, or values on these topics, challenge their way of thinking and make them see the topics from other perspectives.

## 4.5 Critical Cultural Awareness

When it comes to the savoir of critical cultural awareness the data in the previous section (4.4) is relevant here as well. T1 says that intercultural competence is about “learning how to live together” and the teachers agree on the fact that the pupils should learn to be critical of their own perspectives as they live in a globalized world where many different cultures and social groups exist in the same societies. Therefore, openness and the willingness to change one’s perspectives (see Section 4.4) are necessary attitudes for them to be able to co-exist with their fellow citizens.

T2 gives several examples of texts she uses in the classroom, which concern themes related to critical cultural awareness. One of the examples is *American History X* (Kaye, 1998, see Section 4.6.2), where the characters are challenged in their way of thinking and world views and must be critical to their own perspectives.

T3 stresses the importance of critical thinking and the ability to evaluate a source critically. She explained that “Right now, I am working with the Middle East conflict, and challenging the pupils to find objective sources on this topic, which is quite difficult”. T3 further explained that it is important that they learn why there is a lack of objective resources on this topic and understand that the sources are affected by the cultural background of the author.

## 4.6 Texts

When the teachers were asked to describe their thoughts on the term “literature” they all agreed that it was broad and included several types of texts. T1 described the term as “reading other people’s thoughts” and related it to philosophical questions such as “the meaning of life”. She continued with relating it to culture and knowledge. T2 explained that “first of all I think of books, and then poems and short stories. But I also think of comics, graphic novels and news articles”. T3 highlighted that literature can both be written and oral, and mentioned podcasts, video clips on YouTube, in addition to books, short stories and poems.

Later the teachers were asked to give examples of texts they find useful to teach about and promote intercultural competence and to explain the intercultural affordances of these texts. The teachers seemed to agree that one criterion is that the text is from perspectives of other cultures or social groups, where the pupils can gain new knowledge about them. T2 explained

that authentic texts are very relevant as they have the ability to make a topic or theme more real and concrete for the pupils, which also might spark their desire to read more. Another criterion the teachers agree upon as valuable to promote intercultural competence in the reader, is the text's ability to let the reader walk in another person's shoes. As T2 explained "even though it is fictional, the pupils familiarize themselves with another person's perspective". This helps challenge the pupil's way of thinking (see Section 4.4). Lastly, all the teachers emphasized that the texts needed to fit the pupils' level of proficiency in the English language.

The teachers were also asked to give examples of reasons that would make the texts not usable to promote intercultural competence. T1 and T2 both mentioned politically incorrect language as a reason to not use a text, but T2 emphasized that some terms that are politically incorrect now were used freely in earlier times. So, if one were to discuss with the pupils the historical aspect of it and why the terms are not politically correct to use today, the text can be used for this purpose. T3 also stresses the importance of considering the content of the texts, before using them in the classroom. She emphasized that it cannot be themes beyond the pupils' maturity level, too much violence or too advanced language.

In addition to authentic text types, the teachers describe diligently using the textbook as a resource in the classroom. T1 explained that "The other English teachers and I usually use the textbook in the planning of the teaching. We actually got to participate in the process of choosing which textbook the school should order and chose the one we found most useful. We usually use topics and text excerpts from this book when planning the lessons". T1 adds that it is easier to cooperate when they all use the same source. T2 describes the same thing but adds that "we should probably be better at finding sources outside of the textbook, on my team. It is quite easy to get stuck there". She also mentions that in English In-depth studies, she is better at finding topics and texts herself, because there is no assigned textbook in this subject. T3 explained that she does not use the textbook that often in her teaching, but when finding reading material she consults the textbook because the texts in there are usually adapted to the targeted age group and proficiency levels.

The teachers were asked in various ways to describe and explain their perceptions on using different types of texts to teach about and promote intercultural competence. The following subchapters present the results gathered from the interviews concerning specific text types and the teachers' thoughts and opinions on them.

#### 4.6.1 Novels

T1 explains that she “believes reading in English is really important”. The teacher enjoys using books in their teaching but explains that the lack of availability of English books in the local library, makes it difficult to do so. T1 also explains that some teachers prefer to stick with the textbook, as working with novels can be challenging because of the time and energy it takes to create these types of lessons, in an already packed work schedule. Even so T1 stresses that “it is important that the pupils develop a love for reading books. It has several benefits, like promoting the pupils’ English language skills and at the same time develop their understanding of foreign cultures. It just depends on the book one chooses”. T1 explains that when deciding upon which books to read with the class, she uses her own reading and judgment as the main source. As most of the pupils in her class do not particularly enjoy reading, it is rare that they themselves suggest books to read in the English lessons. T1 describes this as unfortunate as she believes that pupil-chosen texts could contribute to develop their liking for reading.

When asked to give examples of texts T1 has used in her teaching, she named the following: *Miracle’s Boys*, *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* (Boyne, 2006), *The Little Prince* (de Saint-Exupéry, 1943) and *Lord of the Flies* (Golding, 1954). The teacher is asked to describe the benefits of using one of these books in their teaching and responds with:

*Miracle’s Boys* is about three Afro-American siblings that grow up in the USA. They come from a poor family, and they end up in jail. I believe that when the pupils read this, they do not only develop their English language skills, but also a greater understanding of why some people end up in these “gangs”, how difficult their lives are and how easy it is to be dragged into these types of social groups.

As mentioned, T2 explains that she does not typically use texts outside of the textbook in the English subject, as it is more convenient to stick with what is known. She describes this as unfortunate because “there are plenty of useful texts out there, it does not even have to be whole novels, one can use excerpts”. However, in English In-depth studies there is no assigned textbook, so T2 explains that she is therefore forced to find texts on her own. When choosing texts to use in the classroom, T2, like T1, uses her own reading and judgment as the main source. T2 names, Steven King, J. K. Rowling and Tolkien as some examples of authors she has consulted and used texts from in her teaching. Even though T2 usually chooses the texts herself, she mentions that “a colleague and I have started a reading project in English In-depth

studies, where the pupils shall read English books. Here, the pupils get to choose books based on their interests, and we forward their requests to the library”.

T2 says that she is particularly fond of the fantasy genre. She explained that “In fantasy one can find underlying themes such as religious diversity and good versus evil. Is there even anyone that is a 100% good? One can discuss questions like that for ages. I love the fantasy genre because it allows for interpretations and can be used in a variety of different contexts”. One example the teacher mentioned is the Harry Potter series (J. K. Rowling, 1997-2007).

When discussing the good versus evil one example is Harry Potter. Is he really the hero in the Harry Potter books? Or is there maybe someone else that deserves the hero-title? Is Harry Potter 100% good? Had he managed on his own? He probably would not. These are questions that one can explore with the pupils.

T2 also mentioned using *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Lee, 1960) and *The Life of David Gale* (Gram, 2003). T2 was then asked to explain why *To Kill a Mockingbird* is useful to promote intercultural competence. She answered:

In the novel, the father is a lawyer of an Afro-American man and does the job happily, even though he stands in contrast to the rest of his society’s opinion. That is brave, especially considering the time period. When using this novel in the classroom, one can create discussions in relation to the historical perspective. For example, the racial wars in the USA.

#### 4.6.2 Films

The second text type the teachers mentioned using were films. T1 claims that she herself has learned a lot about other cultures through watching films. She explained that she frequently uses book to film adaptations in addition to reading the novel with the pupils. “We have just finished reading *The Diary of a Wimpy Kid* in 9<sup>th</sup> grade and have also watched the movie together and written a review of the film. In addition, we have compared and contrasted the book and movie”. Another example of a film T1 describes using is *Rabbit-Proof Fence*. The teacher explains that she uses this film in relation to the topic Australia and New Zealand. When asked why she chose this specific movie, T1 explains that:



I have seen this movie several times before. It handles the theme of oppression that many minorities experience, especially indigenous people, very well. I believe it is important for Norwegian pupils to develop an understanding of their fortunate circumstances, and that there are many people that do not share their lucky fate. Therefore, I try to make the pupils reflect on this quite often.

T2 says that she loves to watch movies and likes almost every genre. She explained that movies can be a useful source to use in the classroom, but that one should include some activities for the pupils to work with in relation to the film:

If watching the movie is the only activity one uses with the pupils, they might not have learned what they should from it. One should include activities after watching the movie and also maybe before watching it, that makes the pupils reflect and discuss relevant themes. For instance, they can write an argumentative text. The design of the activity is not that important, as long as it creates some thought processes where the pupils have to describe their learning outcome.

T2 continued to explain that the pupils usually respond well to visual media and find it more engaging. She explained that:

This is probably because they are used to receiving most of their input from a screen. They do not read news; they listen to what they think are news on apps such as TikTok. So, they are used to the visual medium and if one presents and discusses the topic with them before and after watching the movie, for instance with book to film adaptations, films can be a useful source for teaching.

T2 describes using both whole films, excerpts from films and also video clips from YouTube in their teaching. She names two different movies in specific: *American History X* and *A Time to Kill*.

I have used, even though one of the scenes are horrific, *American History X*. It is about a Nazi who is an older brother that influences his younger brother to follow in his footsteps. This Nazi ends up in jail for breaking an Afro-American man's jaw. In jail, he expects to befriend the group of Nazis. However, the friend he gains is an Afro-

American. The brothers are both throughout the movie, challenged with their perspectives and beliefs. This movie can be used in a variety of contexts, so the possibilities are many.

A very straight forward film, about the racial wars in the USA is *A Time to Kill*. It starts with a young Afro-American girl getting raped by two rednecks and then attempted murdered. During the trials, the girl's father makes an appearance and shoots the perpetrators. The rest of the movie is about the white man that has to be the lawyer to this father. This movie has a lot of provoking scenes concerning the racial thinking in the USA at that time, especially in the southern states. I have recently used this movie in Year 10 and discussed the themes with the class. It made a great impression.

T3 explains that she frequently uses video clips from YouTube in her teaching.

In English I use a lot of YouTube videos. When teaching grammar, I usually find video clips made for young children in English speaking countries, preferably with a childish song playing in the background. In my experience, this sparks engagement in the pupils as they think it is funny and awkward. In addition, because the videos are made for very young children, the proficiency level is pretty low, which makes them useful for all the pupils in the classroom.

T3 also says that she uses short films in class, with subtitles in English or without subtitles.

#### 4.6.3 Picture books /Graphic Novels

When it comes to picture books, all the teachers mention using *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*. T1 describes “We have just finished reading *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* in Year 9. This book has a lot of pictures, which is a useful resource for pupils with a lower proficiency level”.

Additionally, when T3 is asked to give examples of texts that is useful to teach about and promote intercultural competence, she first states that she does not really have any specific texts in mind. “No, I cannot really think of any. I find this quite difficult”. However, after some time to think T3 explained:

We just read an excerpt from *The Karate Kid*. Maybe that could be used in relation to intercultural competence, as the boy moves to Beijing and experiences culture crash. He meets another culture and experiences trouble because of his lack of intercultural competence. One could discuss this with the pupils.

#### 4.6.4 Poetry

Both T1 and T2 mention poetry as useful a source to teach about and promote intercultural competence. T1 explains that she wishes that the pupils would develop a liking for poetry. In relation to intercultural competence, she would have liked to use “poems that describes minorities, that portrays how challenging life can be or how difficult it is to be different”. She further explains that:

the poem must be short and have a clear punchline, where the pupils could analyze and retrieve knowledge from it. So, if the pupils could gain a liking to poetry, one could have used it to promote intercultural competence.

T1 was later asked to give examples of any texts that she would have liked to use in her teaching, but for some reason does not use. She then mentioned poetry again:

I do not use poems because the pupils are not interested. I believe they find it difficult because they must interpret them and do in-depth analyses to gain access to the underlying themes and topics. The pupils are at a state mentally where everything is boring. There are of course some pupils that find poems ok to work with, but I have tried several times to use it with the whole class, and the pupils are just not motivated. I have had greater success in earlier years.

### 4.7 Experiences

This chapter contains the data collected from the interviews, regarding the teachers experiences of working with intercultural competence in the English subject and in general. Section 4.7.1 presents what the teachers consider to be the benefits and challenges of working with intercultural competence in the English subject, while section 4.7.2 presents the teachers’ didactic choices related to teaching about and promoting intercultural competence.

#### 4.7.1 Benefits and Challenges: intercultural competence in the English subject

All of the teachers agreed that the English subject is a useful subject to teach about and promote intercultural competence. T2 explains that:

English is a world language. It binds countries together across borders. Therefore, it is nice to reflect around a topic such as intercultural competence in English. It is also a natural topic to work with cross disciplinary, in social science, Norwegian and Religious Education. I think it is positive that the English subject can contribute to develop the pupils' tolerance and respect for others.

T1 explains that in the English subject, the pupils learn the language, while at the same time learning something else. She explains further that by teaching intercultural competence in the English subject can:

Teach the pupils about different cultures and their day-to-day challenges. Intercultural competence is useful to teach the pupils how to live together in a society filled with a variety of different cultures. It might make it easier for them to develop an understanding of other cultures and social groups, rather than generalizing and stereotyping.

T3 argues that there are a lot more texts in English than Norwegian, because the English language is larger and more extensive than the Norwegian language. The teacher says that "the texts can be used to gain new perspectives". T3 further explains that intercultural competence can contribute to "develop the pupils' maturity level. They grow up in a society where a variety of different cultures live together. So, they need intercultural competence in order to make it work". In addition, T3 points out that all of the competence aims in the curriculum could be used to teach about and promote intercultural competence, as long as one adapts the teaching accordingly. She explains that "one could even use grammar as a topic in relation to intercultural competence, focusing on differences in language use in different English-speaking areas".

When it comes to challenges of working with intercultural competence in the English subject, the teachers all agree that the pupils' motivation and level of maturity is a central one. T1 emphasizes that the pupils' maturity level has dropped in the last three-four years. She explains that "there are several things we can't teach anymore, because the pupils' level of maturity is

too low”. She relates this to the pupils’ interest and motivation too (see Section 4.6.5). T2 also emphasizes that it is important to consider the group of pupils:

The most important thing to consider is the group of pupils. I have to know their level of maturity and the relationships between the pupils. The classroom needs to be a space that allows for interpretations, discussions, and wonder. Like, is it ok to rise questions regarding sensitive topics? Or will that create unnecessary conflict within the group of pupils?

T2 further explains that intercultural competence involves topics that can be quite sensitive and that she is afraid to make mistakes or step on someone’s toes.

Today, it can be difficult to know what might be offensive or not. For instance, it can be difficult to know which terms that are politically correct to use. Is it ok to say “black”, or is it Afro-American that is the correct term? In a way, one must navigate in a minefield and remember to be cautious about the different cultures in the classroom. For instance, if one has a Palestinian and an Israeli in the classroom, one must find a way to discuss the Middle East conflict in a neutral way that does not provoke either side. That can be quite challenging. One must be careful when choosing one’s words, but at the same time have respect for the topic.

T3 argues that one must carefully evaluate the content of the texts used in the classroom. The teacher explained that the content cannot be too violent: “One should provoke the pupils to a certain degree, but not push it too far. We have pupils here that still prefers to watch *Cinderella*. Therefore, it is not a good idea to use a text that can upset them too much”. T2 agrees with this and said:

When choosing a text to use in the classroom there are many considerations to be made. If the text is very controversial, one has to tread lightly, and be ahead of the potential troubles. For instance, one should inform the parents that one is planning to discuss the specific topic and use the specific text and ask if this is alright. One must use one’s professional judgement and choose texts one can stand for. It is important that oneself is comfortable in the teaching situation.

T1 gives an example of this as well:

A colleague of mine decided to use a book called *Does My Head Look Big in This?*, which is about a girl wearing a hijab. My colleague had a pupil in her class who wore hijab, so they came to me for consultation on if it was a good idea to use the novel with the class. I advised them to think twice before using it, as the girl might feel uncomfortable with this. What my colleague ended up doing, was conferring with said pupil on whether it was ok for her that they used the book in class. The pupil said that she was fine with the teacher using it. So, it is important to always keep the feelings of the pupils in mind.

Another challenge the teachers point out is the time and energy it takes to come up with lesson plans incorporating authentic texts. T1 explained that “I would love to work with a topic without using the textbook, but in the every-day life of a teacher there is already a huge workload, with unexpected things happening every day. Therefore, one does not have time to be very creative”. T3 agrees with this and explained that when choosing reading material to use in the classroom, she usually uses the textbook as she does not have the capacity to read and find texts elsewhere. T3 also mentioned that it is challenging to get access to texts, because of the lack of economy to buy class-sets of novels and the local library’s limited selection of English books.

Lastly, T3 described the difference in the pupils’ proficiency level as a challenge. She described a huge gap between the highest-achieving pupils and the lowest achieving pupils: “I have those who are fluent in English and those who sees a picture of a red ball and says “red”. Some can’t for the life of them read a sentence and understand its meaning, while others could easily read *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy without fail”. T3, like T1, presented this as a development for the worse, in the last few years. T3 continued to explain:

Therefore, it is difficult to adapt the texts to fit everyone’s proficiency level. Especially if everyone is supposed to read the same text, because one needs to find the same texts on different levels.

#### 4.7.2 Didactics

All of the teachers describe using different types of texts in their teaching of intercultural competence. They all described teaching activities such as reflecting and discussing in

collaboration with using their chosen text, to make the pupils develop an understanding and tolerance for other cultures and people. T1 said that:

Discussions about how teenagers from other parts of the world live their lives is important. How is their every-day life and what challenges to they live with? Some people have no prospects at all. I find it useful to discuss these things with the pupils and hear their thoughts and opinions on them. It is important because they learn about other people and their culture, while learning English.

The teachers also explained that they use the textbook as the guideline for their teaching and use the chapters and topics in there as a starting point. T2 said that she uses the book specifically for grammatical purposes, because she finds the grammatical tasks in there, quite useful. When using texts outside of the textbook T2 described several different teaching activities:

We have used the simple method of reading excerpts. Watching the book-to-film adaption. We have written book reports, had presentations about for instance characters in the book, and we have written diary-entries from the perspective of characters we meet in the book.

As mentioned in Section 4.6.2, T3 frequently uses video clips from YouTube in her teaching, which she experiences as a particularly useful tool to spark the pupils' motivation for learning grammar. When asked how she works with texts in the classroom T3 responded with:

I frequently read out loud to the pupils. Then, one can stop along the way and talk about what has happened so far, because I know there are pupils that do not manage to pay attention. In addition, one can work with tasks related to the text. We have sometimes made them record audio clips where they read an excerpt from the text or discuss something related to the text. Sometimes they also have to give a presentation where they talk about something from the book, for instance the environment or a character from the book.

## 5. Discussion

This chapter discusses teachers of English in Norwegian lower secondary schools and their perceptions on using texts to teach about and contribute to developing their pupils' intercultural competence. The discussion is based on the results from the interviews (Chapter 4), the English subject curriculum (Section 1.5) and the theoretical framework and previous research (Chapter 2). The following sections are based on the sub-research questions. Section 5.1 discusses how the teachers define the term intercultural competence, and Section 5.2 concerns the teachers' thoughts and practices in relation to the components of intercultural competence. Section 5.3 discusses the teachers' choices of texts when teaching about and promoting intercultural competence and Section 5.4 discusses what the teachers consider to be the benefits and challenges of working with intercultural competence in the classroom.

### 5.1 Intercultural competence

As described in section 2.1, intercultural competence is a complex term composed of different components and characteristics. The complexity of the concept was reflected in the findings, as the teachers' definitions on intercultural competence varied in terms of which aspects and characteristics they highlighted as important. Even so, in their answers, it is evident that knowledge about other cultures, the ability to understand other cultures and their practices and the ability to see other people's perspectives are aspects of intercultural competence that the teachers consider important.

The field of intercultural competence emphasizes several different aspects and characteristics, such as knowledge of others, valuing others' values, beliefs and behaviors (Deardorff, 2006,) and the ability to see the world through the others' eyes (Sercu, 2005). Knowledge about other cultures, understanding other cultures and their practices and the ability to see other people's perspectives can therefore be considered aspects that are closely connected to intercultural competence. T2 also highlights the ability to understand the dynamics in an interaction between people from different cultures or religions as essential in relation to intercultural competence. This makes it evident that T2 agrees with what Byram (2021) describes as "knowledge of the *processes* of interaction at individual and societal level" in the *savoir* of knowledge (p. 47, see Section 2.2).



The teachers' descriptions also reflect how intercultural competence is emphasized in the English subject curriculum (see Section 1.5). The teachers emphasize embracing diversity, and use the word "understanding" diligently, which is not surprising as the curriculum expresses that "English shall help the pupils to develop an intercultural understanding of different ways of living, ways of thinking and communication patterns" (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020, p.2). T1 describes in her definition of intercultural competence that she "understands this as developing an understanding of the fact that people are different, and that there are different ways of thinking and ways of acting than one's own" (see Section 4.1). This reflects the description from the curriculum and proves that the teachers' understanding of the term is connected to how intercultural competence is described in the curriculum.

## 5.2 Components of intercultural competence

Byram's (2021) model of intercultural communicative competence is composed of five interdependent *savoirs*: *knowledge*, *skills of interpreting and relating*, *skills of discovery and interaction*, *attitudes* and *critical cultural awareness* (see Section 2.2). The results from the interviews show that the teachers emphasize all of the *savoirs* as important in relation to their teaching. However, their utterances give evidence to the fact that they consider knowledge about other cultures to be explicitly taught through the use of texts, and skills and attitudes to implicitly be developed through the pupils' engagement with the texts.

The following sections discuss the findings from the interviews in relation to the different *savoirs* of ICC.

### 5.2.1 Knowledge

The findings show that the teachers repeatedly describe knowledge about other cultures as important in their teaching. The teachers highlight knowledge as essential for the pupils to be able to understand other cultures, see other people's perspectives and reflect on their own and others' values, beliefs and behaviors. In the interview with T2, she described how learning about specific historical events such as the conflict in the Middle East can help the pupils to reflect on the topic and contribute to a greater understanding and tolerance for others. In other words, the teachers closely link the *savoir* of knowledge to the other components and aspects of intercultural competence. The theoretical framework can be considered to agree with this, as

the different *savoirs* of Byram's model of ICC depend on each other (see Figure 2.1). The *savoir* of Knowledge is essential for the intercultural speaker whether it is to; gain new knowledge about a culture or social group, which is central in Skills of discovery and interaction; interpret cultural documents or products, which is an aspect of Skills of interpreting and relating; or see the perspectives of others, which is essential in Attitudes.

Byram (2021) divides the *savoir* of knowledge into two main categories: (1) knowledge about one's own and other's culture, (2) knowledge about the processes of interaction (p.46-47). All of the teachers seem to agree on the first category as relevant in intercultural teaching. The data imply that the teachers focus on teaching about a variety of foreign cultures within the English-speaking world. T2 points to the fact that English is a widely spoken language, which allows the teachers to explore cultures from all corners of the world. T1 expressed in the interview that she uses texts in relation to specific topics to teach about a culture or occurrence. She endorses this by adding that she herself has learned a lot about different cultures through engaging with different types of texts. T2 highlights indigenous peoples as a significant aspect of a country's culture and one that has great impact on a country's history. She points to how the Sami in Norway were oppressed by the Norwegian government and that this still affects the Norwegian society today. This agrees with what Byram (2021, p.85-86) refers to as an historical event that represents a national memory, which relates it to the *savoir* of knowledge.

Dervin (2016) argues that the *savoir* of knowledge is limiting in its use of terms such as "countries" and "culture" (p.76). In the conversation with T2, she describes culture both at macro level and micro level (see Section 4.1). She agrees with Kramsch (2011) on the notion that culture is no longer just defined in terms of institutions, historical traditions, and communities (p.355-356). Instead, the term is complex and exists in several layers of society, as T2 explains when highlighting the different cultures within the borders of Norway. T1 and T3 also use the term culture in different contexts throughout their interviews. One can therefore argue that the data give evidence to the fact that the teachers' understanding of the term "culture" agrees with what Dervin (2016) and Kramsch (2011) describe and is broader than what Byram (2021) implies in his *savoir* of knowledge.

In the interview, T2 also refers to the second category of the *savoir* of knowledge when emphasizing "understanding of the dynamics between different people from different cultures or religions" as relevant to intercultural competence. Byram and Doyé (1999) explain that the

learner needs to know that the differences between their and the interlocutor's beliefs, values, habits, and perspectives can lead to misunderstandings and rejection (p.143). This is highlighted by T2's example of misunderstanding in a greeting situation (see Section 4.2). She explains that it is important to teach the pupils that the dynamics of interactions is culture dependent, that one needs to have knowledge about the interlocutor's culture and knowledge about the process of interaction to communicate successfully and appropriately in an interaction. T3 agrees with this when explaining that knowledge can contribute to the pupils' understanding of other people and help them adapt their behavior according to the interlocutor, to avoid misunderstandings and rejection.

The findings demonstrate that the teachers see intercultural competence as useful when interacting with other people (see Section 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3). Bland (2020) explains that a part of interculturality is to be able to engage in dialog between a variety of cultural identities and create bonds based on mutual respect (p.69). As explained in Section 2.3.3, one medium through which one can communicate is language. Even though communication is recognized as a skill, an important factor to successful interaction is a person's linguistic knowledge. Lund (2020) argues that language learning and intercultural learning are interdependent and that as the pupil's language proficiency increases, they can use it as a device to gain new knowledge about cultures and intercultural issues (p.26). Therefore, linguistic knowledge is a central component in the pupil's intercultural competence. However, even though knowledge about the linguistic rules and patterns of a language is important, Byram (2021) argues that one should not expect the pupils to master a language at the same level as a native speaker (p.17). The goal is rather for the pupils to become intercultural speakers and communicate effectively in an interaction, where they understand the interlocutor and can make themselves understood by the interlocutor. Through the interviews, the teachers repeatedly highlighted the pupils' linguistic knowledge as an important factor for their ability to engage with different types of texts and communicate with others (see Section 4.6). Hence, linguistic knowledge appears as an important aspect of their teaching.

### 5.2.2 Skills of discovery and interaction

All of the teachers explained in their interviews that they used different types of texts to give the pupils access to new knowledge about different cultures (see Section 4.3.1 and 4.6). If the pupils pay actively attention, they execute what Byram (2021) refers to as *savoir apprendre/faire* – skills of discovery and interaction. He describes it as one's ability to gain new knowledge

about different cultures and their practices and using the knowledge, skills and attitudes one already possesses in an interaction (p.88-90). The findings prove that the teachers emphasize the importance of giving the pupils access to new knowledge, through the use of texts and activities in their teaching.

However, the findings also suggest that explicit teaching about how to gain new knowledge about other cultures and their practices is not diligently exercised. This could be because the questions in the interviews were not designed to ask about *savoir apprendre/faire* explicitly, but rather to investigate the teachers' perceptions on intercultural competence and teaching in general. If asked specifically about the different *savoirs*, the data might have proved differently.

However, as mentioned in section 5.2.1 the teachers highlight communication and interactions as something they consider important for their pupils to master. T2 explains that the pupils need to understand the dynamics of an interaction. When describing the example of an unsuccessful interaction in a greeting situation (see Section 4.2), T2 explained that it is important to teach the pupils why this interaction was unsuccessful and foster an understanding of why we greet each other differently. T3 expressed in her interview that the pupils' knowledge about other cultures and their practices can come in handy when communicating with other people. She emphasized that the knowledge can expand the pupils' understanding of why people talk and behave the way they do, which can help them to act according to whom they are speaking. Byram (2021) explains that the *savoir* of skills of discovery and interaction includes considering the familiarities and differences between one's own and the interlocutor's country, culture and language when communicating (p.88-90).

The data therefore gives evidence to the fact that the teachers value Skills of discovery and interaction as essential in relation to intercultural competence and important in their teaching. However, it seems that the teachers consider the dimension of interaction as more important to teach about explicitly, than the dimension of discovery. This might be due to the fact that communication is explicitly emphasized in the subject curriculum, and therefore natural for the teachers to emphasize in their teaching (see Section 1.5). The curriculum says that "the subject shall give the pupils the foundation for communicating with others, both locally and globally, regardless of cultural or linguistic background" (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020, p.2). This means that even though the teachers define the term differently, their aim is to develop the pupils' communicative skills, so they can successfully interact with others.

### 5.2.3 Skills of interpreting and relating

*Savoir comprendre* – skills of interpreting and relating is described as the ability to interpret and explain documents or occurrences from another culture or social group and relate these to documents or occurrences in one's own culture or social group (Byram, 2021, p. 87-88; Byram & Doyé, 1999, p. 142). Through the conversations with the teachers, they describe using different texts in their teaching, and having the pupils reflect on the content of the texts. Byram (2021) explains that the pupils need to be able to identify different ethnocentric perspectives in these documents or occurrences, which includes to read and analyze them, point to its origins/sources, and understand the meanings and values they have (p.87-88). In the conversation with T1, she described a cross disciplinary project where the pupils compared the Sami culture and cultural artefacts to the Inuit culture and cultural artefacts. Through this project the pupils needed to identify the differences between the ethnocentric perspectives of the Sami and the Inuits, which proves that T1 agrees with Byram (2021) and considers Skills of interpreting and relating to be important in their intercultural teaching. T2 and T3 also describe using texts in relation to teach about specific cultural themes. T2 said she has used *A Time to Kill* to teach about American history, and T3 described using activities such as character studies when using *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* (see Section 4.3.2). This shows that the teachers aim to develop their pupils' interpretation and reflection skills through the use of these texts and activities, which is in accordance with the *savoir* and the English subject curriculum (see Section 1.5).

Skills of interpreting and relating also encompasses the ability to identify causes of misunderstanding in an interaction (Byram, 2021, p.87-88). Therefore, T2's example of an unsuccessful interaction in a greeting situation (see Section 4.2) is relevant to this *savoir* as well. T2 explains that it is important for the pupils to understand why the interaction was unsuccessful. In order to do this the pupils must be able to explain the dysfunctions and their causes from the perspective of each participating cultural system (ibid.). Again, this demonstrates that T2 emphasizes aspects of Skills of interpreting and relating to be important to include in her teaching.

### 5.2.4 Attitudes

Byram (2021) explains that *savoir être* – attitudes, is important to acquire in order to counteract prejudice (see Section 2.2.1). The *savoir* emphasizes the importance of attitudes such as

curiosity and openness, that have the ability to counteract judgment and disbelief of other's values, beliefs and behaviors (Byram & Doyé, 1999, p. 142). The pupils need to be able to meet people with openness, welcome differences and willingly try to adapt their behavior, to be able to act appropriately in relation to the specific culture of whom they are engaging. The findings support Byram and Doyé's (1999) emphasis on attitudes such as curiosity and openness, for instance when T2 describes an interest in sparking her pupils' curiosity through using texts (see Section 4.4).

Dervin (2016) problematizes *savoir être* and the idea that showing curiosity and openness is enough in relation to intercultural competence (p.76, see Section 2.2.2). He argues that showing is not the same as believing in what one is showing (ibid.). The teachers describe lack of motivation in the pupils as a challenge in their classroom. T1 explains that "the pupils are at a state mentally where everything is boring" and that they express this explicitly in relation to topics and activities in the classroom (see Section 4.6.4 and 4.7.1). One can therefore argue that when the teachers experience a spark in the pupils' curiosity by using provoking texts (see Section 4.4), the curiosity the pupils are showing is likely authentic.

UNESCO (2015) highlights promoting respect for cultural diversity as one of the responsibilities of education (see Section 2), which T2 agrees with when explaining that the English subject contributes to promote this. All of the teachers express that they see tolerance, empathy and respect for others as the most important attitudes to promote in their pupils. For instance, T2 describes intercultural competence as "the ability to tolerate and respect and have a certain knowledge about why people do what they do, react the way they do, have the traditions they have".

The ability and willingness to change one's own perspectives are important aspects of *savoir être* (Rindal et al, 2020, p. 220-221), and is something the teachers considers important as well. For instance, T1 stresses that it is essential for the pupils to be able to see other's perspectives on the world (see Section 4.4). She explains that by using texts, preferably written from a younger person's point of view, the pupils will be exposed to perspectives that drastically differs from theirs, which can contribute to promote empathy, which again can contribute to change their perspectives and counteract generalization, stereotyping and prejudice. Therefore, the data prove that the teachers are interested in promoting empathy and a willingness to change perspectives in their pupils. However, Hoff (2014) argues that promoting approaching others

with an uncritical willingness to demonstrate tolerance and acceptance would be counterproductive, because it would result in that neither of the perspectives are taken adequately seriously (p.514). The data show that the teachers emphasize reflecting and critical thinking in their teaching (see Section 4.5 and 5.2.5), which contributes to counteract Hoff's concerns.

Even though *savoir être* is fundamental to be able to develop intercultural competence, and something the teachers consider important for their pupils to gain, the data does not give evidence to attitudes being explicitly taught in the classroom. However, one can argue that the teachers promote the necessary attitudes implicitly, by engaging the pupils in discussions and reflections on different perspectives through using a variation of texts. The teachers describe using activities such as character studies, where they discuss the character's background, motives, and identity. Activities such as this opens for reflection, and makes the pupils walk in someone else's shoes, which supports the view that texts are suitable material to use when promoting intercultural attitudes and proves that this is something that is important to the sample of teachers.

### 5.2.5 Critical Cultural Awareness

*Savoir s'engager* – critical cultural awareness is defined by Byram and Doyé (1999) as the educational dimension of intercultural communicative competence (p.143). Dervin (2016) and Hoff (2014) describe the *savoir* as an essential component to counteract what they consider to be Byram's (2021) model of intercultural communicative competence's weaknesses (see Section 2.2.2). Critical cultural awareness incorporates the teachers' responsibility to teach their pupils to think critically about their own culture, values, beliefs, and perspectives, as well as others'. Hoff (2014) highlights this as important, because the objective of the *savoir* is not to change the pupils' perspectives or to inspire a specific way of thinking, but to develop their ability to use rational and sensible arguments (p.515).

The pupils must learn to identify by which criteria they evaluate others and use the same criteria to evaluate themselves. The findings give evidence to support that the teachers in this sample put effort into teaching the pupils to direct their critical eye toward their own culture as well as towards other cultures and social groups. The teachers expressed that they want their learners to develop an understanding of what is normal in their culture and day-to-day lives, does not directly translate as the normal for others, and vice versa. Exposing the pupils to texts that

portray perspectives and customs they are unfamiliar with, allows the teachers to use the pupils' own perspectives and experiences to reflect on and discuss why certain customs, habits or traditions seem odd to them, but are normal for the characters in the text. The pupils need to be willing to understand others' perspectives in order to engage in these reflections and discussions and critically analyze and evaluate values present in their own and others' culture. Therefore, the findings indicate that the teachers support Rindal et al. (2020) in their claim that Critical cultural awareness can facilitate the attitudinal aspect of intercultural competence.

The results from the interviews indicate that the teachers are interested in having their pupils reflect on and evaluate different cultures and cultural products. Even so, it seems that the teachers emphasize less the analytical aspect of critical cultural awareness than the comparative one. T1 expresses the importance of having the pupils compare their every-day life to the ones who are less fortunate (see Section 4.7.2), and T2 expresses using *American History X* (see Section 4.6.2) to depict someone changing their perspective. As mentioned, the theory explains that teachers should engage in making the pupils aware of the criteria they evaluate other people by and make them evaluate themselves by the same criteria (Byram & Doyé, 1999). When the pupils encounter cultures or occurrences they are unfamiliar with and that seem strange from their perspective, they should be able to use their knowledge of the fact that something that seem normal to them might seem strange to others to analyze the occurrence and understand that through others' perspectives the occurrence might be customary. The findings gathered from the interviews suggest that this is not something the teachers focus explicitly on teaching, but rather implicitly through using texts to develop their pupils' intercultural attitudes, such as the willingness to change one's perspective.

### 5.3 Texts

The findings from the interviews show that the teachers use a variety of different texts in their teaching of intercultural competence, which reflects what is written with the English subject curriculum (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020, see Section 1.4.2). T3 explained that text can be both written and oral and mentioned podcasts, video clips on YouTube, books, short stories and poems as examples of different types of texts. This and the variation of texts selected by the teachers proves that their understanding of the term text is in accordance with the definition in the curriculum (see Section 1.4.2 and 4.6; *ibid.*). This also



agrees with Lyngstad's (2019) results, where the English teachers' choices of literature to use in the classroom, varied in terms of text types (see Section 2.5).

Authentic texts are described by Brevik and Rindal (2020) as texts that are not specifically developed to use for pedagogical purposes (p.221, see Section 2.3.4). The data show that the teachers stress the importance of the pupils engaging with authentic texts in order to develop important aspects of intercultural competence. This agrees with the data from Cornei and Dina's (2014) research, which showed several arguments in favor of using authentic texts to improve communication skills and cultural acquisition (p.279, see Section 2.5). T1 explains that it is important for the pupils to develop a love for reading, because it can increase the pupils' English language skills and at the same time develop their understanding of foreign cultures (see Section 4.6.1). This agrees with Lund's (2020) notion that language learning and intercultural learning are interdependent (p.26, see Section 2.3.3) and that reading authentic texts can contribute to develop both aspects of learning.

Dypedahl (2020) argues that authentic materials are especially well suited for culture-specific learning, because when engaging with such materials, the pupils "put themselves in other communication situations than the typical learner situation, and this can help them decenter mentally to another context" (p.65, see Section 2.3.4). This is essential to intercultural communicative competence, as the learners need to use their knowledge, skills and attitudes in intercultural encounters (see Section 2.2). The results from Heggernes' (2021) research showed that the teachers strongly focused on using texts where the reader can learn about other cultures, which was also the main argument to use fictional texts (p.9). The findings from this thesis gives similar evidence, as the teachers of this sample seem to agree with that one of the main criteria for a text to be suitable to teach about and promote intercultural competence, is that the text is from perspectives of other cultures or social groups where the pupils can gain new knowledge about them (see Section 4.6). This corresponds with Heggernes' (2020) argument that the text should challenge the reader, for instance by showcasing a variety of perspectives and views that differ from their own (p.113). T2 highlights that by "reading authentic texts even though they are fictional, the pupils familiarize themselves with another person's perspective". The data therefore proves that the teachers of this sample find authentic material essential to use in intercultural language learning, which Liddicoat and Scarino (2013) agree with as the pupils engage in "experiences of languages, cultures, and their relationship" (p.59).

Brevik and Rindal (2020) say that “Teachers lay the foundation for students to become lifelong learners” (p.163). All of the teachers explain that they like reading on their spare time. A central part of the lifelong learning is the joy of reading (ibid.), which T1 expresses as something they consider important to develop in their pupils. Teachers are central role models to their pupils and should try to help them develop useful learning strategies to succeed as lifelong learners, such as the joy of reading. As mentioned, the data show that the teachers use different types of texts to teach about and promote intercultural competence. Fictional novels being one of them. T1 describes using the novel *Miracle’s Boys* to develop the pupils’ English language skills and promote a greater understanding of people’s actions (see Section 4.6.1). This shows that T1 agrees with Bland (2020) on the fact that reading can contribute to both linguistic knowledge and knowledge of the world (p. 72). T2 describes using *To Kill a Mockingbird* and discussing it in a historical context with the pupils. T2 also expresses a particular fondness of the fantasy genre, because it allows for interpretations and can be used in a variety of different contexts (see Section 4.6.1). She describes using the Harry Potter series (J. K. Rowling, 1997-2007) and critically analyzing the characters with the pupils by raising questions that make them reflect on the notion of good versus evil. Therefore, the data gathered from the interviews show that the teachers agree with Nicolajeva (2014) on the notion that fictional literature can stimulate several mental processes, such as empathy and imagination (p.227, see Section 2.3.4).

Film is the second type of authentic texts the teachers describe using in their teaching. Film can convey meaning through other means in addition to written or spoken text, such as “the setting, the characters’ appearance, body language, gestures, as well as tone of voice and intonation” (Villanueva, 2020, p. 90). This contributes to make the content more available to pupils with a lower proficiency level in the English language, which is something the teachers describe as a criterion for the text to be useable in the classroom. For instance, T3 describes using videoclips from YouTube frequently in her teaching because it sparks enthusiasm and makes the content more accessible for the pupils. Heggernes (2020) agrees with this when arguing that for the text to be suitable for intercultural learning, it should be *adaptable*, so that they are usable for every pupil in a classroom, regardless of their proficiency level (p.113). Therefore, it is not a surprise that audiovisual texts are extensively used by the teachers.

In line with novels, films can also develop both linguistic knowledge and intercultural knowledge, because audiovisual texts present the learners with authentic language in context, as well as expose them to a variety of different phenomena and occurrences (Villanueva, 2020,

p. 90-91, see Section 2.3.4). Bluestone (2000) argues that films are useful to provide the reader with glimpses into a character's motivations, beliefs, and lives (p.144). T1 seems to agree with this, as she explains that she herself has learned a lot about other cultures through watching films. She also describes using *Rabbit-Proof Fence* in relation to teaching about Australia and New Zealand. She explains that this specific film tackles the issue of oppression of minorities well, and that she is interested in developing the pupils' empathy by having them reflect on their lives in contrast to the lives of the characters in the film. T1 therefore also agrees with Summerfield (1993) on that experiencing intercultural contact through seeing and hearing a film can be a more inspiring and explicit way of learning about topics such as discrimination (p.1). Villanueva (2020) argues that this is especially useful to promote the pupils' empathy and critical thinking (p.106).

T2 is also fond of using audiovisual texts in her teaching and gives several examples of films that she has used to teach about and promote aspects of intercultural competence (see Section 4.6.2). Roell (2010) argues that films vividly portray themes like "intercultural misunderstandings and the roots of racism" (p.3). *A Time to Kill* is one of the films T2 describes using in relation to explore the topic of racism, which corresponds with Roell's argument.

Picture books and poetry are other examples of authentic texts the teachers describe using in their teaching. In line with films, picture books are multimodal, composed of both written text and pictures. Heggernes (2020) argues that the reader can be challenged cognitively and emotionally through both of these modes, in addition to the books' content (p. 114). The teachers all express using *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* in their teaching. T1 explains that picture books such as this, is useful in relation to adapting the teaching to accommodate all proficiency levels. Heggernes (2020) agrees with this as the "pictures allow the students to use their visual literacy to make sense of even complex verbal text" (p.115, see Section 2.3.4). Heggernes (2020) further argues that since the pupils must engage visually, cognitively and emotionally when engaging with a picture book, the complexity of impressions will affect their interpretations, and because of this contribute to promote empathy and the ability to see other's perspectives (p.118). Therefore, the data gives evidence to prove that the teachers are interested in promoting aspects of intercultural competence through using picture books such as *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*.

Poetry is mentioned by both T1 and T2 as useful to teach about and promote intercultural competence. The theory seems to agree with this, as Pande-Rolfsen (2021) explains that poetry can make the reader question the world and the people and culture in it (p.61, see Section 2.3.4).

T1 expresses an interest in using poems that describe minorities, that portray how challenging life can be or how difficult it is to be different, to teach about and develop intercultural competence (see Section, 4.6.4). Coats (2013) explains that poetry often conveys meaningful content, that can connect us to others and promote self-reflecting (p.134). Similarly, to films and picture books, poetry can be seen as multimodal, as the meaning can be communicated explicitly through words in the poem but can also come from the experience of emotions when reading it (ibid.). This is something T1 explains as a challenge when trying to use poems in the classroom, because the pupils find it difficult to interpret poems and do in-depth analyses in order to gain access to the underlying themes and topics. However, the data show that the teachers consider poetry useful to promote intercultural competence but that they tend to avoid using it, because the pupils find it challenging to work with.

Although the teachers express using different types of texts in their teaching, all of the teachers explain that they rely heavily on textbooks as well. This corresponds with the research by Lyngstad (2019) which found that textbooks play a central role for many teachers when choosing texts to use in the classroom (p. 273, see Section 2.5). Davcheva and Sercu (2005) found in their research, that one of the reasons for the frequent use of textbooks was that it reduces the teachers' preparation time and allows them to approach the teaching in a systematic way (Davcheva & Sercu, 2005, p.106). The findings give evidence to support this, as the teachers explain that they use the textbook mainly in the process of planning the teaching, and that it makes it easier to cooperate with other teachers (see Section 4.6). T3 adds that the textbooks give access to texts that are adapted to the targeted age group and proficiency levels. Even so, Davcheva and Sercu (2005) found that the teachers expressed a strong critical attitude towards the textbook (p.106). T2 expresses something similar as she explains that she should be "better at finding sources outside of the textbook". The data suggest that the teachers see the value in using authentic texts to teach about and promote intercultural competence, and that they try to vary their teaching by using different types of texts, which again is in accordance with Davcheva and Sercu's research (2005).

## 5.4 Experiences

### 5.4.1 Benefits and Challenges

The teachers were asked in the interviews to describe the benefits and challenges of teaching about and promoting intercultural competence in the English subject. One of the benefits

mentioned by T2 is that English is a widely spoken language, which is a useful tool one can use to communicate with foreign cultures. In the section *Relevance and Central Values* in the English subject curriculum, it says that the subject shall “give the pupils the foundation for communicating with others, both locally and globally, regardless of cultural or linguistic background” (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020, p.2, see Section 1.5.2). This shows that the teacher’s utterance corresponds with what is written in the curriculum, which makes it apparent that T2 relates intercultural competence to the English subject. The utterance also relates to what Bland (2020) calls interculturality, which means to be able to engage in and promote understanding and dialog between a variety of cultural identities and develop bonds based on mutual respect (p.69, see Section 2.3.3). The English language is a tool through which the pupils can engage with different cultural identities, which gives evidence to prove that T2 is interested in developing her pupils’ interculturality.

T1 points out that the subject allows the pupils to develop their linguistic skills and at the same time learn about other things, such as “different cultures and their day-to-day life”. This agrees with Lund’s (2020) argument that “Language learning and intercultural learning are interdependent” (p.26, see Section 2.3.3). She explains that as the pupils’ language proficiency increases, they can use it as a device to learn about and explore new cultures and intercultural issues (ibid.). Following this argument, by using activities to teach the pupils about different cultures and their day-to-day lives the pupils’ language skills will develop, which inevitably also develops their intercultural competence.

T3 highlights that a lot of the competence aims are related to intercultural competence. One of the competence aims T2 points to is “explore and describe ways of living, ways of thinking, communication patterns and diversity in the English-speaking world” (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020, p.9). She explains that the English-speaking world includes countries from every part of the world, which gives the teachers opportunity to dive into cultures from a specter of countries, also in Africa and Asia (see Section 4.2). T2 states that intercultural competence is a useful topic to work with interdisciplinary (see Section 4.7.1). The interdisciplinary topic *Democracy and citizenship* can be used in relation to the referenced competence aim, since the topic shall help the pupils communicate with people around the world with different linguistic or cultural background, which “can open for new ways to interpret the world, and promote curiosity and engagement and help to prevent prejudices” (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020, p.3, see Section

1.5.2). As the teachers point to several aspects of the English subject curriculum when describing the benefits of teaching about and promoting intercultural competence, it shows that the teachers consider intercultural competence to be relevant to the English subject and therefore something they are legally obligated to incorporate in their teaching.

When it comes to challenges, the teachers all agree that the pupils' motivation and maturity level is central (see Section 5.4.1). T1 explains that there are several topics she cannot teach about, because the pupils' maturity level is too low to take the topics seriously.

Another challenge the teachers express is a concern about engaging with controversy. T2 explains that she is worried about making mistakes because "it can be difficult to know what might be offensive or not", and that one has to remember to be considerate towards the different cultures within the classroom (see Section 4.7.1). Even so, according to the English subject curriculum (2020) the teachers need to elaborate on topics that concern different cultures and promote new perspectives and ways of thinking (see Section 1.5.2). In relation to this, one might encounter learners with negative attitudes towards different behaviors or customs from another culture (Byram, 2021, p. 66, see Section 2.2.1). As a teacher one is not supposed to interfere in the learner's perspectives and views, instead one can encourage them to explain their reasoning and to use the same criteria that they evaluate other cultures by, to evaluate their own (Byram & Doyé, 1999, p. 144). The data show that T2 agrees with this, as she explains that even though one has to be careful when choosing one's words, one must show respect for the topic one is teaching.

The teachers also express that the time and energy it takes to develop creative lesson plans, that incorporate different texts to work with intercultural competence, is a challenge. T1 explains that in the every-day life of a teacher there is already a huge workload with unexpected things happening every day, which makes it difficult to find time and energy to be very creative. T3 explains that when finding texts to use in the classroom she usually consults the textbook. The teachers describe the time and energy as the main reason for why they excessively use the textbook in their teaching. The data therefore support the findings in the research by Davcheva and Sercu (2005), which explains that one of the reasons for the extensive use of textbooks is because it reduces the teachers' preparation time (p.106).

The last challenge the teachers describe is the differences in the pupils' proficiency level. T3 explains that there are huge gaps between the higher achieving pupils and the lower achieving pupils when it comes to their language skills. Some of her pupils can hardly read a sentence in English, while others read long texts without any problems. T3 relates this to the use of authentic texts in the classroom and describes it as difficult to "adapt the texts to fit everyone's proficiency level, especially if everyone is supposed to read the same text" (see Section 5.4.1). Heggernes (2020) argues that the teaching materials should be *adaptable*, so that they are usable for every pupil in a classroom, regardless of their proficiency level (p.113). This corresponds with the findings in the research by Cornei and Dina (2014), which argue that an authentic text is only useful in accordance with the pupils' proficiency level (p.279). As explained in Section 5.3, films are one of the more frequent text types used by the teachers in this sample. This is not surprising following the arguments of Heggernes (2020) and Cornei and Dina (2014), as the teachers described films as useful in relation to adapting the teaching to every pupil's proficiency level.

#### 5.4.2 Activities

The teachers describe different activities related to using different types of text to teach about and promote intercultural competence. The most frequently mentioned are those of reflection and discussion. For instance, T1 describes reflecting on the circumstances and lives of teenagers from other parts of the world and having the pupils comparing these lives to their own lives (see Section 4.7.2). In their model of intercultural language teaching and learning, Liddicoat and Scarino (2013) describe four different processes (p.59-61, see Section 2.3.3). When the pupils engage in activities that make them reflect or discuss different cultures, cultural artefacts, or occurrences, they start off by engaging in the first process, which is *noticing* differences between the culture they are exploring and their own. Secondly, the pupils engage with the next process, which is *comparing* what they have noticed to their own culture, cultural artefacts, or occurrences. Lastly, the pupils engage in the third process, which is *reflection*. This is considered the most important aspect of intercultural language teaching and learning and is where the pupils must try to make sense of and understand other cultures' perspectives, artefacts, and occurrences (ibid.). This therefore shows that the teachers are interested in developing their pupils' intercultural competence, by using suitable activities that correspond with the model of intercultural language teaching and learning.

The teachers also describe other tasks in relation to using different types of authentic texts in their teaching. Some of the tasks are used to adapt the lessons to different proficiency levels, such as reading out loud and taking breaks along the way to make sure that everyone is following along and watching book to movie adaptations after reading. Other tasks are used after reading a text, such as writing book/movie reports, writing diary-entries from the perspective of characters in the text, and giving presentations about topics, themes, or characters in the text.



## 6. Conclusion

This thesis has explored teachers of English in Norwegian lower secondary schools and their perceptions on using texts to teach about and promote their pupils' intercultural competence. The method used was semi-structured interviews, which allowed in-depth investigations concerning the teachers' thoughts, perceptions, and beliefs on teaching intercultural competence. In the work with the thesis four different sub-research questions were used to guide the research and discuss the findings. The following paragraphs are structured after these questions.

### 6.1 Concluding remarks

The first research question asked how the teachers define the term intercultural competence. The teachers' understanding of the term seems to agree with both the theoretical framework and the English subject curriculum. In their definitions, they highlight knowledge about other cultures, the ability to understand other cultures and their practices and the ability to see other people's perspectives, as essential aspects of intercultural competence. The terms respect, tolerance and understanding are repeated throughout the teachers' interpretations. In addition, the teachers express throughout the interviews, that they consider intercultural competence to be useful for the pupils to succeed with interactions and developing relationships with people from different cultures. As the English subject curriculum is the teachers' job specification and something that they have to consider when teaching, it is not unexpected that the teachers' definition of intercultural competence relates to the descriptions in the curriculum. To conclude, the teachers seem to have a common interpretation of the term intercultural competence where they include respect and tolerance of others and the ability to see other people's perspectives, as essential aspects of the competence.

The second research question explored which components of intercultural competence the teachers emphasized as important in their teaching. This question is divided into three subdivisions, as it concerns the *knowledge*, *skills*, and *attitudes* in intercultural competence that the teachers consider essential for their pupils to gain. When it comes to the *knowledge* division, the teachers express knowledge as fundamental to intercultural competence and a central component for their pupils to succeed with intercultural encounters. The results indicate that the teachers consider knowledge about different cultures, linguistic knowledge, and knowledge about the process of interaction to be important aspects of the *savoir* and something they aim

to develop in their pupils. The teachers seem to have a broad understanding of central terms within the *savoir* such as “culture”, where they include sub-cultures and other aspects of the term in their definition. This is reflected in their descriptions of teaching methods and activities, where they include a variety of different themes and topics related to different cultures.

Regarding *skills*, the findings show that the teachers consider both *skills of discovery and interaction* and *skills of interpreting and relating* as important in their teaching. The teachers describe communicative skills and reflection skills as essential for their pupils’ intercultural competence. They specifically highlight the pupils’ ability to identify misunderstandings in an interaction, their ability to analyze different types of texts to interpret the perspectives of foreign cultures and relating those perspectives to their own. The findings show that it is important for the teachers that their pupils are able to use their knowledge, skills and attitudes to appropriately engage with other people. Even so, in regard to the *savoir* of skills of discovery and interaction, it is evident that the teachers aim for their pupils to gain new knowledge about different cultures, but they do not describe explicitly teaching the pupils strategies to help them do so.

In relation to *attitudes*, the *savoir* seems to be taught implicitly through texts and activities in the classroom, rather than explicitly. However, the data show that the teachers are interested in promoting necessary attitudes for their pupils to successfully interact with others. They highlight attitudes of curiosity, openness, respect, empathy, and tolerance, in addition to the willingness to change one’s perspectives, as essential in the development of the pupils’ intercultural competence. The teachers also consider these attitudes to relate to *critical cultural awareness*. The teachers describe using different types of texts to expose the pupils to perspectives that differ from their own. In relation to the texts, they describe activities that make the pupils compare unfamiliar cultures to their own culture, and make them reflect on the notion that what is considered normal in their culture does not necessarily seem normal to other cultures. The data therefore indicate that the teachers aim to have their pupils critically reflect on their own culture and allow for other perspectives to be explored as well. Even so, the findings are lacking in terms of the analytical aspect of critical cultural awareness.

The third question sought answers to which types of texts the teachers use when working with intercultural competence, and how they evaluate the usefulness of a text in relation to its intercultural affordances. In accordance with previous research the main finding indicate that the teachers use a variety of different types of authentic texts in their teaching, such as novels,

picture books, and films. They explain that the main criteria for a text to be useful to contribute to develop pupils' intercultural competence, is that it presents unfamiliar perspectives of cultures or social groups where the pupils can gain new knowledge about them and familiarize themselves with other's perspectives. The teachers also express that the text must be adaptable, to have the desired effect on every pupil's intercultural competence, regardless of their language proficiency level. Therefore, it is not surprising that the results align with previous research, when the teachers also describe using the textbook to find material to use in their teaching, because the texts found in the textbooks are usually adapted to the targeted pupils' proficiency level. Even so, the data show that the teachers consider authentic texts to be useful in relation to developing pupils' intercultural competence.

The fourth question asked about the teachers' experiences of working with intercultural competence in the English subject. The teachers were asked to describe the benefits and challenges of working with intercultural competence and using texts to do so, and which activities they used in relation to intercultural language teaching and learning. The benefits highlighted were that the English language is a useful tool in order to communicate with people around the world, that the subject allows for development of both linguistic skills and cultural knowledge, and that the English subject curriculum offers great support of intercultural competence in several of its sections. Even so, the teachers explain that it can be a challenge to engage with intercultural competence, as the pupils' motivation is low and their proficiency level varies, one has to engage with controversy, and it takes a lot of time and energy to find suitable materials and develop creative lesson plans. However, the data indicate that the teachers have used different types of texts in their intercultural teaching, together with activities that make the pupils reflect and discuss on the content of the texts.

The four sub-research questions have tried to elucidate teachers of English in Norwegian lower secondary schools' perceptions on using texts to teach about and promote their pupils' intercultural competence. To conclude, the teachers in this research emphasize knowledge as the *savoir* they explicitly focus on, while working with skills and attitudes implicitly. Their understanding of the term intercultural competence aligns with what is described in the national curriculum and they highlight understanding, respect, and tolerance towards other cultures as essential, in addition to critically evaluating one's own culture and the willingness to change one's perspectives. The informants describe using a variety of different texts to contribute to develop their pupils' intercultural competence, in accordance with activities that promote

reflections and discussions. Even though there are challenges related to working with intercultural competence, such as engaging in controversy and a text's adaptability, the findings indicate that the teachers are interested in developing their pupils' intercultural competence, and that they consider the authentic text to be a useful tool to do so.

## 6.2 Limitations

The research in this thesis has sought to provide insight into teachers of English in Norwegian lower secondary schools' perceptions on using texts to teach about and promote intercultural competence. Even though the teachers' understanding of the term intercultural competence relates to what is written in the curriculum, and their perceptions on using authentic texts to promote intercultural competence agrees with previous research, it is important to emphasize that the data does not apply to all teachers of English in Norway. The sample of this research consists of only three teachers, and the perceptions presented and discussed in this thesis are provided by these participants, therefore the results are not generalizable and cannot represent every English-language teacher teaching intercultural competence in Norwegian lower secondary schools.

## 6.3 Suggestions for further research

The research of this thesis has focused on teachers' perspectives and experiences of teaching intercultural competence through the use of text, which is an area that could benefit from further exploration. The research in this thesis provides new data to the field of intercultural competence in Norwegian lower secondary schools. Even so, further research could provide teachers of English with guidance on how to work with and foster intercultural competence in their pupils. As the teachers' choices of texts and activities are subjective, one could argue that exploring how different types of teaching activities contributes to the texts' ability to foster intercultural competence would be an interesting scope for future research and could help teachers in their choices of teaching activities. It could also be interesting to explore further the intercultural affordances of texts like film and poetry and their effectiveness of fostering intercultural competence in the pupils, as previous research has focused specifically on other text types such as picture books, in a Norwegian context. Another area that could be interesting to explore is the differences between the English subject and English In-depth studies when it comes to using text to foster intercultural competence. English in-depth studies is an area in general that could benefit from further research in a Norwegian context.

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## 8. Appendices

### 8.1 Appendix 1 – Information letter

Forespørsel om å delta i forskningsprosjektet:

#### **Teachers' perspective on using text to promote intercultural competence**

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt, hvor formålet er å finne ut hvordan engelsklærere velger og vurderer ulike tekster i engelskfaget for å undervise om eller fremme interkulturell kompetanse. Dette skrivet inneholder informasjon om prosjektet slik at du kan føle deg trygg på å delta. Du vil også bli tilsendt en intervjuguide, slik at du er kjent med tematikken og spørsmålene som stilles i selve intervjuet.

##### **Formål**

Denne studien utforsker hvordan engelsklærere velger og vurderer ulike tekster i engelskfaget for å undervise om eller fremme interkulturell kompetanse. Funnene etter gjennomført intervju vil brukes i min masteroppgave. Prosjektets problemstilling lyder som følger på engelsk:

*“What are EFL teachers in Norwegian lower secondary school’s perceptions on using texts to teach about and promote intercultural competence in their pupils?”*

##### **Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?**

Høgskolen i Innlandet ved Fakultet for lærerutdanning og pedagogikk er ansvarlig for prosjektet.

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

Du er spurt om å delta fordi du jobber som lærer i ungdomsskole i Innlandet og har engelsk som fag. Totalt vil jeg i dette prosjektet gjennomføre tre intervjuer med engelsklærere som jobber i ungdomsskolen.

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

Om du samtykker til å delta i prosjektet mitt, vil du bli bedt om delta i et intervju der jeg enten møter deg på arbeidsplassen, eller et annet sted du føler er passende for deg å gjennomføre intervjuet. Du vil under intervjuet, blant annet bli bedt om å oppgi hva slags læringsressurser (læreverk, skjønnlitterære bøker, filmer etc.) som benyttes i din undervisning. Under intervjuet vil jeg både ta notater samt gjennomføre lydopptak, gjennom en sikker diktafon-applikasjon. På denne måten sikres din anonymitet.

Det vil ta ca. 30 minutter å gjennomføre intervjuet. Formen er semistrukturert, hvilket betyr at jeg på forhånd har utformet en intervjuguide med spørsmål knyttet til tematikken. Intervjuet vil likevel være av en slik natur at det vil være rom for å snakke utenom de forhåndsformulerte spørsmålene. Du får tilgang på intervjuguiden i forkant av selve intervjuet.

### **Det er frivillig å delta**

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

### **Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger**

Vi vil bare bruke opplysningene om deg internt, til veiledning og sensur. Vi behandler opplysningene konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Underveis i prosjektet er det kun lydopptak av stemme lagret på nettskjema via Universitetet i Oslo, som vil bli brukt. Det betyr at lydfilen fra intervjuet oppbevares der, gjennom en kryptert database, slik at kun jeg og mine veiledere vil ha tilgang til lydopptakene. Ellers vil du bli anonymisert fordi du ikke nevnes eller lagres med navn. Derfor vil intervjuet få en kode slik at jeg kan identifisere hvilket intervju som tilhører hvilken informant.

### **Hva skjer med personopplysningene dine når forskningsprosjektet avsluttes?**

Prosjektet vil etter planen avsluttes 1. juli 2023. Informasjonen lagres i Nettskjema, dette fordi Høgskolen i Innlandet anbefaler at studenter som gjennomfører intervjuer i forskning skal benytte denne programvaren, fordi lydfilene lagres på en kryptert side, noe som sikrer lydfilene fra intervjuene. I tillegg vil intervjuene fjernes når masteroppgaven er bestått og prosjektet fullført.

### **Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?**

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

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

## Dine rettigheter

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

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

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

- Høgskolen i Innlandet, Fakultet for lærerutdanning og pedagogikk ved veileder Knut Øystein Høvik ([knut.hovik@inn.no](mailto:knut.hovik@inn.no); 62 51 76 41) eller personvernombud Usman Asghar ([usman.asghar@inn.no](mailto:usman.asghar@inn.no); 61 28 74 83)

Hvis du har spørsmål knyttet til Personverntjenester sin vurdering av prosjektet, kan du ta kontakt med:

- Personverntjenester på epost ([personverntjenester@sikt.no](mailto:personverntjenester@sikt.no)) eller på telefon: 53 21 15 00.

Med vennlig hilsen,

Knut Øystein Høvik & Regine Porsvik Forfang

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## Samtykkeerklæring

*Samtykke kan innhentes skriftlig (herunder elektronisk) eller muntlig*

**Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet, «Teachers' perspective on using text to promote intercultural competence», og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til:**

- å delta i intervju

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

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(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

## 8.2 Appendix 2 – Approved Sikt Application



[Meldeskjema](#) / [L2 teachers' perceptions on using text to promote intercultural com...](#) / Vurdering

# Vurdering av behandling av personopplysninger

**Referansenummer**  
256455

**Vurderingstype**  
Standard

**Dato**  
08.11.2022

**Prosjekttittel**

L2 teachers' perceptions on using text to promote intercultural competence in their pupils

**Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon**

Høgskolen i Innlandet / Fakultet for lærerutdanning og pedagogikk / Institutt for humanistiske fag

**Prosjektansvarlig**

Knut Øystein Høvik

**Student**

Regine Porsvik Forfang

**Prosjektperiode**

13.10.2022 - 01.07.2023

**Kategorier personopplysninger**

Alminnelige

**Lovlig grunnlag**

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

Behandlingen av personopplysningene er lovlig så fremt den gjennomføres som oppgitt i meldeskjemaet. Det lovlige grunnlaget gjelder til 01.07.2023.

[Meldeskjema](#)

**Kommentar**

OM VURDERINGEN

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

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

**VIKTIG INFORMASJON TIL DEG**

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

**TYPE OPPLYSNINGER OG VARIGHET**

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

**LOVLIG GRUNNLAG**

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



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

#### PERSONVERNPRINSIPPER

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

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

#### DE REGISTRERTES RETTIGHETER

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

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

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

#### FØLG DIN INSTITUSJONS RETNINGSLINJER

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

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

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

#### MELD VESENTLIGE ENDRINGER

Dersom det skjer vesentlige endringer i behandlingen av personopplysninger, kan det være nødvendig å melde dette til oss ved å oppdatere meldeskjemaet. Før du melder inn en endring, oppfordrer vi deg til å lese om hvilke type endringer det er nødvendig å melde: <https://www.nsd.no/personverntjenester/fylle-ut-meldeskjema-for-personopplysninger/melde-endringer-i-meldeskjema>

Du må vente på svar fra oss før endringen gjennomføres.

#### OPPFØLGING AV PROSJEKTET

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

Lykke til med prosjektet!

## 8.3 Appendix 3 – Interview Guide

### Intervjuguide

#### Generelt om læreren:

- Alder, stillingskategori
- Hvilke trinn underviser du på? (Både nå og før.)
- Hvilke andre fag underviser du i?
- Hvor lenge har du jobbet som lærer? (Erfaring fra andre skoleslag?)
- Hva er din utdanningsbakgrunn i engelsk?

- 1. Hva tenker du på når du hører ordet «litteratur»?**
- 2. Hvordan vil du beskrive deg selv som leser?**
  - a) Liker du å lese? (Hvilke sjangere? Nyheter, skjønnlitterære bøker, tegneserier etc.)
  - b) På ulike språk?
  - c) Hva med film/andre typer tekster (eks. Kunstuttrykk, videospill, podcast, musikk, musikkvideo, bilder)?
- 3. Hvordan vil du beskrive samarbeidet mellom engelsklærere og/eller andre faglærere på din skole?**
- 4. I læreplanen for engelskfaget brukes begrepet ‘interkulturell kompetanse’. Blant annet sier læreplanen at «Engelsk skal bidra til å utvikle elevenes interkulturelle forståelse av ulike levemåter, tenkesett og kommunikasjonsmønstre.» Hva legger du i dette? Og hvordan forstår du begrepet interkulturell kompetanse?**
- 5. Hva kan være fordelene ved å jobbe med interkulturell kompetanse i engelskfaget?**
- 6. Hva kan være utfordringene med å jobbe med interkulturell kompetanse i engelskfaget?**
- 7. Hvordan går du fram når du skal planlegge undervisning? (Eks. læreboka først, temaer først, tekster først, etc.?).**
- 8. Et av kompetansemålene i læreplanen for engelsk etter 10.trinn er «lese, tolke og reflektere over engelskspråklig skjønnlitteratur, inkludert ungdomslitteratur». Hvordan går du fram når du skal velge tekster som skal brukes i klasserommet? (Eks; din egen lesing, elevenes interesser, kollegers anbefalinger, anbefalinger fra andre kilder?)**

**9. Er det andre kompetansemål du anser som særlig relevante med tanke på å fremme interkulturell kompetanse?**

**10. Hvilke kriterier bedømmer du teksters egnethet til å fremme interkulturell kompetanse etter?**

**11. Har du konkrete eksempler på tekster som**

- a) egner seg spesielt godt til å undervise om/fremme interkulturell kompetanse?  
Hvorfor?
- b) absolutt ikke egner seg til å undervise om/fremme interkulturell kompetanse?  
Hvorfor?
- c) du gjerne skulle brukt, som du av ulike grunner ikke bruker? Hvorfor?

**12. Hvilke aktiviteter bruker du når du jobber med disse tekstene?**