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**Master's thesis**

**Pupils' beliefs, attitudes, and notions on English  
elective subjects: a study on the decrease of  
English as an elective subject in upper  
secondary in Norway**

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YES

NO

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Rena, 2022.

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## Norsk sammendrag

Den negative trenden i antall elever som velger engelsk som et av sine valgfag er skremmende, og må tas opp og undersøkes. Hvilke faktorer påvirker elevene til å velge valgfag, og hvordan korrelerer disse valgene med fremtidige planer om høyere utdanning og arbeidsliv? Denne studien tar sikte på å undersøke faktorer som elevenes motivasjon, påvirkning fra andre og tidligere erfaringer med engelsk. Videre tar studien sikte på å belyse begrensende tilbud om valgfag og kombinasjonssammensetningen av valgfag.

For å undersøke dette benytter studien et kvantitativt undersøkelsesdesign.

Undersøkelsesmetoden er en halv-lukket kvantitativ spørreundersøkelse utført på to videregående skoler. Denne undersøkelsesmetoden har blitt brukt for å svare på de tre overordnede forskningsspørsmålene:

- *Hvordan reflekteres elevenes oppfatning og holdning på engelske valgfag?*
- *Hvilke forskjeller kan vi bemerke ut fra kjønn i valg av fag?*
- *Hvor utrustet føler elevene seg til høyere utdanning, hverdagsliv og arbeidsliv?*

Dataene vil bli stratifisert ved hjelp av kjønn, og virke som en variabel for å undersøke elevenes erfaringer og oppfatninger.

Funnene i studien antyder at elevenes motivasjon er blandet, der jentene er mindre motiverte enn guttene. I tillegg mente elevene at de kunne tilstrekkelig med engelsk når det kom til høyere utdanning og arbeidsliv. Videre fant elevene det obligatoriske engelskfaget nyttig, men ikke interessant. Dette er en sterk indikasjon på hvorfor det er en nedgang i antall elever som velger engelskvalgfag, men tilbudet om valgfag og kombinasjonene av disse er begrensende for elevene. Noen av elevene ville valgt engelsk som et av sine valgfag, men får ikke lov til dette på grunn av studiespesialiseringstudiene og deres begrensninger innenfor valgfag.



## Engelsk sammendrag (Abstract)

The evergrowing deficiency in English as an elective in upper secondary is alarming, and needs to be addressed and investigated. Which factors influence the pupils into choosing their elective subjects, and how do these choices correlate with future plans such as higher education and working life? The present study aims to investigate the factors, motivation, influence by others, and previous experience with English. Furthermore, it aims to shed light on limiting offers of elective subjects and combination of elective subjects.

In order to investigate this the study employs a survey design with high emphasis on giving the pupils a voice. The method of inquiry is a semi-closed quantitative questionnaire conducted on two upper secondary schools. The method applied have been used to answer the three overarching research questions:

- *How do the pupils' beliefs and attitudes reflect upon the English elective subjects?*
- *What role does gender play in the choice of elective subject?*
- *In what manner do the pupils feel equipped for higher education, society and working life?*

The data is stratified by means of gender, and serve as a variable in investigating the pupils' experiences and perceptions.

The findings of the study suggests that the pupils' motivation is mixed, where the girls are less motivated than the boys. Additionally, the pupils thought that they knew sufficient English in terms of higher education and working life. Further more, they found the obligatory English subject useful, but not interesting. This is a strong indication of why there is a decrease in pupils choosing English as one of their elective subjects, but the offer of elective subjects and the combination of said subjects are limiting for the pupils. Some of the pupils would have liked to choose English as one of their elective subjects, but were not allowed to do so due to Programme Specialization Studies and their restrictivity regarding elective subjects.

# 1. Introduction

In proficiency tests, Norway has traditionally performed well. Norwegians are known to have adequate English language proficiency. Norway is a multilingual country in rapid growth, with thousands of students studying the language. Large amount of research imply that the English knowledge of Norwegian adolescents is not adequate for the attainment necessary in international education and working life. Yet, pupils decide against English as one of their elective subjects. This may, at first glance, indicate that the pupils feel that they know sufficient English, and therefore opt to study different elective subjects. Thus, this thesis seeks to explore and address the issue of decreasing numbers of pupils choosing English as one of their electives in upper secondary school. The decrease may indicate a shift in fields of education, educational programmes, and obligatory subject combinations. Considering the many possible variables and ‘what ifs’, the most suitable way of acquiring a representative answer, was to ask the pupils in upper secondary directly. After all, it is the lack of pupils that measure the decrease, and it became evident that that they were the answer to all unrequited questions. Therefore, the thesis, in addition to investigating the decrease, offers a voice to the pupils.

The thesis aims to discover why there is a decrease in pupils choosing English as one of their elective subjects. It aims to research pupils' notions and motivation regarding English teaching and the English subject in years 11 to 12. The thesis intends to investigate which factors inspire and motivate the pupils' choice when deciding which elective subjects to choose. Pupils of upper secondary school in Norway have numerous options when choosing elective subjects. Some of these elective subjects are only available on a specific specialisation, and the offer of elective subjects fluctuates from school to school. The general decline of pupils choosing English as one of their elective subjects has resulted in fewer pupils in *International English*, *English Literature and Culture* and *Social Studies English* than other elective subjects.

Therefore, this thesis will investigate if the factors, motivation, influence by others (i.e., teachers, parents, friends and so forth), experiences with English from previous years, and the pupils' overall interest and the notion of English have anything to do with the decrease in pupils. The overarching aim of the thesis is thus to contribute to a more extensive understanding of the English subject from the pupils' point of view and consequently shed light on the general interest in English elective subjects.

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## 1.1 Research questions and hypotheses

In order to properly understand issues related to subject selection in upper secondary school, it is necessary to consider a wide range of factors. Therefore, the thesis focuses, in particular, on the following research questions:

1. *How do the pupils' beliefs and attitudes reflect upon the English elective subjects?*
2. *What role does gender play in the choice of elective subject?*
3. *In what manner do the pupils feel equipped for higher education, society and working life?*

Research question 1 seeks to investigate how the pupils interpret the overall necessity of the English subjects and its curriculum, including their attitudes towards English learning. Ultimately, researching pupils' beliefs meant investigating if pupils felt that their English teaching was engaging, resourceful, and helpful.

Research question 2 served to stratify the pupils by gender. The means of stratification functioned as a variable to investigate whether females and males interpreted the English subjects differently. Using gender as a variable meant that the data collected could investigate the answers given in a more representative way. Therefore, the data presented is stratified by gender and as a whole target group to examine the overall tendency of pupils in upper secondary.

Research question 3 functioned as a measure of how the pupils felt that their previous English teaching had equipped them with enough knowledge to tackle higher education, society and working life. The thought of researching pupils' notions and self-measured attainment was interesting because the pupils often are the ones measured.

The hypotheses will be presented throughout the thesis but briefly outlined below.

The hypotheses are:

- The mixed implementation of English and its ambitious competence aims in lower secondary school impact the pupils not choosing English as one of their elective subjects in upper secondary.
- The subject classification and combination limit the pupils negatively, resulting in pupils not being able to choose their desired elective subjects.
- Boys' motivation and notion of the English subject is lower than girls' motivation and notion of the English subject.

## 1.2 Thesis structure

In order to understand pupil's attitudes towards English as an elective subject, it is first necessary to situate this topic in its historical and academic context. Chapter Two is therefore devoted to a literature review which assesses previous research conducted on lower secondary school, articles written by, and for, the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (henceforth NDET), statistics conducted by researchers and didactic literature. It is difficult to measure motivation, as motivation is not static. Nonetheless, motivation portrays an important role in the educational system and functions as a variable on more aspects than just election of subjects. Therefore, motivation deemed necessary to measure the pupils by, and specifically to measure the pupils' motivation for English learning. Gender functioned as means of stratification and was used as a variable to investigate two main discourses on gender. The discourse on boys' education implied that boys' motivation and attainment was lower than girls' motivation and attainment. Additionally, the pupils, in statistics conducted on the decrease in English elective subjects, is presented as a unit, and it deemed interesting to investigate whether there is a correlation between gender and choice of subject. Finally, research on Norwegian adolescents, in higher education and working life, have shown that they are not well-enough equipped with English language knowledge. Therefore, it deemed interesting to investigate whether the pupils themselves feel that they know sufficient amount of English to function in higher education and working life.

Chapter Three frames the methodology and method used in the thesis. The method used in the thesis is quantitative survey research. The aim of the thesis is to acquire representative data of the researched pupils and to measure the tendency in correlation with the research questions. Survey research allow for quantifiable and measurable data of large units that can be analysed and interpreted. Therefore, survey research was the obvious and apparent choice of method to best answer the set research questions. The methodology chapter include discussions of advantages and disadvantages of the survey design and takes validity and reliability into consideration in the execution of the method. Ensuring the quality of ethics is important in any research, but specifically important when conducting research on human participants. The questionnaire conducted on the pupils were anonymous, and multiple considerations were made to safeguard the pupils from further investigation by others. Therefore, the methodology chapter discuss ethical considerations in regard to questionnaires, and which measures to implement to guarantee the respondents that they are

in fact anonymous, and that their answers cannot be traced back to them. The pupils must be reassured that their identity, answers, and opinions will be kept anonymous to best acquire truthful answers. Subsequently, collection of material and instrumentation are considered in the methodology chapter and discuss which processes were included in this stage. Lastly, the questionnaire is explained thoroughly, and include discussions on the three types of questions used.

Chapter Four presents the results from the quantitative data collected and is discussed in correlation with the literature review and the research questions. The chapter is divided into four subchapters, where each research question has been given a subchapter and the hypotheses is discussed in the last chapter. The analysis could have become quite disorganised and cluttered due to the large amount of data. By dividing the analysis into three parts, the analysis became clearer and more defined. Due to the questionnaire containing three different types of questions, the discussion of findings consisted of various statistics and written answers. Some researchers avoid open-ended questions due to the data becoming unmanageable and may in some cases be difficult to interpret. However, the written answers provided valuable information and opinions of the pupils that would not have been a part of the analysis if the open-ended questions were removed. The data collected have been made into diagrams, which show the number of pupils on each question. Additionally, the diagrams have been converted into percentages, which gives a bigger representation of tendencies among the pupils. The analysis is structured so that the findings is presented as a unit first. This creates statistics that is easily readable and interpretable and allows for analysis. Dividing the respondents by gender allows for more profound interpretations and analysis, and therefore gives more valuable answers and understandings of the concept of the decrease in English elective subjects.

Chapter Five contain the concluding remarks of the analysis and finds. The discussion of limitations and further research is also included. The main conclusion of the thesis is that 50.73% of pupils in upper secondary school are negatively motivated or indifferent towards learning more English. Yet, most of the respondents answered that the obligatory English subject was useful. However, 40.58% of the respondents found the obligatory English subject to be neither interesting or uninteresting and were indifferent towards the subject. Interestingly, the respondents are content with their English language knowledge, and feel well equipped for higher education, society and working life. In relation to the gender discourses, male respondents are seemingly better equipped when compared to females. An alarming 7.25% of the 69 respondents researched, had English as one of their elective

subjects. The pupils themselves say that the English elective subjects are boring, that they learn more useful English on their own time, and lastly, that there are subjects more important than English elective subjects for their future studies and working life.

### **1.2.1 Choice of methodology**

Conducting survey research is objectively rather traditional in quantitative research. Survey research is beneficial when describing the characteristics of a population. Furthermore, survey research ensures a more accurate sample that gathers targeted results and enables the researcher to conclude straightforwardly. Additionally, survey research is purposeful when the previous research conducted in a field or on a specific target group is limited. Since the desire was to research and investigate three different research questions on a compound issue, survey research deemed the most beneficial choice of method. There is currently very little research conducted on upper secondary schools in Norway, and there is even less research on English in upper secondary. Therefore, the questionnaire seeks to investigate how pupils experience and perceive their English teaching and English as an elective in upper secondary. The questionnaire also investigates the pupils' motivation to learn more English or whether they feel that they know sufficient English. Thus, it is essential to examine how the pupils view their future regarding higher education. The theoretical framework assists the quantitative data and correlates the research previously conducted on in-depth English in lower secondary to motivation and recognition. Additionally, the theoretical framework in survey research serves to build a more extensive understanding of the research topic and problem. It, therefore, functions as equally important instrumentation in analysing, interpreting, and concluding the findings. Therefore, the survey research method was deemed the most appropriate choice of methodology because the wish was to provide the pupils with their voice and allow them to express themselves about their previous English education.

The discussion outline will be centred around each research question and hypothesis. The discussion will follow a gradual structure, where the findings from the questionnaire will be introduced in connection to the theoretical framework. The collaboration between quantitative data and theoretical framework will answer each research question and hypothesis. The discussion structure must be clean, clear, and understandable to contribute to a more significant understanding of the topic researched.

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## 2. Literature review

English is one the most common language spoken worldwide. It is used as both a national language, and a communicational language between people with different mother tongues and cultural backgrounds. Mass media, such as social media, TV, news, and film more often than not use English as their core language. In Norway, English is used in higher education, science, and employment. It is the language being spoken, and especially in science and education, the language of textbooks and references. English as an elective have therefore been a precursor to the pupils' later life, in higher education- or employment-settings.

English elective subjects in Upper Secondary were introduced in 2007-2008 and consists of three different subjects. These are as following, International English, Social Studies English and English Literature and Culture.

There is very limited research conducted on English in upper secondary. Therefore, most of the previous research found is conducted on lower secondary. However, this does not make the research non-applicable, as the two topics, in-depth studies in English in lower secondary and English as an elective in upper secondary correlates to one another.

### 2.1 In-depth studies in English in lower secondary school

In-depth studies in English, or English specialization, was introduced as a standalone elective subject in Lower Secondary in Norway in 1997, due to its ever-growing interest and influence by the English language (NOU 1996, 1996) The pupils had, due to the reform of 1997 (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 1996), other optional subjects to choose from. These subjects were in-depth studies in Norwegian, English or sign language, French, German, or other foreign languages that were offered on regional basis, and a practical project (NOU 1996, 1996). However, in 2006 the practical project subject was no longer available, which meant that pupils who did not want to learn a foreign language such as French or German, had to choose between in-depth studies in Norwegian and in-depth studies in English.

This meant that pupils who did not excel in theoretical subjects, or who simply wanted a more practical approach to learning, had to choose yet another theoretical subject to fill their timetable. Bakken and Dæhlen (2011) have shown, in a report ordered from NOVA (The Norwegian Welfare Research Institute) that few theoretical strong pupils chose in-depth studies. This had, according to Bakken and Dæhlen (2011) repercussions towards in-depth

studies in Norwegian and English, that impacted the in-depth studies to acquire a lower status compared to other subjects. The repercussions together with few options, steered pupils who were theoretically weak, pupils who needed a practical subject, or pupils who did not wish to learn new languages, or languages in-depth, to choose in-depth studies in Norwegian or English. Furthermore, Bakken and Dæhlen's (2011) report show that every third pupil, at that point in time, chose in-depth studies. Most of these pupils chose in-depth studies in English rather than Norwegian.

According to Bakken & Dæhlen (2011), the in-depth studies that were taught, were a mere simplification of the English and Norwegian subject rather than in-depth subjects. The intention of the curriculum is that every subject is adaptable to every pupil's limit and aspirations. With the high number of weaker pupils, in regard to theoretical limits and motivation, the subjects were made simpler than what the Norwegian governments' intention were, when creating the subjects. Bakken & Dæhlen (2011) also found that, even though the teachers were competent enough, the interest in, and motivation to teach these in-depth subjects were surprisingly low. As the English in-depth subject became less popular and demanding, the difficulties acquiring competent teachers grew. Therefore, teachers who did not have the competence to teach English, taught the subject, and the subject overall became a low-ranking subject (Bakken & Dæhle, 2011).

In an attempt to reconstruct in-depth studies in English as a subject and increase its popularity, The Foreign Language Centre in Norway responded to Bakken & Dæhlen's (2011) report, elaborated in chapter 1.4, in 2014. The response was in an article that included multiple exercises and ways of teaching in-depth English. The article, *På djupt vatn i engelsk fordypning* (Sutton, 2014), or translated to English, "In deep water in English in-depth studies", assesses Bakken & Dæhle's (2011) findings and approach 'new' strategies towards teaching in-depth studies in English. Sutton (2014) argues that The Foreign Language Center found, in Bakken & Dæhle's (2011) report, a basis to use a broad scope of competence and focus on relational class management. The Foreign Language Centre's article also contributes, according to Sutton (2014), to an overall goal, namely that the pupils, first and foremost, must be motivated. Moreover, after receiving feedback from teachers, pupils, and parents, the article emphasises that the pupils greatly missed the lack of practical working methods and subjects. Sutton (2014) focuses strongly on how an in-depth subject can be a practical subject and that these two combined cannot be anything but superb. Sutton (2014) argues that every steppingstone in the teaching and motivational direction is a form of specialisation or in-depth study. In their report, Bakken & Dæhle (2011) found that the

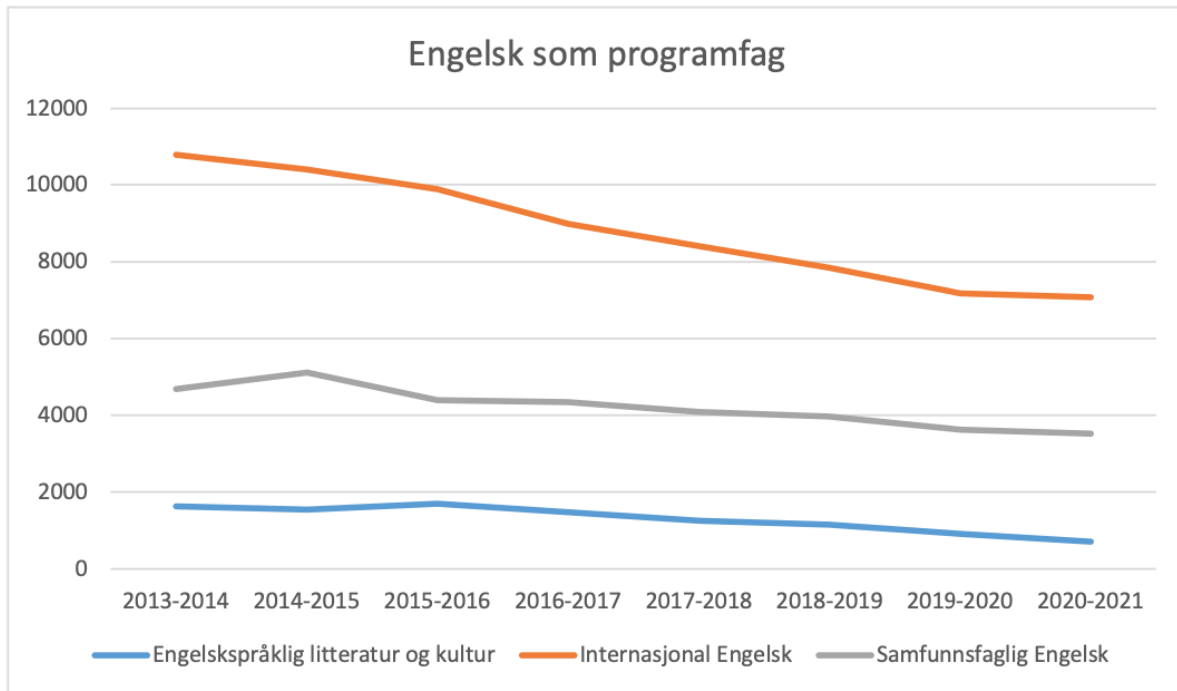


competence aims regarding in-depth studies in English were too ambitious. Sutton (2014), on the other hand, argues that competence aims act as an objective, or a goal, for each pupil and, therefore, must not come in the way of a motivational process in the classroom. However, competence aims are a defined goal in the curriculum for learning, and the Norwegian government introduced competence aims in 2006 as *Kunnskapsløftet* (Regjeringen, 2006). With the introduction of competence aims, the curriculum became more goal-oriented than previous curricula. In line with this, *Kunnskapsløftet* (Regjeringen, 2006) provides fewer guidelines for content and methods in education and is said to represent a break with the content-oriented curriculum tradition that Norway previously used. The competence aims are in place to guide teachers toward grading pupils. This issue on different viewpoints and understandings of competence aims, motivation and in-depth studies in lower secondary prompted the hypothesis, "the mixed implementation of English and its ambitious competence aims in lower secondary school impact the pupils not choosing English as one of their elective subjects in upper secondary". The hypothesis aims to determine whether the pupils perceived in-depth studies in English in lower secondary to be discouraging, therefore leading the pupils to choose other elective subjects in upper secondary. Further discussion of the hypothesis in collaboration with the findings is in chapters 3.4.1.2. and 4.4.

## 2.2 The decrease in English as an elective

The emergence of new statistics regarding which elective studies the Norwegian pupils have chosen caused The Foreign Language Centre to look more closely at why the decrease is so abundant (Øksenvåg, 2021). The statistics show a worrying trend concerning the popularity and overall offer of English as an elective in upper secondary school and in-depth language studies offered in lower secondary school. The statistics show three prominent trends, which are all negative. Firstly, the number of pupils choosing foreign languages in lower secondary schools has not been this low since the insertion of *Kunnskapsløftet* in 2006. Secondly, the number of pupils choosing foreign languages as their elective studies has never been as low. Lastly, the elective studies, English Literature and Culture, International English, and Social Studies English, have slowly but steadily decreased in the number of pupils and have never been as low (Øksenvåg, 2021). However, the statistics mentioned above mainly concern the foreign languages French, German and Spanish. Nonetheless, the negative trend is prominent

in lower secondary and upper secondary schools. Interestingly, the negative trend is more recent concerning upper secondary school. However, the declining numbers regarding the three elective subjects in English have been a constant for the last seven years.



*Table 1.1: English as an elective in Upper secondary school*

*(Øksenvåg, 2021)*

As shown in the table above, the negative trend has been consistent from 2013 to 2021. In the report produced for The Foreign Language Centre, Øksenvåg (2021) concludes that the decrease in English as an elective is unsettling. The English elective subjects are a necessary precursor for many pupils later in life, in terms of higher education and working life. Table 1.1 indicates that the elective subject English Literature and Culture is the least popular of the three elective subjects. Social Studies English is more popular than English Literature and Culture. The most popular subject is International English. According to Table 1.1, it is the subject with the most significant decrease of the three subjects. An exciting find in statistics from NDET (2019) is that the number of pupils choosing Programme Subject Language, Social Studies and Economics is higher than the pupils choosing Programme Subject Science. When first starting the research project, the initial thought was that the difference would be reversed. The Programme Subject Science would hold most of the pupils attending upper secondary. To elaborate, seeing as the deficiency in English as an elective in upper secondary is high, the preliminary assumption was that

pupils, to a greater extent, chose elective subjects such as physics, chemistry, and calculus to be better equipped for higher education. Physics, chemistry, and calculus are often compulsory subjects in higher education that have increased in popularity. The elective subjects, physics, chemistry, and calculus are only available in the Programme Subject Science and are one of two possible choices the pupils can make when attending General Study specialisation.

The composition of programme subjects in General Study specialisation and the available elective subjects prompts the following hypothesis: “the subject classification and combination limit the pupils negatively, resulting in pupils not being able to choose their desired elective subjects”. To clarify, choosing between only two specialisation courses may limit the pupils' scope and future aspirations. Some schools offer International Baccalaureate (henceforth IB), two-year university preparatory training. However, the admission requirements are high, and all teaching takes place in English (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2021). IB may not be appropriate for all pupils wishing to obtain a general study competence. All pupils are awarded the general study competence upon completing their General Study specialisation or IB, but IB is only available at a few upper secondary schools in Norway. In a dynamic, globalised world, is it time for the schools to remove these branded specialisation studies and replace them with other, more forward-looking, and advanced options?

## Fordeling av programområder Vg2 studiespesialisering 2018-19.

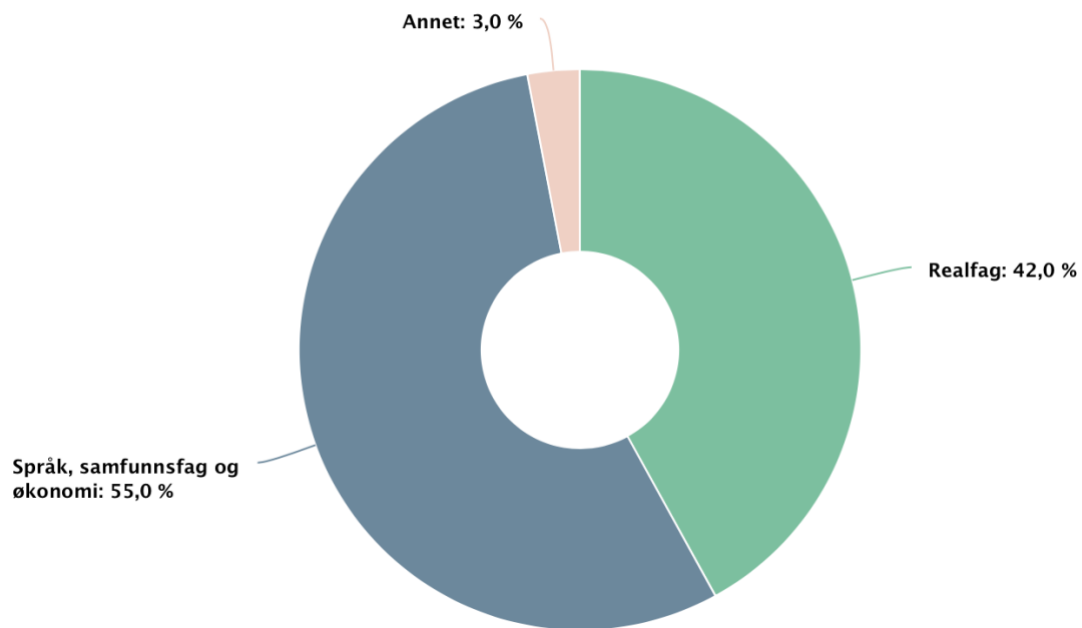


Figure 2.1. Distribution of program areas in Vg2 General Study specialisation.  
(NDET, The Education Mirror 2019).

The figure above shows that 55% of all pupils in the General Study programme in Vg2 choose Language, Social Sciences and Economics (henceforth LSE), while 42% choose the Programme Subject Science (henceforth PSS). The statistic in Figure 2.1 above automatically challenges the initial assumption stated above and establishes that most pupils in upper secondary in Norway preferred LSE. Nevertheless, it will be interesting to see if this statistic correlates with the findings from the data collected through the questionnaire.

### 2.2.1 International English

In terms of this thesis, the subjects International English and Social Studies English (more on Social Studies English in chapter 2.2.2) are the two subjects researched, as these subjects were the ones available at each school. The subject, International English, is offered to Vg2 pupils in Upper secondary school and claims to provide deep knowledge in the English language, including diverse language variations. The aim of International English is to acquire each pupil with knowledge of the English language and equipping them with strategies to promote one's own language learning. Furthermore, it involves understanding

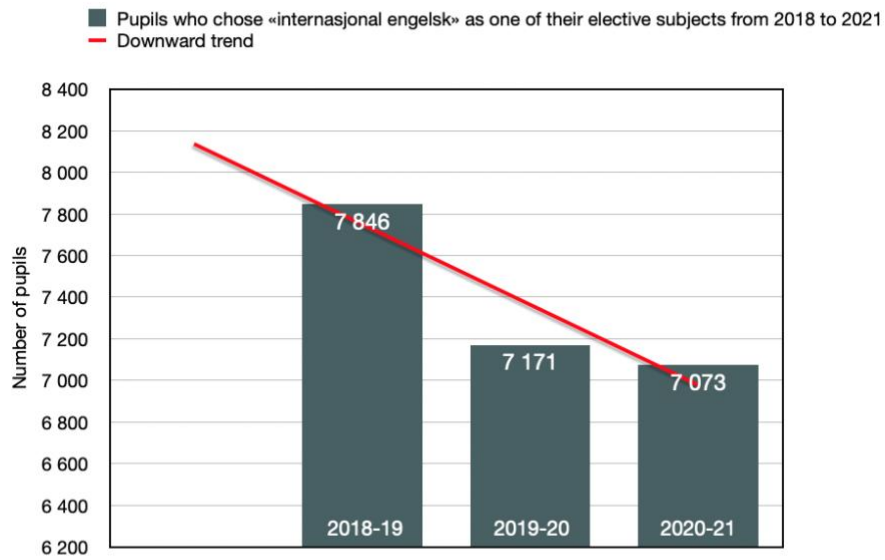
of the English language's structure at sentence and text level and involves creating awareness of linguistic tools in various genres. Moreover, the subject is meant to deal with central themes such as intercultural communication, intercultural competence, literature, and media from the English spoken world. According to NDET, English is a subject of development and growth, and a subject to be better equipped with tools to tackle the modern world (2020). Overall, the core of International English is to further develop language competence with a conscious relationship to one's own learning, strategies, and goals.

### **2.2.2 Social Studies English**

The subject Social Studies English is an extension of International English; however, it is not a requirement to have passed or chosen International English to select Social Studies English as one of the elective subjects in Vg3. English is important in higher education, science, and work-life. According to NDET (2006), to participate in society and working life, both nationally and internationally, it is becoming increasingly essential to master English at an advanced level. Because English is a language used worldwide and, in all cultures, intercultural competence becomes a natural and necessary part of language competence. The core of Social Studies English is for the pupils to attain knowledge of the English language and assess various strategies to promote one's language learning. It includes knowledge of the basic features of English language use and the connection between language, culture, and society. Furthermore, the subject wishes to equip the pupils with linguistic tools to use in different text types. Lastly, the aim is to teach the pupils to assess their language learning with set goals (NDET, 2006).

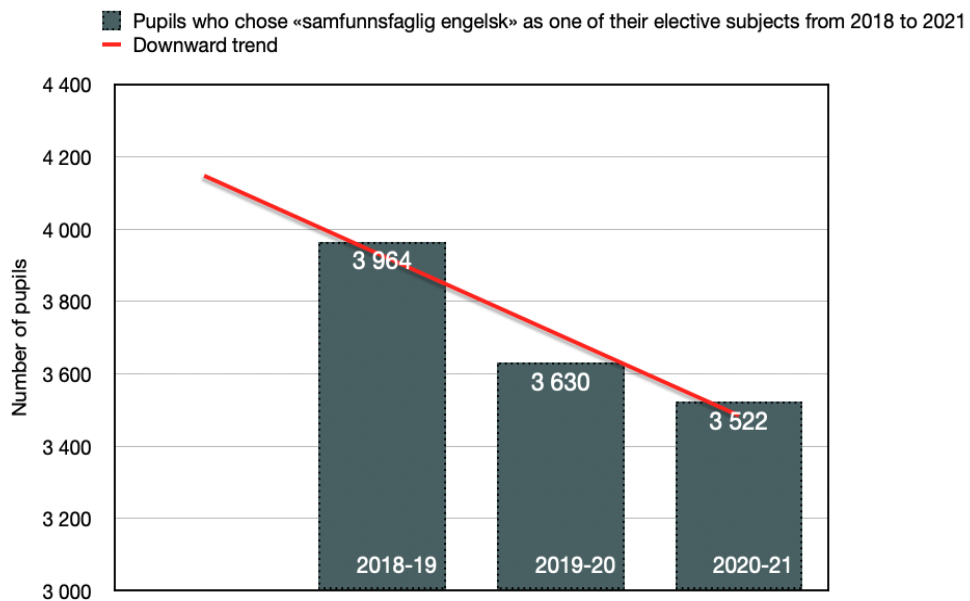
### **2.2.3 Addressing the decrease**

Looking more closely at statistics created for the three English in-depth subjects in upper secondary shows that the interest is decreasing quickly. See Table 1.2. and 1.3. below.



Internasjonal engelsk 2018-2021

Table 1.2: International English from 2018-2021 (NDET, 2021)



Samfunnsfaglig engelsk 2018-2021

Table 1.3: Social Studies English from 2018-2021 (NDET, 2021)

Table 1.2 and Table 1.3 show that the number of pupils from 2018 to 2021 has decreased quite rapidly. Especially between the school year of 2018-2019 to 2019-2020. The subject, International English, is offered to Vg2 pupils, and Social Studies English is offered to Vg3 pupils in Upper secondary school and claims to provide deep knowledge of the English language, including diverse language variations. Moreover, the subject is meant to deal with central themes such as intercultural communication, intercultural competence, literature, and media from the English spoken world. According to NDET, English is a subject of development and growth and a subject to be better equipped with tools to tackle the modern world (2006). The statistics show that the decrease in English elective subjects has been consistent. Therefore, it is interesting to see if the pupils investigated in this thesis can give a precursor as to why this decrease endures and which measures are needed to prevent a continuous decline.

#### **2.2.4 Fagfornyelsen**

*Fagfornyelsen* (LK20) is the renewal of the old *Kunnskapsløftet* (LK06) earlier touched upon in chapter 2.2. What does LK20 entail? The renewal of subjects and competence aims entails everything between the school and vocational training. Most of the subjects are the same, but the curricula have been changed and adjusted to provide and improve in-depth learning. Seeing as there have not been any changes to the subjects, vocational training, or competence aims since 2013, the changes have been more than welcome (NDET, 2006; NDET, 2021). What exactly is the difference between *Kunnskapsløftet* and *Fagfornyelsen*? *Kunnskapsløftet* increased the pressure on basic skills and introduced curricula that emphasized what pupils should learn instead of focusing on what the pupils should do. *Fagfornyelsen* is a continuation of this, but the curricula will be less extensive and include more coherence between subjects, allowing for interdisciplinary work (Regjeringen, 2019). The coherence in the curriculum has been improved with LK20, and the curricula were transformed in form and content. More subjects become more practical and exploratory. There will be more learning through play for the youngest children. Critical thinking and source criticism will become a central part of multiple subjects. There will also be more time for in-depth studies (Regjeringen, 2019).

### 2.2.5 In-depth English competence aims in LK06 versus LK20

In-depth English competence aims in LK06 have been touched upon in chapters 2.2.1 and 2.2.2. To summarise, the LK06 competence aims to provide deep English knowledge, including diverse language variations. Moreover, the subject is meant to deal with central themes such as intercultural communication, intercultural competence, literature, and media from the English spoken world (NDET, 2006). LK20's core elements include language and communication development, which contribute to the pupils' identity and formation development. Furthermore, the subject will contribute to developing the pupils' intercultural understanding, increasing their understanding of the versatile English Language, and the importance of using a situation-adapted language. Mastering adequate English is essential for the pupils in education, working life, and interaction with people worldwide (NDET, 2020). The revised in-depth English subject aims to equip the pupils choosing English to better themselves in communicating, connecting with other English speakers, and learning English (NDET, 2020). Additionally, mastering English can provide the pupils with self-confidence, security, and the opportunity to unfold. Knowledge of and an exploratory approach to other languages, societies, lifestyles, forms of communication, and cultures open new perspectives on the world and the pupils themselves. Moreover, the subject will contribute to the pupils developing an understanding of, and respect for, cultural and linguistic diversity, making the pupils reflect on the historical context in which cultural expression and social conditions are included (NDET, 2020).

The difference is insignificant when rapidly looking through each competence aim of the new in-depth English curricula and comparing them to the old in-depth studies' competence aims (NDET, 2006; NDET, 2021). Of course, some competence aims have been prominently specified, such as the interdisciplinary part, allowing the subjects to work more intertwined and transversely to each other. However, the pupils are still expected to show understanding, reflect, and analyse around themes presented. Additionally, the pupils are expected to produce both oral and written assignments (NDET, 2021). The core elements of the in-depth English subject in LK20, called *English 1 and 2*, are communication, language training and English-spoken texts (NDET, 2021). These core elements are somewhat the same as in LK06. However, the amount of competence aims has been prominently decreased in LK20. This is a positive change from LK06 to LK20, and gives more room for in-depth learning, as The Norwegian Government promised would appear in the revised curricula (NDET, 2021). One of the main elements in the revised in-depth English subject curricula is better to equip



the pupils with a vocabulary of subject-specific nature. This means that the pupil can work with vocabulary related to various subjects and topics to be better prepared for higher education (NDET, 2021).

## 2.3 English as a global language and EFL<sup>1</sup>

The English language holds the position as a mother tongue, or native language, in many countries. The global use of English is ever-growing, and is the language primarily used for communication between speakers of other languages in nations where English may not be the native language (CAL, 2021). The English language has continued to expand since the Commonwealth of Nations and colonisation of nations and countries, as seen in the figure *Three Circles of English*, made by the Indian language researcher Braj Kachru Figure 1.2 below:



Figure 2.2. Kachru's three circles of English. (In Hunstadbråten, 2020)

Figure 1.2 shows the English language's status within three different types of countries today and is represented by three circles (Hunstadbråten, 2020). The inner-circle includes the United Kingdom, the nation where English arose, and countries colonised by the British or that became independent early. In the next circle, called the outer circle, we find countries or nations that were former colonised but where English has the status as an official language. The outer circle, also called the expanding circle, consists of countries or nations where English is a foreign language. The expanding circle illustrates

<sup>1</sup> English as a Foreign Language.

that the use of English constantly increases, whereas the outer and inner circles are somewhat constant. The expanding circle indicates that English has evolved from an international language to a global one. English has become a lingua franca and is a language that makes it possible to communicate and make oneself understood by people with different native languages (Hundstadbråten, 2020).

### **2.3.1 English and its status in Norway**

Most of the people in Norway use English in everyday life, whereas young people use the language more than older generations. Conversely, due to social media, older generations are becoming more and more apparent on social media platforms and may become more frequent English language users (Hundstadbråten, 2020). Furthermore, its influence through Web 2.0<sup>2</sup>, games, social media, English is spoken in movies and TV series, and music is a natural part of our globalised world. We travel and explore the world more and use English as a common language when conversing with people from different parts (Hundstadbråten, 2020). Depending on how one chooses to see it, a central theme or issue is the growing usage of English slang in the Norwegian language. Slang usage has been widely researched among pupils in lower and upper secondary schools in socially and regionally dispersed areas in Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Swedish-speaking parts of Finland (Hasund, 2000). The research, conducted by the Language Contact and Youth Language in the Nordic Region (UNO; My translation), targets explicitly young pupils and their use of English and examines the influence of English on the slang language of Nordic youths. UNO's research found that English loanwords in Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Swedish-speaking parts of Finland (the year 2000) amounted to approximately 15% of the slang vocabulary (Hasund, 2000). However, an interesting find concerning Norway was that 51% of the words the pupils stated as slang were dialectal and could not be classified as slang. The research done by Hasund (2000) is slightly outdated, conducted in 1997-1998. However, more recent research conducted by Anne Mette Sunde as part of her doctoral dissertation in 2019 found that the Norwegian language is anglicised. The Norwegian people loan new words and phrases from the English language. Sunde (2019) concludes that languages can withstand changes without dying out. Norway's influence from radio, television, film, and music is nothing new. The pressure on English from the internet, social media and gaming is new and

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<sup>2</sup> Web 2.0. refers to the second stage of internet development, characterised mainly by the change from static web pages to dynamic or user-generated content and the growth of social media (OED, 2021).

might change the Norwegian language (Sunde, 2019). On the other hand, like the world, languages are dynamic, not static, and are in constant change.

### **2.3.2 EF English Proficiency Index**

When looking at the competence aims and goals for the subjects, teachers would think that our pupils are well enough equipped to enter the modern world with everything that encompasses. According to the international EF English Proficiency Index award, Norway scores among the five best countries (EF EPI, 2020a). The EF English Proficiency Index survey examines the people's English skills in 100 different countries which do not have English as their L1<sup>3</sup>. In 2007, when the tests were first conducted, Norway placed first. (EF EPI, 2020a). However, Norway has had the most significant fall of all participating countries. Given Norway's international position, with trade and cooperation across national borders, it is alarming that the people of Norway are not as well-equipped as they think they are (EF EPI, 2020a).

According to various researchers, the Norwegian people cannot quite master English in work, social and academic settings. Poor English knowledge leads Norwegian companies to miss valuable negotiations and contracts and risk insulting customers due to poor English. English professor Glenn Ole Hellekjær at the Department of Teacher Education and School Research at the University of Oslo showed this through a survey conducted on 1032 Norwegian companies (2007). The study found that English is the most dominant language in international business, being spoken over 95% in all exchanges in the import- and export industry. The other languages included in the study are German, Norwegian, Swedish, Danish, French, Spanish, Russian [and other languages] (Hellekjær, 2007). Hellekjær (2007) concludes with the following remarks:

“The companies have sufficient employees who speak English, but at the same time lack employees who speak the English language adequate to master the many tasks involved in these companies, ranging from sales to negotiations. Some answers indicate that the employees experience problems in social contexts, which suggests that the General English skills fail to the same extent as the professional languages. Regarding these language difficulties, mutually English and other foreign languages, the companies mention issues ranging from incorrect deliveries, lost sales, and

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<sup>3</sup> L1 refers to your first or native language. The language which is most used and most comfortable for a given person.

contracts to social isolation at conferences and courses due to insufficient language skills. [...]"

(Hellekjær, 2007, p. 6. *My translation*)

This study may come across as non-applicable; however, more recent research confirms that the knowledge of the English language is too low. EF EPI (2020b, test conducted in 2017 and 2018) has found that, after researching universities and their English knowledge, most students are not reaching the sufficient skill level necessary for professional-level English (EF EPI, 2020b). See table 1.4. below.

## Distribution of Students by CEFR Level

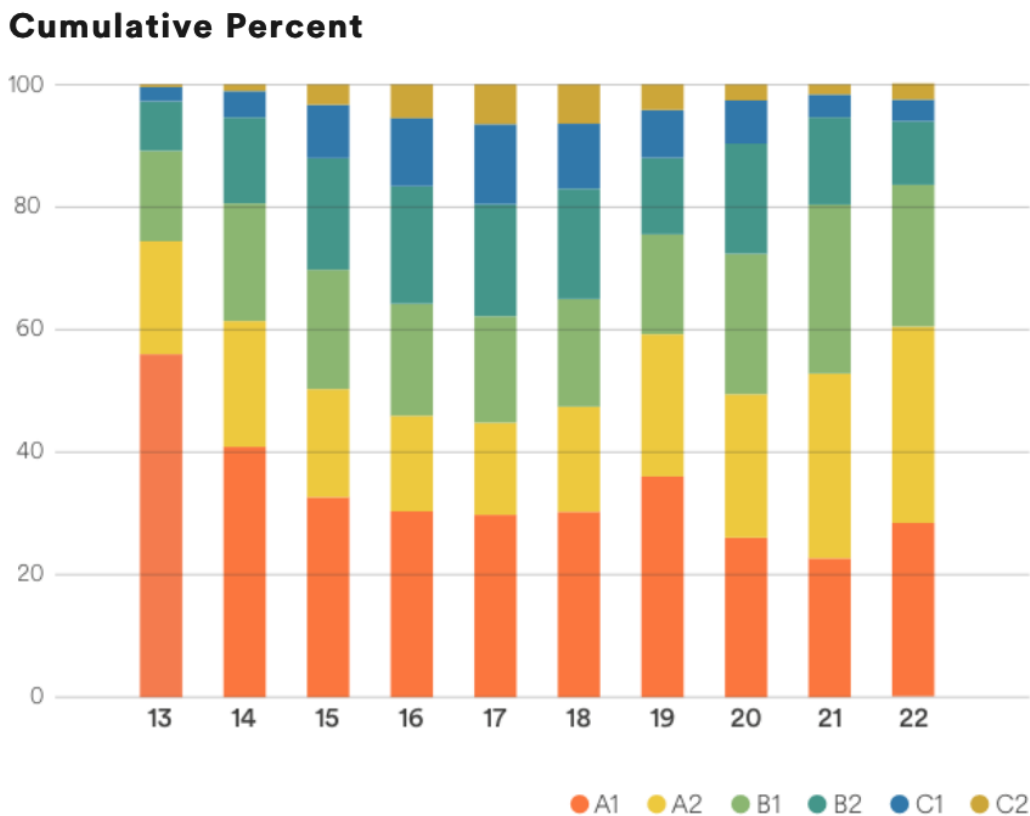


Table 1.4. *Distribution of Students by CEFR Level (EF EPI, 2020b).*

Table 1.4. above illustrate that trends at university levels are not adequate. EF EPI (2020b) has conducted a proficiency study to understand where university pupils are situated on the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) levels. The CEFR levels functions as this:

“The CEFR organises language proficiency in six levels, A1 to C2, which can be regrouped into three broad levels: Basic User, Independent User and Proficient User,

and that can be further subdivided according to the needs of the local context. The levels are defined through ‘can-do’ descriptors.”

*(Council of Europe, 2021)*

As seen in the quote above, the CEFR levels are grouped into three broad levels, starting at A1-A2, Basic User, B1-B2, Independent User, and C1-C2, Proficient User. The descriptors specify progressive mastery of each skill and are graded on the six-level scale mentioned above and illustrated to the right (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, n.d.).

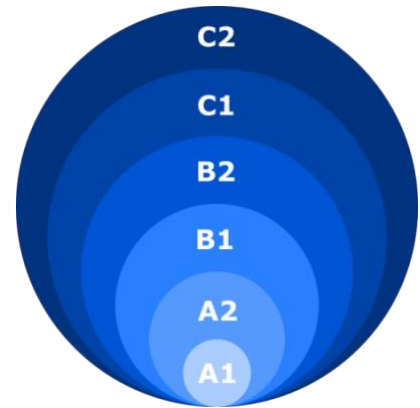


Figure 2.3. The CEFR Levels. (Council of Europe, 2021)

Table 1.4. illustrate the stagnation of proficiency skills in English, and the EF English Proficiency Index (2020b) explains it as such:

“Trends at the university level are less clear. On the one hand, students at age 21 have the lowest proportion of A1-level English speakers of any age group. On the other hand, 21 and 22-year-olds have lower proportions of advanced C2 students than 17 and 18-year-olds. In other words, by the end of university, students are more concentrated in the middle of the proficiency spectrum. One worrying finding here is that most students are not reaching the skill level they need for professional-level English; the minimum proficiency level required for an international workplace is upper intermediate (B2), a level attained by less than 20% of the university-aged students we tested.”

*(EF EPI, 2020b)*

The quote above embodies an additional example of the English language skills not being satisfactory enough. Knowledge of academic words is necessary for Norwegian pupils in Upper secondary school to complete the English subject and qualify for higher education. The old curriculum (LK06) for English in Upper Secondary in Norway, as mentioned in chapter 2.3, aims for pupils to acquire sufficient language knowledge to comprehend the difference between formal and informal language (Skjelde & Coxhead, 2020). The newly revised curriculum (LK20) specifies that Upper Secondary pupils must listen to and use academic language when working with oral and written texts (Udir, 2020: Skjelde &

Coxhead, 2020). Skjelde & Coxhead (2020) have researched first-year pupils in Upper secondary school and their recognition of the academic vocabulary of written academic English and associations with English course grades. They research this using the Vocabulary Levels Test (VLT)<sup>4</sup> (Nation, 1990: Schmitt et al., 2001, in Skjelde & Coxhead, 2020, p. 5). They found, on average, that learners had high levels of meaning-recognition knowledge.<sup>5</sup> (80.93%), but 58.21% failed to reach minimum mastery levels<sup>6</sup> of written academic English (Skjelde & Coxhead, 2020, p. 1). Skjelde & Coxhead (2020) also included previous research, in their study, regarding other Scandinavian countries, including Denmark, Sweden and Iceland, to see where Norwegian pupil's scores compared to other Scandinavian pupils.

Previous research conducted on vocabulary knowledge and knowledge of academic vocabulary shows to be essential for reading comprehension and writing proficiency of L2.<sup>7</sup> learners in Upper secondary school (Henriksen & Danelund, 2015; Olsson, 2016; Edgarsson, 2017, in Skjelde & Coxhead, 2020, p. 3). As Skjelde & Coxhead (2020) have found, the research conducted in Denmark (Henriksen & Danelund, 2015, in Skjelde & Coxhead, 2020), Iceland (Edgarsson, 2017, in Skjelde & Coxhead, 2020) and Sweden (Olsson, 2016, in Skjelde & Coxhead, 2020) indicate that there is a deficiency in terms of academic English vocabulary knowledge among students of Upper secondary school in Scandinavian countries (p. 3). Humphrey (2016, in Skjelde & Coxhead, 2020, p. 3) inquired about the lack of knowledge in terms of academic English in educational contexts as such: "There is a danger of assuming academic language competence from evidence of fluency in everyday language" (p. 447). This lead Skjelde & Coxhead (2020) to further raise the question of the lack of knowledge in terms of English academic discourse in educational contexts are grave enough so that the pupils cannot comprehend and suffice in higher education with the simplicity of General English, or conversational English (p. 3).

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<sup>4</sup> The Vocabulary Levels Test (Nation, 1990: Schmitt et al., 2001) indicates the word frequency level that should be used to select words for learning. The test assesses written meaning-recognition knowledge of vocabulary at 2,000, 3,000, 5,000 and 10,000 frequency levels and academic English vocabulary (Skjelde & Coxhead, 2020, p. 5).

<sup>5</sup> VLT-score.

<sup>6</sup> The minimum mastery levels of written academic English are 52 out of 60 points for the test (Skjelde & Coxhead, 2020, p. 5).

<sup>7</sup> L2 refers to any language that a person uses other than a first or native language (See L1).

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## 2.4 Gender gaps, roles, and differences in education

In the discussion of gender, it is common to distinguish between “biological” and “social” gender. Biological gender refers to the difference in body, meaning that the body is different from female to male (Phillips, 2005). When discussing social gender, the topic revolves around the expectations set by society and how well females and males perform in various settings (ibid). Furthermore, the two terms, biological and social gender, are distinguished by additional two terms, namely “sex” and “gender” (ibid). Sex refers to the biological aspect previously mentioned and means the difference in the body. Gender is often referred to as identity in research and concerns the social differences between the sexes. Research on gender in education may concern gender-specific roles, gaps, and differences between the sexes in the educational system. Thus, gender research in educational contexts attempts to investigate, analyse, and interpret why sexes differentiate from each other or how the sexes correlate with each other based on different variables. Therefore, the study of gender in educational settings allows researchers to cover differences in achievement, attainment, and experiences within the education system. By differentiating between sexes in the data collection process of this thesis, the research will obtain a more representative outcome on the issue of subject choice and motivation. It is also interesting to investigate the similarities or dissimilarities between the sexes regarding the research questions raised for the scope of this thesis. The only way to properly allow such analysis is to distinguish and separate the respondents by gender.

Pupil categorisation and definition based on gender is a widely recognised term for measuring each individual's ability to perform in life. Lahelma's (2014) analysis of gender discourses in education is based on findings conducted in Finland from the 1970s to the 2010s. It raises fascinating remarks that apply to the analysis of this thesis. Lahelma (2014) recognises two discourses on gender, specifically the ‘gender equality discourse’ and ‘the boy discourse’. These two discourses have existed in educational policies since the 1980s and recognise the prominent differences between females and males (Lahelma, 2014, pp. 172-173). The ‘gender equality discourse’ primarily focuses on the positions of girls and women and is based on international and national declarations and plans. These international and national declarations and plans revolve around gender differentiation in educational policies, where females do not acquire the same opportunities as males, disregarding the difference in statistical results (Lahelma, 2014, p. 175). ‘The boy discourse’ concerns males’

achievement, attainment, and behaviour in educational settings (Lahelma, 2014, p. 174). Specifically, males' statistical results are compared to females' and have, over time, created a self-evident gender pattern. According to Lahelma (2014), This pattern has created 'the boy discourse', where males' achievements, attainment, and behaviours have appraised them as the weaker gender concerning higher education and working life. Underachievement and poor attainment have resulted in females obtaining positions males previously held. This, in turn, led to what Lahelma (2014) describes as the 'feminisation' of certain professions (p. 175). 'Feminisation' of certain professions refers to professions which earlier were male-dominated and now attracted more females. The 'gender equality discourse' focuses on shifting the two discourses to instead focus on 'gender awareness' that implements consciousness of social and cultural differences, inequalities, and otherness (Lahelma, 2014, p. 181). Gender has been applied to the collection of data for this thesis as a variable to investigate whether the 'the boy discourse' and 'gender equality discourse' that Lahelma (2014) describe are accurate for the pupils researched in the data collection. The two discourses will be investigated and analysed in correlation with the findings to see if the discourses have empirical grounds in the data collected for this thesis.

The differences between females and males are widely researched in multiple nations. Researching the dissimilarities between the two sexes allows the researcher to interpret and distinguish finds more comprehensively and recognise the possible correlations concerning the variables used. Concerning this thesis, Delaney & Devereux (2021) recognises two evident and well-established gender gaps in education, similarly to Lahelma (2014). Females mostly have higher educational achievement and attainment than males, and there are significant differences in which study specialisation the two genders choose (Delaney & Devereux, 2021, p. 1). Furthermore, Delaney & Devereux (2021) explain these two evident gender gaps as "the boy problem" and "the girl problem" (p. 1). 'The boy problem' refers to females' propensity to have higher educational attainment and achievement than males. 'The girl problem' refers to the differences in chosen study specialisations, implying that female pupils significantly enter less highly paid fields more often than male pupils (Delaney & Devereux, 2021, p. 2). 'The boy problem' and differences between genders are most suggestively prominent among pupils from lower socio-economic families. Owens (2016, in Delaney & Devereux, 2021) found that boys are five per cent more probable having repeated a grade (p. 4). Fortin et al. (2015, in Delaney & Devereux, 2021) illustrate that US high school GPAs are considerably lower for boys than girls (p. 2). Additionally, research conducted in OECD countries has found that female pupils have a higher completion rate in



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bachelor's degrees than men (OECD, 2019, in Delaney & Devereaux, 2021, p. 2). Delaney & Devereux (2021) assert that the two gender discourses slightly differ from Lahelma (2014). The incorporation of various understandings on these discourses is deliberately done to obtain a broader knowledge of the usage of gender in research and therefore allows for a more precise analysis of the findings in collaboration with the variables used.

Research on gender gaps in the US indicates favouritism towards girls in educational outcomes and includes variables such as standardised test scores, high school graduation rates and disciplinary issues (Delaney & Devereux, 2021, p. 3). This research suggests that male pupils from lower socio-economic groups tend to have lower scores on standardised tests and more significant difficulties attaining a university degree. On the contrary, Brenoe & Lundberg (2018, in Delaney & Devereux, 2021) found that family disadvantages had no dissimilar systematic effects on males in Denmark and concluded that male pupils had no lesser chance of college completion (p. 3). Lahelma (2014) concludes that the 'the boy discourse' is not empirically true in Finland's current society because the average poor achievement from boys does not have an impact nor weakens the boys' further education or working life (p. 181). Thus, 'the boy problem' is widely discussed, and in some countries, a strongly made dispute in gender gaps, though not a straightforward discovery for long term educational outcomes. 'The girl problem' investigates why there is an orderly difference in choice of study specialisation between females and males. Specifically, 'the girl problem' examines why males are over-represented in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and economics (Delaney & Devereux, 2021, p. 3). Moreover, 'the girl problem' explores why females most often choose to study nursing, teaching, and other less technical areas (Delaney & Devereux, 2021, p. 3). Research conducted in OECD countries in 2017 found that 30% of new bachelor's students in STEM fields were females, whereas 77% of new bachelor's students in health and welfare were females. Moreover, Astorne-Figari and Speer (2019, in Delaney & Devereux, 2021) discover that dropout rates in STEM bachelor's educational programmes are significantly higher among females (p. 4). Delaney & Devereux (2021) argue that the gap in study programmes and field choices affects the labour market, where females most often underperform by comparison with male pupils in terms of expected earnings and higher education (p. 4). Females' choices may be explained by differences in preferences over fundamental characteristics of fields. Females more often prefer studies or occupations oriented toward working with people, whereas males tend to occupy themselves working in male-dominant areas (Delaney & Devereux, 2021, p. 28). Ultimately, this difference accentuates the topic of gender gap in education and implies that

female pupils most often choose gender-specific roles in education and working life. Gender gaps and gender differences are unquestionably diverse, complex and vary from nation to nation. Test scores, graduation rates or socio-economic statuses are variables not included or studied in the data collected for this thesis. Motivation, attitudes, and attainment of the English subject deemed most appropriate to question the pupils about to properly acquire a descriptive evaluation of the pupils' notion of their English education. The two discourses on gender, 'the boy problem' and 'the girl problem', will therefore be used as a factor in analysing the findings from the data collection. It will be interesting to see if there is a correlation between the research outlined in this chapter and the two sexes. Also, testing the discourses on the data collected will undoubtedly prove exciting and will identify whether the discourses apply to the respondents researched.

## 2.5 Motivation, recognition and teacher-pupil relation

Pupils' motivation for learning is a central variable in their school results. Motivation is the basis for each pupil's educational path, hereunder higher education, and the effort each pupil makes derives from their motivation (Bakken, 2018). Many pupils experience everyday school life as uninteresting and monotonous. Various researchers have found that pupils' motivation in Norway is at its lowest in lower secondary (see Aftret & Myhr, 1999; Ertesvåg, 2015; Gaasemyr & Døssland Nordre, 2017; Bakken, 2018; Simonsen, 2019). Low motivation may have serious consequences, where pupils lose motivation. In some cases, it may lead to pupils not completing upper secondary, thus not obtaining General Study competence. General Study competence is necessary to acquire an education. The Norwegian Storting issued a report on White Paper 22 (Ministry of Education and Research, 2012) that encompassed Motivation – Mastery – Opportunities in January 2012, cf. Instalment 145 S. White Paper 22 (Ministry of Education and Research, 2012) indicate that additional development is needed regarding the prominent diverse and inclusive school. Moreover, the necessity to advance in practical, relevant, and challenging fields is a prominent variable in increasing pupils' motivation and overall learning. The Norwegian Government offered three steps that will contribute to this. Firstly, the introduction of elective subjects that involve, among other things, more practical work. Lastly, increased flexibility in the distribution of subjects and hourly time spent on these subjects. Governance and jurisdiction among the OECD prompted the Norwegian Government to clarify which

expectations are set and prioritise measures of the education system to help better each school accomplish the set goals (Ministry of Education and Research, 2012).

Contrary, in more recent research, the pupils are still bored. White Paper 22 (Ministry of Education and Research, 2012) was issued in 2012, but according to Simonsen (2019), 50% of pupils in upper secondary schools are bored. Simonsen (2019) wrote a master thesis in 2019, using data already conducted from a project called "*Se videre*."<sup>8</sup> These are alarming numbers and may indicate a bigger apostasy in pupils completing upper secondary.

According to Strand (2019), this boredom might stem from the constant satisfaction today's young people experience with their smartphones. Finding the concentration and focus needed in school may be challenging when constant stimuli from social media and other entertainment channels are a habit. A report conducted by Statistics Norway (2021) found that 79,6% of all pupils completed Education Programme for Specialisation in General Studies (henceforth General Study specialisation) and Vocational Education Programme in the years 2014-2020 (Statistics Norway, 2021). That means that 20,4% dropped out and did not complete the upper secondary educational programme.

The Union of Education Norway is continuously researching better ways of teaching by implementing strategies and terms and exploring already known terms in different manners. Federici & Skaalvik (2015) stress that the teacher-pupil relationship holds a significant role in developing and preserving pupils' motivation and learning. Building relationships with pupils is not a new phenomenon in Norway. Multiple schools have this as one of their most significant focuses. Learning the ability to build valuable relationships with pupils is one of the first things a teacher trainee learns in teaching practice. Building relationships with the pupils is invaluable in a teaching position. Pupils' motivation and learning outcomes are directly interrelated with the relationship between teacher-pupil and may have significant importance for pupils' perception of their everyday school life (Federici & Skaalvik, 2015; Bakken, 2018). According to Federici & Skaalvik (2015), positive teacher-pupil relationships are dependent on the teacher showing emotional support in combination with instrumental support. They will offer higher tendencies of positive motivation and learning outcome conditions.

It became evident that a good teacher-pupil relationship was necessary, but a pupil-pupil relationship is equally important. The classroom is a social system that sets the premises for

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<sup>8</sup> «*Se videre*» is an ongoing project that researches pupils' experiences regarding their learning environment. The variables researched are, among other things, how the learning environment affects pupils' motivation, mental health, and ability to complete upper secondary education. The project is led by Edvin Bru and is conducted by the University of Stavanger. Preliminary findings can be found in Simonsen, 2019.

pupils' development and learning, mutually in terms of social premises and academic premises (Nordahl, Flygare & Drugli, 2016). The relationship between teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil can be compared to the concept of 'you reap as you sow', meaning that the respect, kindness, inclusion, and courtesy you exercise as a teacher, will be what you get in return from your pupils (Nordahl, Flygare & Drugli, 2016). Nordahl, Flygare & Drugli (2016) also found that the teacher is an important role model in how the pupils treat each other. Respectful and inclusive teachers will help their pupils fundamentally in positive interaction with each other, which will also help with their motivation.

Another key term in education is the term recognition which correlates to *Fagfornyelsen*. Recognition is a fundamental basic psychological need and is, therefore, a crucial part of every pupil's life (Jordet, 2020). As mentioned in chapter 2.3.4., *Fagfornyelsen* is the Norwegian school's take on enhancing the core values present in today's educational system. *Fagfornyelsen* intends to better equip pupils for life itself, and general recognition is a fundamental step in the correct direction. Motivation<sup>9</sup> The Norwegian educational system is alarmingly low, which correlates to more and more pupils struggling academically and socially in school (Bakken, 2018; Jordet, 2020; OsloMet, n.d.). Pupils that struggle lose motivation, and the appeal to attend school decreases, which leads to high dropout rates in upper secondary, where one in every fourth pupil has not completed the upper secondary educational programme after five years (Bakken, 2018; NDET, 2019; Jordet, 2020). Jordet (2020) asserts that this problem stems from the school's educational traditions, where the schools, to a large extent, mainly circle passive and deskbound activities. The factors mentioned construct the pupils to "become passive recipients of handed down knowledge". Furthermore, Lillejord, Børte & Nesje (2018) acknowledge that pupils being "passive recipients of handed down knowledge" (Jordet, 2020) amplifies the decrease in pupils' desire to learn and be motivated. The educational system has been centred around being taught, where the pupils are expected to follow teaching plans and activities determined by the teacher or others authorised at the school (Jordet, 2020). The school is supposed to be an arena "where the pupils can learn to master life and become participants in the working community and society." (Jordet, 2020). Jordet (2020) concludes that the school's processes, practice, and thinking must be challenged and changed so that the educational system can support pupils' self-realising and dynamic nature. The pupils must feel growth in all areas

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<sup>9</sup> Motivation is one of the factors investigated yearly in the national survey called *Ungdata*.

and be recognised to muster the motivation to become active participants in their educational course and life.

### 3. Methodology

Research designs are procedures for collecting, analysing, interpreting, and reporting data in research studies. Research is, according to Creswell (2014, p. 17), "a process of steps used to collect and analyse information to increase our understanding of a topic or issue". Due to the limited research available and to help address the deficiency revolving around the English elective subject, the need to do an empirical study was present. Since the primary point of interest in this thesis is to investigate English in upper secondary, specifically, the continuous deficiency of pupils choosing English as one of their elective subjects, it was necessary conduct and collect new data on the topic. To properly investigate the continuous deficiency, the most resourceful, appropriate, and suitable choice was to give the pupils a voice. It is the pupils who make up the deficit, and therefore it was clear that they needed to be the point of research. The research questions allow the thesis to stay focused and provide a path through the research and writing process. Therefore, research questions have a complex purpose, and it is therefore necessary to apply them in the contexts of this chapter.

The research questions were:

- How does the pupils' beliefs and attitudes reflect upon the English elective subjects?
- What role does gender play in the choice of elective subject?
- In what manner does the pupils feel equipped for higher education, society and working life?

The data collected was stratified by gender, which was therefore a measure in investigating the pupils' experiences and perceptions. The first research question functioned by means of investigating three main variables. These variables were influence by others when choosing elective subjects, experiences with the English subjects, and motivation for learning more English. The second research question considered gender and investigated whether there was a difference between the sexes on influence by others when choosing elective subjects, experiences with the English subjects, and motivation for learning more English. The third research question investigated whether the pupils felt fully equipped for higher education, society and working life in terms of English knowledge.

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### 3.1.1 The quantitative approach

Since the primary objective is to investigate the pupils, their notion of the English subject, and the lack of previous research, the most suitable method was quantitative research. As Creswell (2015) puts it, "In quantitative research ... the research problem can be answered best by a study in which the researcher seeks to establish the overall tendency of responses from individuals and note how this tendency varies among people" (p. 13). As seen in the quote above, quantitative research allows to establish overall tendency and to see how this tendency varies among the people researched. To examine overall tendency of pupils in upper secondary, and how the tendency varied among those pupils, conducting a questionnaire was the best option to obtain a representative view of the pupils' opinion. There are six major characteristics of quantitative research (Creswell, 2015, p. 13). The quantitative approach allows the investigator or researcher to identify, describe, and analyse research problems using the description of trends, a need to explain the relationship among variables, or why something occurs (*ibid.*). Additionally, literature presents a significant role in the thesis as important as the quantifiable data (*ibid.*). Literature allows for justifying the need for the research problem and suggesting potential purposes and research questions for the study (*ibid.*). Moreover, having research questions, hypotheses and purpose statements that are specific, narrow, measurable, and observable is essential (*ibid.*). However, research problems require that the researcher to explain how one variable affects another. These variables are attributes, such as attitudes, or characteristics of individuals, for instance, gender, that the researcher studies. Variables in quantitative research are interesting and important because the relationship between these variables help determine whether one or more variable might influence the other (*ibid.*). Therefore, the quantitative questionnaire will consequently allow to compare, contrast, and interpret previous research on English as an elective in the educational system. Because the wish to elaborate on some questions was present, it became apparent that using semi-closed questionnaires would be the best solution. Therefore, the data was collected using a semi-closed questionnaire—more on semi-closed questionnaire in chapter 3.2.1. The research design applied to this thesis is a survey design described in Creswell (2015), Creswell & Creswell (2018), and Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2018).

### 3.1.2 The survey design

Educational research methods mean to be descriptive because they wish to describe and interpret what is (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2018, p. 334). Surveys are typically used to "gather data at a particular point to describe the nature of existing conditions, identify standards against which existing conditions can compare, or determine the relationships between specific events." (ibid.). The survey is a widely used instrument for data collecting and offers the benefits of standardised and open responses from the sample population (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018, p. 471). Survey research designs use quantitative research to investigate the attitudes, opinions, behaviours, or characteristics of the population (Creswell, 2015, p. 379). Therefore, the survey design withholds strengths that is essential for the research problem in this thesis. Furthermore, survey research "... help identify important beliefs and attitudes of individuals, ... [and] provide useful information to evaluate programs in schools ..." (Creswell, 2015, p. 376). The overarching aim of the thesis is exactly that, to identify pupils' beliefs, attitudes, and notion of the English subject in upper secondary school. Survey research thus allows the researcher to precisely identify and investigate, and functions as a tool of evaluation.

When applying a specific design to research, it is important to justify the choices made. According to Creswell (2015)), "... survey researchers collect quantitative, numbered data using questionnaires (e.g., mailed questionnaires) or interviews (e.g., one-on-one interviews) and statistically analyse the data to describe trends about responses to questions and to test research questions or hypotheses." (p. 379). The important difference between survey research and other experimental research is that survey studies describe and research trends in data and, therefore, cannot explain cause and effect in the same manner as other experimental research (ibid). Although survey design has some limits ascribing cause and effect, it is nevertheless valuable considering that the point of interest is the beliefs and attitudes of pupils. As such, despite its apparent limitations, survey design is a vital tool in acquiring pupils' notion, attitudes, and beliefs of the English elective subject.

Creswell & Creswell (2018, p. 207) state that the survey design allows for a quantifiable description by studying a sample of the chosen population. Explicitly, it allows a more significant analysis of the chosen population's various trends, attitudes, and opinions. It may also test for diverse associations among distinctive population variables (ibid.). To accurately analyse and study the pupils' attitudes and notions of the English elective subjects, variables were set in place. These variables, such as gender and educational



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programme, functioned as means to specify and deduce each answer. This was done to diligently allow for a significant analysis of importance. Moreover, survey designs help researchers answer three main types of questions. These are "(a) descriptive questions ... ;(b) questions about the relationships between variables ... ;(c) questions about predictive relationships between variables over time ..." (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 207). Detailed description of each type of question used and their purposes in section 3.3.1. In survey research,

[the] quantitative description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a population sample. It includes cross-sectional and longitudinal studies using questionnaires or structured interviews for data collection to generalise from a sample to a population.

(Creswell, 2015, p. 50).

The survey designs have applied various approaches throughout time. However, there are only two basic types of research surveys (Creswell, 2015, p. 380). These two are the cross-sectional survey design and the longitudinal survey design (Creswell, 2015, pp. 380-381). The longitudinal survey design uses correlational research that allow the researcher to observe and collect data over time. Longitudinal studies collect data on a number of variables but does not try to effect change. The cross-sectional survey design collects data from different individuals at the same point in time. The survey design used for this thesis was therefore the cross-sectional survey design.

### **3.1.3 The cross-sectional survey design**

The cross-sectional design is the most popular form of survey design used in education (Creswell, 2015, p. 380). In this design, the data is being collected and studied at one point in time. The design provides information in a short amount of time and allows for measuring current attitudes or practices. Cross-sectional designs vary in type and execution. One type focuses on comparing two or more educational groups regarding attitudes, beliefs, opinions, or practices. These variables, attitudes, beliefs, and opinions are how individuals think about issues, while practices are the population sample's actual behaviours (Creswell, 2015, pp. 380-381). This type of cross-sectional design is the most appropriate for the aims of this thesis. The cross-sectional survey design collects data to study and interferences with a population of interest. In this case, the point of interest is the pupils' attitudes, beliefs, and practices. The purpose of researching attitudes is to investigate the pupils' notion of the

English subject, including the compulsory English subject, but mainly focusing on the English elective subject in upper secondary schools. Investigating the pupils' beliefs and practices withholds some of the same interest, but it is equally interesting to investigate why the pupils have chosen the elective subjects that they did. Therefore, the cross-sectional type that focuses on studying and examining the current attitudes, beliefs, opinions, or practices of a population sample is the most suitable and appropriate for the purpose and aims of this thesis, as the thesis seeks to investigate the pupils' notion of the English subject – rather than comparing the two schools. Additionally, it is interesting to allow the pupils to explain why they made their decisions regarding elective subjects. Lastly, pupil participation is one of the key factors in Norwegian education, and it was crucial to ask the pupils whether they felt the elective subjects presented to them were limiting. Based on these factors, the cross-sectional survey design focused on studying and examining the data deemed the most appropriate design for the thesis and its scope.

### 3.1.4 Validity and reliability in quantitative survey research

As with other key terms in research, validity and reliability have numerous definitions and meanings. A general definition of validity refers to how a concept is accurately measured (Creswell, 2015, p. 158). Validity is, therefore, the degree to which all the evidence points to the intended interpretation of the proposed purpose (ibid). Considering validity in terms of data collection tools when conducting research is important. There are three main types of validity in quantitative research. See Table 1.5. below.

#### TYPES OF VALIDITY

<i>CONTENT VALIDITY</i>	The extent to which a research instrument accurately measures all aspects of a construct.
<i>CONSTRUCT VALIDITY</i>	The extent to which a research instrument (or tool) measures the intended construct.
<i>PREDICTIVE OR CONCURRENT VALIDITY</i>	The extent to which a research instrument is related to other instrument that measure the same variables.

Table 1.5. on types of validity. (Adapted from Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 215)

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The first measure of validity is content validity. Content validity refers to whether the instrument adequately covers all content that it should with the respect to the variable. Content validity confirms whether the items measure the content they were intended to measure. For this thesis, the items of measure associates to the population sample and data collection tool. Construct validity is also called quantitative validity and is the measure of validity that is mostly used with quantitative research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 318). Construct validity corroborates if the items measure hypothetical construct or concepts and focuses on whether “the scores serve a useful purpose and have positive consequences when they are used in practice” (Humbley & Zumbo, 1996, in Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 215). The findings from the data collected cannot be practiced per se, but they can be measured and serves a useful purpose regarding the English subject in Norwegian upper secondary school. The last measure of validity concerns whether the results from the data correlate with other results or findings and is called predictive or concurrent validity. Concurrent validity serves to predict a criterion measure of scores. The findings correlate with the consistent decrease in English as an elective subject, and the literature review also support and emphasises the data and its extent.

There are, according to Belson (1986, in Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018, p. 277), two ways of measuring validity in a questionnaire. The first threat to validity revolves around the respondents, and whether they complete the questionnaire accurately, honestly, and correctly. The second threat to validity concerns those respondents that do not return their questionnaires, and if their answers would have given the same distribution of answers (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018, p. 277). Fowler (2014, pp. 1-5) exemplifies validity in factual reporting, and how respondents are under-reporting their answers. Additionally, the validity of the respondents not understanding or comprehending the questions asked is an important factor. It is therefore, according to Fowler (2014), important to write unambiguous questions, questions that are easily understood, and to insert measures that will make it less probable of happening.

Hudson & Miller (1997, in Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018, p. 278) suggest several strategies to maximize the response rate of the questionnaire, and thereby increasing its reliability. Some of these strategies involve:

...

- *stressing the importance and benefits of the questionnaire;*

- *features of the questionnaire (ease of completion, time spent, sensitivity of the questions asked, length of the questionnaire);*
- *understanding the nature of the sample population in depth, so that effective targeting strategies can be used;*

...

*Hudson & Miller, 1997 in Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018, p. 278*

External validity threats appear when researchers draw incorrect inferences from the data to other persons, settings, or other situations (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 244). This means, that “threats to external validity arise when the researcher generalizes beyond the groups in the experiment to other racial or social groups not under study, to settings not examined, or to past or future situations.” (ibid). Other possible threats of validity are threats to statistical conclusion, and concerns “inaccurate inferences from the data due to inadequate statistical power or the violation of statistical assumptions.” (ibid.). External reliability relates to the replication of studies. Since this thesis investigates pupils’ experiences and perceptions about English as an elective, the issue of replication is not present; the research problem is applicable to various types of future research. Internal validity measures to which extent the results found in the study is truthful. To address internal reliability in the data collected, the pupils were asked about motivation and interest in English as a subject. Therefore, they may not be ‘counted’ as motivation and interests may change. However, the pupils researched have learned English through the old curriculum. Due to the fact the curriculum is newly revised, the outcome of a future study based on the same methodology or research issue, may be different. This is an interesting future research topic and can evaluate the newly revised curriculum to investigate whether there is an actual change in English as an elective in upper secondary school. This will be discussed at greater length in chapter 5.

### **3.1.5 Advantages and disadvantages of quantitative survey design**

The survey research design has many advantages and is a widely used research method (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018, p. 334). The survey has several characteristics and can be used to investigate large samples to measure or describe any generalized features. Creswell (2015, pp. 384-385) defines four key survey design characteristics. The first characteristic revolves around sampling from a population. The survey allows the researcher to select and study a sample population and generalize results from the sample to the

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researched population (Creswell, 2015, pp. 384-385). The second characteristic relates to data collection. Survey design allows collecting data using questionnaires or interviews (Creswell, 2015, pp. 384-385). The third characteristic allows the researcher to design the instruments for data collection (Creswell, 2015, pp. 384-385). There are many available survey instruments to measure the needed variables. The researcher can choose to create their instrument or modify an existing instrument. Designing the instrument necessary for each research problem is a vital tool in many research studies and certainly was for this thesis. The last characteristic of the survey design is the simplicity of obtaining a high response rate (Creswell, 2015, pp. 384-385). High response rates from the chosen population are vital, and survey researchers pursue high response rates to apply the results to the population under study confidently.

Additionally, OECD (2012, in Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018, p. 334) and Dillman et al. (2014, in Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018, p. 334) list multiple other characteristics of the survey design that proves the research method as applicable. The data collection is economical and efficient, and it generates numerical data that can be processed statistically. Additionally, the survey design provides descriptive, inferential, and explanatory information. It allows for ascertaining correlations (e.g., to find out if there is any relationship between gender and test scores) and gathers standardized information. The survey design withholds many more characteristics, but the characteristics mentioned are the best suited for the scope of this thesis.

There are a few disadvantages associated with the survey design. Fowler (2014, p. 10) states that the survey design is not personal, which may lead the respondents to respond differently through interviews. This disadvantage, or limitation, may have given a different outcome of the data if the thesis had been conducted with the original, initial mixed-method format. In order to mitigate this disadvantage, a series of open-ended questions were included. These serve as means to allow the pupils to elaborate on questions more precisely and could therefore give a different outcome of the findings. The open-ended questions served as means to allow the pupils to elaborate. Additionally, the validity rate may be lowered by only including close-ended questions—more on the choice of questions in section 3.3.1 and open-ended questions in sections 3.3.1 and 3.3.4. Other limitations of the survey design that apply to the thesis involve misinforming and poorly written questions. The questionnaire went through several rounds of editing and one round of pilot on fellow students to remove possible ambiguous, misleading, and poorly written questions. Additionally, in each question that may include difficult words, sentences, or terminology that the pupils did not

understand, a definition or explanation was given to ensure that this would not be a problem. Next, the survey design depends on willing respondents. Fowler (2014) writes about this and exemplifies factual reporting and the outcome of respondents under-reporting their answers (pp. 1-5). Therefore, the respondents can be a limitation or weakness of the research design. If the respondents do not feel encouraged to provide accurate, honest answers, the outcome of the findings risk validity of the study. Furthermore, ensuring that the respondents are comfortable answering the questions is very important and, if not done correctly, may lead to what Fowler (2014) describes as non-factual reporting (pp. 1-5). Data errors due to questions with few or no responses can limit the survey design. All questions were obligatory to ensure that data errors did not limit the questionnaire. Lastly, answer options could lead to unclear data, as the respondents may interpret specific answer options differently. This limitation is centred explicitly around residual categories as an answering option. The weakness of this specific limitation depends on the researcher and how the researcher analyses them. Residual categories may give unspecified responses, and some researchers chose not to have them in their questionnaires. The downside of not including answer options such as “I do not know” may prompt respondents to tick other options and thereby give a false or untruthful response, thus risking validity. Therefore, residual categories were included in the questionnaire to ensure that the respondents gave truthful answers. If the respondents felt the need to elaborate on questions with residual categories, they were allowed to do so multiple times.

### **3.1.6 Ethical considerations in quantitative research**

There are general ethical considerations involved when conducting research with human participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 57). The researcher needs to be considerate of ethical questions throughout the research process. The research design has, according to Farrimond (2013, in Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018), an ethical duty to demonstrate quality (p. 121). Hammersly & Traianou (2012, in Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018) argue that research ethics does not only revolve around researchers treating people correctly, hereunder procedural matters such as rights, interest and duties, but also about the ‘primary obligation’ (p. 121). The ‘primary obligation’ includes answering worthwhile questions, and pursuing, producing, and to test and defend factual knowledge (ibid.). Moreover, when conducting research, the researcher should make a significant, relevant contribution to knowledge (ibid.). Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2018) disputed that ensuring the quality regarding ethics in educational research is important (p. 121). This encompasses a range of

reasons, seeing as the quality of research may affect those involved negatively. It is therefore important to be transparent with each participant, by informing them of their rights, as well as being truthful about the research' purpose. In quantitative research, and specifically questionnaires, there are multiple ethical considerations to be made. As mentioned in the first paragraph of this subchapter, the necessity of a researcher's transparency and authenticity is utmost essential. Questionnaire respondents are not passive data providers, contrary, they are subjects of research (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018, p. 471). Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2018) list the ethical considerations of respondents in questionnaires (pp. 471-472). Not all ethical considerations are applicable for the scope of this survey, but the ones who are will be outlined. Providing voluntary consent is essential to obtain an informed consent because it means the respondents are providing their consent voluntarily (ibid). Respondents may withdraw their responses at any time or decide not to complete certain sections of the questionnaire (ibid). A study such as this may have the possibility of positively impacting the respondents' situation, or that of subsequent pupils and refers to the issue of beneficence. In order to guarantee non-maleficence, assurance must be given that the research will not harm the respondents (ibid). There must be guarantees regarding confidentiality, anonymity, and non-traceability of research participants (ibid). Moreover, there is a risk that respondents may overstate or understate their responses (depending upon the level of threat and the level of sensitivity of the question posed. There are many factors to consider, including the questionnaire itself; for instance, avoiding bias, guaranteeing validity and reliability, and ensuring fairness and impartiality in the questionnaire (ibid). There is also the question of how respondents will react to the research. In most cases, individuals will express strong reactions if they believe something is offensive, intruding, misleading, biased, misguided, infuriating, inconsiderate, impertinent, or obscure. The ethical issues regarding questionnaires as mentioned are all considerations the researcher needs to make. They are in place to ensure that ethical issues, validity, reliability, authenticity, and transparency are in place of the research project. These considerations have been made and are touched upon in chapter 3.2.

## 3.2 Material and instrumentation

The quantitative data collection will be based on an initial questionnaire form, which consists of twelve (12) main questions. However, with subsequent questions, depending on

what the respondents answer, there is a total of twenty-two (22) questions. Some of the questions asked have follow-up questions with varying sequels depending on previous answers. The nature of the questionnaire is closed. However, due to the questionnaire being conducted in two different schools, some questions have textboxes. The reasoning behind this is that the schools may not have the same elective subjects; therefore, the pupils were asked to write their chosen subjects. Furthermore, there was a desire to see if there is a correlation between multilingual pupils and their thoughts regarding English. Consequently, multilingual students were asked to write in the language they identified with or grew up speaking. At the end of the survey, there was an open box where the pupils had the choice to write more if they felt the need to do so. Some pupils elaborated on their choices throughout the survey, while others did not. In addition, those students who elaborated provided valuable suggestions or comments that contributed to the change in statistical results.

### **3.2.1 The informants, population and sampling**

In terms of units of analysis or population studied, the thesis focuses on the specifics within that unit. The unit was singled out for research regarding place, two different upper secondary schools, and a maximum of one hundred (100) general study pupils. The process resulted in four (4) general study (studiespesialisering) classes, two in each school, which varied in the number of pupils. The research is conducted and analysed based on theoretical presumptions described in Chapters 1 and 2. The same research approach was applied to each of the two classes.

As mentioned above, the study was conducted in two different upper secondary schools. When initiating the sampling design, the thought process revolved around a 'multistage sampling procedure', called clustering, hereunder described in Creswell & Creswell (2018), "in a multistage or clustering procedure, the researcher first identifies clusters (groups or organisations), obtains names of individuals within those clusters, and then samples within them" (p. 212). The process when selecting participants for sampling was at times complex. The samples, i.e., the schools, should ideally be drawn randomly, meaning each individual or group had an equal probability of being selected (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 212). As previously mentioned, the thesis aimed for a representative selection from schools in the same county municipality. Representative selection meant that the search for participants was down-scaled quite drastically. Moreover, in terms of representativity, the wish was that the participating schools were not located within the same municipality. Before starting the



research for this thesis, having difficulties getting participants was not a concern. Participants turned out to be one of the biggest obstacles and limitations of the thesis. According to Fowler (2014) the importance of good sampling is to give all population members the same chance of being selected (p. 4). This is done by using probability methods, which refers to selecting a sample from a population based on the principle of randomisation (Fowler, 2014, pp. 4-5). Probability sampling ensures that the presented sample is accurately representative of the real-life population of interest. This turned out to be difficult to enforce when collecting quantitative data for this thesis. The preliminary thought was to draw random schools located within the same county municipality to obtain the most representative outcome. This was done by sending email invitations to schools and school leaders to complete the questionnaire. Sampling in this manner failed greatly, where no schools or school leaders replied to the email. This prompted a new way of sampling, leaving the probability sampling behind. After struggling to obtain participating public schools, the urgent need to sample differently became apparent. The process of sending out emails functioned as means to randomise the participants. Instead of drawing random samples through emails, the only way to obtain enough participants was to call each public school within the county municipality and ask if they wanted to participate. The last public school on the call list agreed to participate. Attaining a participating private school was not a problem and was already cleared for participation at the very beginning of the thesis. The official invite to participate in the study and questionnaire was sent by email as a means of professionalism. See Appendix 3. This method of sampling, nonprobability sample or convenience sample, is less desirable but often used (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 212). The population, or classes, will remain anonymous. In the nonprobability sample, the respondents are chosen based on their convenience and availability, which was the circumstance for this sampling design.

### **3.2.2 Participating schools**

When applying the survey design approach, the main goal was to conduct a questionnaire on one hundred (100) general study pupils. Furthermore, the aim was to conduct the questionnaire representatively. Thus, the questionnaire was conducted in two different schools. The schools are not geographically close but lie within the same county municipality. Additionally, the questionnaire was conducted on one public school and one private school. A fee is needed to be paid to attend the private school.

There were 188 214 pupils in Upper secondary school within the schoolyear 2020-2021 (Statistics Norway, 2021). These pupils were divided onto 415 different schools. The number includes pupils attending private schools. The number of private schools is increasing, and in 2019-2020, out of 253 newly founded schools, 140, or 55% of these, were private (Mejlbo, 2020). The student number in private schools are almost doubled in the last 17 years. In 2001, 8300 pupils were attending private schools, whereas, in 2018, 15300 pupils attended private schools. This means that 15% of all pupils in Upper Secondary attend private schools. There is a strong political disagreement revolving around the high number of private schools. This is elaborated on in chapters 3.3.2 and 3.2.4. Since many students attend private schools, it was desired to include one private school in the research project to obtain the most representative results.

### **3.2.3 Public school**

Education in Norway is compulsory and free for children and teens between 6 and 16. All young people between the ages of 16 and 19 have a statutory right to three years of upper secondary education. According to Thune, Reisegg & Askheim (n.d.), this educational program shall result in general study competence, vocational competence, or partial competence. The county municipality encompasses a statutory duty to follow up with young people between the ages of 16 and 19 who are not in educational programs or young people who are working. Norway has a unified upper secondary school with coordinated general education and vocational training. Upper secondary education is organised in twelve different study preparation and vocational education programs (Thune, Reisegg, Askheim (n.d.)). The upper secondary program investigated in this thesis is the general study program. The participating public school researched in this thesis is a relatively large upper secondary school with approximately 500 pupils divided into eight program areas. The questionnaire was conducted in two general study classes. However, due to the Covid-19 outbreak and restrictions, not all pupils were present on the visit day. This led to 25 out of 45 pupils answering the questionnaire. Of these 25 pupils, 12 were girls, and 13 were boys. This is further elaborated on in chapter 4.

### 3.2.4 Private school

A strong political disagreement exists regarding the high number of private schools, as discussed in chapter 3.2.2. Those who are optimistic about the change in the number of private schools argue that publicly financed private schools contribute to increased diversity in the educational offer and more significant choices for each pupil. Those on the other side, who are greatly critical of the development, highlight that the financing of said private schools reduce the much-needed financing for public schools (NDET, n.d.) Some areas of Norway have seen a large number of private schools open, which has adversely impacted the public schools in these areas. The primary purpose of opening private schools was to supplement the public schools, but this has resulted in the closing of all public schools (NDET, n.d.). According to The Norwegian Educational Directorate (NDET, n.d.), the establishment of new private schools in bigger cities may have negative consequences on behalf of public schools in smaller districts. The Norwegian Government approved a new law in 2015 that allowed private schools to acquire stately funding. The private schools, prior to this, were solemnly dependent on tuition fees and parental support. The Norwegian Educational Directorate expressed concern for the law that the decrease in funding for public schools would give said schools a poorer offer and reduced choices in subjects (NDET, n.d.). While there is a relatively high number of private schools in Norway, it is not difficult to obtain enough information to reveal which private school the questionnaire was administered to. Due to the ethical aspects and anonymity set in place and promised for each participating school, safeguarding each pupil for their answers given and further investigation, there will be very little information given about this particular private school. A total of 44 general study pupils answered the survey, where out of these 44 pupils, 20 were girls and 24 were boys. The school is located within the same county municipality as the public school. According to the private school leader, the interest in English elective subjects was too low, and they decided to remove the English elective subjects from the elective subject pool. However, according to the pupils' answers, the interest in the English elective was present. This is discussed in chapter 4.

### 3.2.5 Data collection

The only acceptable instrument to gather data when researching at the Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences when personal information is collected is *Nettskjema*.

*Nettskjema* is a net-based tool for designing, managing, and collecting data. The solution is flexible and can be used for different types of surveys and data capture (UIO, 2021).

*Nettskjema* is developed and operated by the University in Oslo's (UIO) Center for Information and Technology (USIT). The Personal Data Act sets requirements for internal control and assessment of Information Security (informasjonssikkerhet) for systems that contain personal information (UIO, 2021). *Nettskjema* is subject to this act, and all personal information is encrypted and securely stored PGP-encrypted in USIT's Services for Sensitive Data (UIO, 2021). Moreover, firms can be set up with Public Key and will be delivered fully encrypted through *Nettskjema*'s secure storage area (UIO, 2021). Each responders IP address is stored in the system log, but these IP addresses will by no means be connected to single answers (UIO, 2021). The security ensures that *Nettskjema* as an IT solution can be used for anonymous surveys following guidelines from NSD, the Norwegian Center for Research Data (UIO, 2021).

NSD's guidelines for online surveys are as following:

*“If you are collecting data through online surveys, the following aspects triggers a duty to notify if:*

- *the questionnaire contains information that can identify individuals directly or indirectly*

*and/or*

- *questionnaires, at some point in the process, are linked to identifying information about the respondent (i.e., IP-address, email address, cookies, browser information or alike)”*

(My translation, NSD, n.d.)

Because the questionnaire was conducted online, identifying information about the participants were present through IP-address. Therefore, ethical considerations about the respondent's anonymity were set in place, to ensure that the pupils were to remain anonymous. This was done by using UIO's *Nettskjema*, which, as mentioned in the

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paragraph above, is a secure data-collecting tool. This study and the methods employed have been approved by NSD, see Appendix 1.

### 3.3 The questionnaire

All four classes answered the same questionnaire. As previously stated, the questionnaires were anonymous, and the pupils were granted an HTTP link to access the questionnaire. The respondents received an information letter before agreeing to participate in the research project. Additionally, before starting the questionnaire, the respondents were, once again, informed about the project, what rights they have, and that the project was confidential and anonymous. The information letter given to each respondent can be read in Appendix 2. The information disclosed at the beginning of the questionnaire will be translated from Norwegian and inserted below:

*“It is voluntary to participate in the project, and you may, at any point, choose to withdraw your participation from the project. Your answers from the questionnaire will be registered electronically but will be kept confidential and are of course anonymous. The purpose of this questionnaire is to investigate which factors influence pupils to choose other elective subjects over English. This involves, among other things, examining motivation for the English subject, influence from teachers, parents and others, experiences with the subject from school, and lastly, general interest in English. It is important to note that the answers in this questionnaire will be kept undisclosed, and I am the only one who have access to the answers in the questionnaire. This means that teachers, or others, do not have access to your answers.”*

(Information about the questionnaire for participants)

An introduction like such substantiates the measures put in place to ensure transparency, authenticity, validity, and reliability to ensure that ethical considerations are constantly taken seriously. The purpose of this was to respect the respondents' rights as subjects of research, particularly confidentiality, anonymity, and non-traceability. Additionally, the questionnaire was conducted in Norwegian. Firstly, it was easier for the pupils to express themselves in their own native language fully. In addition, the study did not want to include issues such as miscommunication, misunderstandings, or linguistic barriers. The native language aspect allowed all pupils to express their opinions and thoughts fully. Additionally, the more

complex questions were clearly defined so that the respondents understood what was being asked of them. These measures aimed to ensure that the variable of misunderstanding would be marginal.

In some form or another, the researcher was present while the pupils completed the questionnaire. As a result of Covid-19 making the survey challenging to conduct, one of the schools administered the questionnaire through Teams. The four General Study classes investigated roughly estimated 114 pupils. A total of 69 responses were received. Most of those 69 answers came from private schools. As a result of an outbreak of Covid-19 at the public school during the visit, only 25 out of 55 pupils were present. Although the questionnaire was voluntary, the students' enthusiastic responses when asked to participate in a research project make one wonder if there would have been a difference in the outcome of the survey if all students had been present. The difference in outcome due to participants is also known as response bias<sup>10</sup> (Fowler, 2014, in Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 218). After conducting the questionnaires in each class, the response rate was 100% of the pupils present. None of the pupils has withdrawn their answers after the fact, so the answers to the questionnaire are plenary.

The layout of the questionnaire was semi-structured. Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2018) describe three layouts of a questionnaire and have a 'simple rule of thumb; the bigger the sample size, the more structured questionnaires (p. 478). The sample size for this research is relatively small, approaching medium-range, and semi-structured questionnaires allow for smaller sample sizes, and comprehensively analyse and support answers (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018, p. 473-5). Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2018) describe the semi-structured questionnaire as a 'powerful tool' that provides a series of statements, items, or questions to answer, comment or respond to as the respondents wish (p. 475). The agenda is set when using a semi-closed questionnaire, but it does not presuppose the nature of the response (ibid.). When creating a questionnaire, there are several kinds of question- and response modes that determine the structure of the questionnaire (ibid.). These range from dichotomous, multiple-choice, rating scales, constant sum, ratio data, and open-ended questions (ibid.). The considerations of these different modes are measured by Wilson (1996, in Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018) and are presented as such:

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<sup>10</sup>. 'Response bias' is the effect of nonresponses on survey estimates (Fowler, 2014, in Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 212)

“Questions must be straightforwardly presented, comprehensible at first glance, concrete, specific, unambiguous, and able to be answered, which means that assumptions are made that: (a) the respondents know the answers and have an opinion; (b) the demand and effort placed upon them are not too great, and they can articulate their response; (c) their recollection and memory are reliable and so on.” (p. 475).

(Considerations when creating questions for questionnaires expressed by Wilson 1996, in Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018, p. 475)

Below is Table 3.1, which identifies the different types of questions and their level of data (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018, p. 476).

<i>QUESTION TYPE</i>	<i>LEVEL OF DATA</i>
Dichotomous questions	Nominal
Multiple choice questions	Nominal
Rank ordering	Ordinal
Rating scales	Ordinal
Constant sum questions	Ordinal
Ratio data questions	Ratio
Open-ended questions	Word-based data

*Table 3.1. on question types used in questionnaires*

*(Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018, p. 475)*

### **3.3.1 The types of questions used in the questionnaire**

The questionnaire went through multiple rounds of modification to be presented without bias and ambiguity and for the questions to be straightforward, comprehensible, concrete, and specific. There are three kinds of questions present in the questionnaire. These are open-ended questions, dichotomous questions, and multiple-choice questions. The latter amounts to the variety of the questions asked; thirteen (13) were multiple-choice questions, three (3)

were open-ended, and eight (8) were dichotomous questions. There is a need for complexity with a complex research problem, such as English as an elective, and the questionnaire, therefore, consists mainly of multiple-choice questions.

When creating the layout for the questionnaire, the wish was to 'ease' the respondents into the more difficult questions. Creating the layout as such was done to ensure that the pupils would not get staggered or stunned by 'heavy' questions at the beginning. In addition, it served as a means of stratification in that the respondents were grouped based on the different variables of interest.

### 3.3.2 Dichotomous questions

Dichotomous questions are defined as: "*Dichotomous* questions have a 'yes/no' response, (...) and is useful, for it compels respondents to 'come off the fence' on an issue. It provides for a clear, unequivocal response (...) Dichotomous variables includes gender, type of school, type of course." (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018, p. 477). Dichotomous questions are treated as nominal data. This is because dichotomous questions rarely provide elaborative answers and yield fewer complex questions.

There was a total of eight (8) dichotomous questions. These were different in layout, where some of the dichotomous questions were used as follow up-questions, and others were used as a means of stratification (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 212).

#### **Spørsmål 1: Kjønn \***

Svar

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Jente

---

Gutt

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(Example 1.1. The dichotomous question in the questionnaire)

Question 1 (henceforth, Q1, Q2, and so forth) asked for the gender of the respondents. Due to the wish to stratify, this appeared as a natural first question.



## Spørsmål 2: Hvilken fordypning har du valgt på Vg2? \*

Svar

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Realfag

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Språk, samfunnsfag og økonomi

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(Example 1.2. The dichotomous question in the questionnaire)

Q2 asked for which specialisation the respondents chose in their second year of upper secondary. In each school researched, the options to choose from are the specialisation subject science (henceforth SSS), where the pupils can choose between subjects such as biology, physics, geology, information technology, chemistry, and calculus. The last option is specialising in language, social studies, and economics (henceforth LSE). Elective subjects to choose between in LSE ranges from law, psychology, history and philosophy, English, marketing management, social sciences, entrepreneurship and business development. This question was asked based on several variables. Firstly, to see if the hypothesis about limitations regarding the offer of subjects is correct. Secondly, to stratify the answers and see if there is a correlation between chosen subjects and motivation for English. Thirdly, to see which is the most popular choice for pupils and if there is a correlation between gender and choice of specialisation and higher education.

### Spørsmål 3: Kommer du fra et flerspråklig hjem? \*

Med *flerspråklig* menes det om du har vokst opp med to eller flere språk som du identifiserer deg med. Dette kan for eksempel være norsk og urdu eller tysk, polsk og vietnamesisk.

Det er viktig å presisere at du ikke trenger å være flytende i begge/alle språkene for at det regnes som flerspråklig!

Svar

---

Ja

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Nei

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(Example 1.3. The dichotomous question in the questionnaire)

Q3 was asked to investigate whether there is a correlation between multilingual homes and language learning. Do multilingual pupils choose English as an elective because languages come easy for them, or do they not choose English because they know enough languages? Those who responded "yes" were asked about the languages they knew or grew up with, in an open-ended follow-up question. Under Q3, there was a definition or explanation of the term 'multilingual'. Defining the term was done to decrease the possibility of misunderstanding.

**Spørsmål 4: Har du bodd eller tilbrakt lenger tid (mer enn seks måneder) i et annet land? \***Svar  
\_\_\_\_\_Ja  
\_\_\_\_\_Nei  
\_\_\_\_\_

(Example 3.4. The dichotomous question in the questionnaire)

Q4 was designed to investigate if respondents who had lived abroad for more than six months were more motivated to learn English and if these said respondents chose English as an elective as one of their subjects. This question is a continuation of Question 3.

**Spørsmål 8: Hadde du engelsk programfag på ungdomsskolen?**Svar  
\_\_\_\_\_Ja  
\_\_\_\_\_Nei  
\_\_\_\_\_

(Example 3.5. The dichotomous question in the questionnaire)

The purpose of Q8 was to investigate a correlation between pupils who had English programme subjects in lower secondary and pupils who chose English as an elective in upper secondary. This question was created to determine whether the hypothesis that the mixed implementation of English in lower secondary influences pupils to refrain from choosing English as an elective in the upper secondary is true.

Q8 had several subcategories of questions, which emerged depending on what the respondents previously answered on given questions. These will be listed below and might be confusing. Therefore, they will be grouped by the category of the previous question. The categories will be written as Q8B1 for category 1, Q8B2 for category 2, and so forth, and will be presented in dichotomous and multiple-choice questions. See Appendix 2 for the complete questionnaire. The point of view of the questionnaire available for the researcher is confusing, which is why sorting them by categories was made. Hence, the reader may understand the structure of the questionnaire more easily. To facilitate comprehension, each question, along with its rationale, is described in detail.

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**Spørsmål 8b: Har du valgt engelsk programfag på Vgs også?**Svar  
\_\_\_\_\_Ja  
\_\_\_\_\_Nei  
\_\_\_\_\_

(Example 3.6. The dichotomous question in the questionnaire)

Q8B1 was prompted to the respondents that ticked 'yes' in Q8. These respondents were asked if they chose English as an elective in upper secondary. The precursor to this question was a multiple-choice question asking what the respondents thought of English programme subjects in lower secondary. The post cursor to this question, depending on whether the respondents answered 'yes' or 'no', asked to what degree the English programme subject differed from the obligatory English teaching. For the respondents who answered 'no', they were asked a question about why they did not choose English as an elective in upper secondary. More on this in 3.4.1.2.

**Spørsmål 8a: Har du valgt engelsk programfag på Vgs?**Svar  
\_\_\_\_\_Ja  
\_\_\_\_\_Nei  
\_\_\_\_\_

(Example 3.7. The dichotomous question in the questionnaire)

The respondents that ticked 'no' in Q8 were asked if they chose English as an elective in upper secondary.

**Spørsmål 12: Gjør skolens fagtilbud det begrensende for deg å velge de valgfagene du vil? \***

*Det er forskjellige grunner til at man ikke nødvendigvis får velge de valgfagene man selv ønsker. Dette kan være ønske om høyere utdanning og krav, at skolen ikke kunne tilby disse valgfagene eller andre personlige grunner.*

Svar

---

Ja, de er begrensende. Jeg fikk ikke velge de valgfagene jeg ønsket

---

Nei, de er ikke begrensende. Jeg fikk velge de valgfagene jeg ønsket

---

(Example 3.8. The dichotomous question in the questionnaire)

The last dichotomous question, Q12, investigated whether the schools' offer of subjects was limiting. This was investigated to test the hypothesis about limitations for pupils and correlates to question Q2. Underneath the question, there were some examples of possible limitations. This was one of the most challenging questions to formulate, as the want not to interpret any bias on the respondents of the questionnaire was present. Some of the respondents chose to write something about these limitations in Q13, and these answers will be featured in chapters 4 and 5.

### 3.3.3 Multiple-choice questions

Multiple-choice questions opt to gain the complexity of a problem, where the range of choices is included and designed to include the likely range of responses to given statements (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018, p. 477). Multiple-choice questions are similar to dichotomous questions, seeing as they both are nominal and easy to quantify. Respondents may interpret the same words differently, where 'anchor statements', i.e., 'strongly agree, agree, and so forth, can be provided to allow a degree of discrimination in response and yield greater reliability (ibid.). Conversely, 'anchor statements' cannot guarantee that the respondents will interpret them in the intended way. When creating the questions for the questionnaire, the intent was to make them as understandable as possible by using easier terms and words so the pupils of upper secondary easily can comprehend and understand them. Champagne (2014, in Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018) disputes against the use of residual categories in multiple-choice questions, such as 'other' (p. 477). To elaborate, Champagne (ibid.) claims that residual categories may insult the respondent, suggesting that the researcher has not done satisfactory preparation work in identifying the likely types of response. This may lead to 'missing choices', which are essential to avoid.

**Spørsmål 5: Pleier du/dere å reise på utenlandsopphold? \***

*Dette kan være ferie, besøke slektninger og lignende.*

Svar

Ja, flere ganger per år

Ja, en gang per år

Ikke hvert år

Har aldri vært utenlands

Vet ikke

(Example 3.9. The multiple-choice question in a questionnaire containing residual categories)

Q5 was a precursor to questions about English motivation and investigated whether the respondents who travelled abroad were more, or less, motivated to learn more English.

**Spørsmål 6: Motivasjon for å lære engelsk \***

**På en skala fra 1-5, i hvilken grad vil du si at du er motivert for å lære mer engelsk?**

Svar

1. Svært umotivert

2. Umotivert

3. Hverken umotivert eller motivert

4. Motivert

5. Svært motivert

6. Ønsker ikke si

(Example 3.10. The multiple-choice question in a questionnaire containing residual categories)

Q6 asked the respondents how motivated they were to learn more English on a scale from one (1) to five (5). It was measured from "Very unmotivated" to "Very motivated".

The questionnaire created to collect data for this thesis includes residual categories in some questions. The questions do not include 'other' but rather 'do not wish to say and I do not know'. Q11 include the term 'other', but it will elicit another question asking the respondents to elaborate when ticked. Champagne (2014, in Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018) and Kroanick & Presser (2010, in Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018) argue that these residual

categories prompt the respondents as a means of satisficing (p. 481). Additionally, the residual categories may lead to ambivalence and problems understanding the question (ibid.). All questions in the questionnaire were mandatory to answer, and the residual categories were included due to the compulsory questions. The questions were made mandatory to answer so that the questionnaire would provide the information asked about. The pitfall of not using mandatory questions is that the respondents may oversee or miss crucial questions. This was not a variable that was desired in the data collected, so all questions were mandatory. Some may argue the ethical aspect, but the questionnaire was voluntary. Thus, if there were any questions that the respondents did not wish to answer, they could close the questionnaire. In hindsight, one of the questions that included residual category should have been phrased differently, as the answers given to this question are ambiguous. None of the respondents ticked the residual categories in other questions, where residual categories were a choice.

**Spørsmål 7a: Hvordan opplevde du den obligatoriske engelskundervisningen? \***

*Med obligatorisk menes det den undervisningen du må ha. Engelsk er obligatorisk i Norge fra 1.-trinn til første videregående.*

**På en skala fra 1-5, synes du at det du lærer i engelskundervisningen er nyttig for deg i hverdagen?**

Svar

1. Svært unyttig

2. Unyttig

3. Hverken nyttig eller unyttig

4. Nyttig

5. Svært nyttig

6. Ønsker ikke si

(Example 3.11. Multiple-choice question containing residual category in the questionnaire)

Q7A investigated how useful the respondents felt that the English they were taught in the obligatory English subject were in their everyday life. The 'obligatory English subject' was defined underneath the question to clarify what was asked. It was measured from 'Very useless' to 'Very useful' and included a residual category of 'Do not wish to elaborate'.

Q7B is a follow-up question for Q7A that investigates how interesting the respondents found the obligatory English subject.

Svar

1. Svært uinteressant
2. Uinteressant
3. Hverken interessant eller uinteressant
4. Interessant
5. Svært interessant
6. Ønsker ikke si

(Example 3.12. The multiple-choice question in the questionnaire containing residual category)

Q7B was measured from 'Very uninteresting' to 'Very interesting' and included a residual category of 'Do not wish to elaborate'.

### **Spørsmål 8a: Hva synes du om engelsk programfag på ungdomsskolen?**

Svar

1. Uinteressant
2. Litt uinteressant
3. Hverken uinteressant eller interessant
4. Litt interessant
5. Veldig interessant
6. Måtte velge noe
7. Ikke utfordrende nok til å være engelsk fordypning
8. Mer utfordrende enn jeg hadde trodd

(Example 3.13. The multiple-choice question in the questionnaire)

Q8A correlates to Q8, as mentioned above, and measures how the respondents that had English programme subject in lower secondary. It was measured from 'Uninteresting' to 'Very interesting' and two other categories, 'Not challenging enough to be an English programme subject' and 'More challenging than I had thought. The question allowed for multiple answers, where the respondents could tick off a maximum of three (3) answers.

**Spørsmål 8c: I hvilken grad vil du si at undervisningen i engelsk programfag er forskjellig fra undervisningen i den obligatoriske engelskundervisningen? \***

Svar

1. I liten/ingen grad

2. I noen grad

3. I ganske stor grad

4. I veldig stor grad

5. Vet ikke

(Example 3.14. The multiple-choice question in the questionnaire)

Q8C investigated to which degree the respondents had English programme subject in lower secondary and had chosen English as an elective in upper secondary thought the teaching was different from English elective subject to obligatory English in upper secondary. It was measured from 'In a small/no degree' to 'To a very large extent and included the residual category 'I do not know'.

**Spørsmål 8d: Hvorfor har du valgt engelsk programfag på Vgs? \***

Svar

1. Fordi jeg synes engelsk er spennende

2. Jeg ønsker å lære mer/fordype meg innen engelsk

3. Fordi det virker enkelt å få god karakter hvis man kan litt engelsk

4. Visste ikke hva jeg skulle velge

5. Påvirkning av venner/familie

6. Læreren min anbefalte det

7. Få/ingen interessante alternativer

(Example 3.15. The multiple-choice question in the questionnaire)

Q8D investigated why the respondents with English programme subjects in lower secondary chose English as an elective in upper secondary. It was measured by multiple-choice answers, where, contrary to the other multiple-choice questions, the respondents could tick off a maximum of three (3) answers. These answers were as follows: 'Because I think English is exciting', 'I wish to learn more/specialise in English', 'Because it seems easy to get a good grade if you know a little English from before', 'I did not know what to choose', 'Influence by friends/family', 'My teacher recommended it, and lastly, 'Few/no interesting options'.



**Spørsmål 8b: Hvorfor har du ikke valgt engelsk som programfag på Vgs? \***

Svar

1. Kjedelig
2. Interesserer meg ikke lenger
3. Kunne ikke velge det på grunn av fordypning og fagkombinasjoner
4. Føler ikke jeg trenger å lære mer engelsk
5. Dårlig erfaring fra engelsk programfag på ungdomsskolen
6. Det er nok med 11 år obligatorisk engelsk

(Example 3.16. The multiple-choice question in the questionnaire)

Q8B2 and asked the respondents who had English programme subjects in lower secondary why they did not choose English elective subjects in upper secondary. A range of categories measured it, and in the same way as Q8D with a maximum of three (3) multiple-choice answers and were as follows: 'Boring', 'No longer interests me', 'Could not choose English elective subject due to specialisation and combinations of subjects', 'I do not feel that I need to learn more English', 'Poor experience from lower secondary English programme subject', and lastly, 'It is enough with 11 years of obligatory English'.

**Spørsmål 8b: I hvilken grad vil du si at undervisningen i engelsk programfag er forskjellig fra undervisningen i den obligatoriske engelskundervisningen? \***

Svar

1. I liten/ingen grad
2. I noen grad
3. I ganske stor grad
4. I veldig stor grad
5. Vet ikke

(Example 3.17. The multiple-choice question in the questionnaire)

Question Q8B3 asked respondents, who did not have English programme subject in lower secondary but had chosen English elective subject in upper secondary, to which degree the teaching in English elective subject is different from obligatory English subject in upper secondary. It was measured from 'In a small/no degree' to 'To a very large extent. The question also included residual category.

### Spørsmål 8b: Hvorfor har du ikke valgt engelsk som valgfag på Vgs?

Svar

1. Kjedelig
2. Interesserer meg ikke
3. Kunne ikke velge det på grunn av fordypning og fagkombinasjoner
4. Føler ikke jeg trenger å lære mer engelsk
5. Det er nok med 11 år obligatorisk engelsk

(Example 3.18. The multiple-choice question in the questionnaire)

Q8B4 addressed respondents that firstly did not have an English programme subject in lower secondary, and secondly did not choose English as one of their elective subjects, why they did not want English as one of their elective subjects. Q8B4 was measured in the same way as Q8D with a maximum of three (3) multiple-choice answers and were as following matter: 'Boring', 'Does not interest me', 'Could not choose English elective subject due to specialisation and combination of subjects', 'I do not feel that I need to learn more English', 'It is enough with 11 years of obligatory English teaching'.

### Spørsmål 9a: Utdanning og arbeidsliv \*

*Hvordan ser du på engelsk videre med tanke på videre utdanning?*

*Flere studier i dag foregår på engelsk, eller innehar deler som foregår på engelsk. Dette innebærer at undervisningen kan gjennomføres på engelsk eller at man har engelske lærebøker eller tekster.*

**På en skala fra 1-5, hvor viktig tror du det blir å kunne tilstrekkelig med engelsk med tanke på videre utdanning?**

Svar

1. Ikke viktig
2. Litt viktig
3. Viktig
4. Veldig viktig
5. Usikker/Var ikke klar over at dette var tilfellet

(Example 3.19. The multiple-choice question in the questionnaire)

Q9 addressed issues related to education and working life. Underneath the question was how English is being used in higher education to see if the pupils were aware that English is an important language to master. Q9A investigated how important the respondents thought that knowing sufficient English was in terms of higher education. All respondents answered this question, and previous answers did not categorise the question. Q9A was measured from

'Not important, to 'Very important, and included a measure that some may call a residual category, but I do not count as a residual category. This is because the category does not give an unspecified response and is therefore analysable. Thus, the last measure was 'Unsure/Did not know that this was the case.

**Spørsmål 9b: Utdanning og arbeidsliv \***

**På en skala fra 1-5, hvordan synes du at du etter 11 år med obligatorisk engelskopplæring er utrustet med tanke på videre utdanning og arbeidsliv?**

Svar

1. Svært dårlig

2. Dårlig

3. Hverken godt eller dårlig

4. Godt

5. Svært godt

6. Vet ikke/Ønsker ikke si

(Example 3.20. The multiple-choice question in the questionnaire)

Q9B continued Q9A by asking how well the respondents felt that they were well equipped with knowledge of the English language concerning higher education and working life. The question was measured from 'Very bad' to 'Very well' and contains the residual category 'I do not know/Do not wish to elaborate'.

**Spørsmål 11: Hvorfor valgte du valgfagene du har valgt? \***

Svar

1. På grunn av høyere utdanning

2. Fordi det interesserer meg

3. Påvirkning av venner/familie

4. Fordi det er lurt å velge de valgfagene hvis man er usikker på veien videre

5. Måtte velge noe

6. Visste ikke hva jeg skulle velge

7. Annet

(Example 3.21. The multiple-choice question in the questionnaire)

Q11 investigated why the respondents chose the elective subjects that they did. Q11 was measured in the same way as Q8D, and Q8B4 with a maximum of three (3) multiple-choice

answers and were measured in the following matter: 'Due to higher education, 'Because it interests me, 'Influence by friends/family', 'Because it is smart to choose these elective subjects if you are uncertain about which path to advance', 'Had to choose something', 'Did not know what to choose, and the residual category 'Other'. As briefly mentioned above, this residual category prompted a follow-up question if ticked. This follow-up question asked the respondents to elaborate in an open-question format why they chose the elective subjects.

### 3.3.4 Open-ended questions

The last type of question used in the questionnaire was open-ended questions. "The open-ended question[s] are an attractive device for smaller-scale research or for those sections of a questionnaire that invite an honest, personal comment from respondents in addition to ticking numbers and boxes" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018, p. 475). Moreover, open-ended responses might give valuable insights that otherwise would have remained below the surface. Furthermore, it gives the respondents the responsibility and ownership of the data (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018, p. 475). Contrary, an open-ended question might frame the answer if the researcher formulates the question containing bias (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018, p. 475). Nonetheless, open-ended questions may carry data handling problems if the sample size is too big, where researchers may opt to quantify the qualitative data and end up missing the importance of open-ended questions. Moreover, open-ended questions include multiple limitations and cautions, but they will not be mentioned as they do not apply to the data collected for this research problem.

Q3A was the first open-ended question included in the questionnaire and correlates to Q3.

**Spørsmål 3a: Hvilke språk har du vokst opp med? \***

*Skriv språkene nedenfor.*

(Example 3.22. The open-ended question in the questionnaire)

The respondents that ticked 'yes' in Q3 were asked to elaborate on which languages they had grown up with.

**Spørsmål 11a: Hvorfor valgte du valgfagene du har valgt? \***

*Skriv kort hvorfor du valgte valgfagene du har valgt.*

(Example 3.22. The open-ended question in the questionnaire)

Q11A correlates to Q11 and is the question prompted by ticking the residual category 'other' in Q11. In this question, the respondents who ticked 'other' are asked to elaborate on why they chose their elective subjects.

### **Andre relevante opplysninger**

(Example 3.23. The open-ended question in the questionnaire)

This open-ended question was more of an 'additional information box, where the respondents could elaborate if they felt the need or wished to do so. This open-ended text box was not mandatory. Upon creating the questionnaire, a slight hesitation was present revolving these questions, as the questions did not seem that significant. However, the pupils who participated in the research project were very elaborative, and 24 out of the 69 respondents chose to elaborate on one or more questions. These elaborations are very interesting and capture essential information absent from the data material if the box was removed.

## 4. Discussion of findings

In this chapter, the aims are to present the respondents experiences and perceptions concerning English in upper secondary. For organisational purposes, the findings from the questionnaire will be presented thematically according to the research questions. There are a total of three (3) research questions, which correlates to three categories of discussion. To reiterate, there are 69 respondents of the questionnaire, where 32 are girls and 37 are boys. The questionnaire consisted of 12 main questions, however, with subsequent questions, the total questions amounted to 21. The subsequent questions were not applicable to all 69 respondents, seeing as the questions was categorized by previous answers. Therefore, some of the questions will not be presented in full, with diagrams, but rather by text. This depends on how many respondents answered each question. Each answered question will however be presented in full, either by text or diagram.

The outline of the discussion will be centred around each research question and hypothesis. It will follow a gradual structure, where the findings from the questionnaire will be introduced in connection with the theoretical framework. These two together will answer each research question and hypothesis and will frame the discussion by means of the survey design.

To reiterate,

The research questions are:

- *How do the pupils' beliefs, attitudes and notions reflect upon the English elective subjects?*
- *What role does gender play in the choice of elective subject?*
- *In what manner do the pupils feel equipped for higher education, society and working life?*

The hypotheses are:

- The mixed implementation of English and the ambitious competence aims in lower secondary impact the pupils into not choosing English as an elective in upper secondary (Put into context in chapter 2.1.).
- The subject classification and combination limit pupils negatively, resulting in pupils not being able to choose their desired elective subjects (Put into context in chapter 2.2.).

- 
- Boys' motivation and notion of the English subject is lower than girls' motivation and notion of the English subject (Put into context in chapter 2.4.).

## 4.1 Pupils' beliefs, attitudes and notion of English

The means of investigating motivation for English stems from the hypothesis that the pupils experience tremendous amounts of strain and pressure, both from the educational system itself, but also from parents and higher education. Every year the Norwegian pupils complete a national survey called *Ungdata* (OSLO MET, n.d.) which investigates various factors concerning the pupils' life. Motivation for learning is a central steppingstone in each pupil life and is the precursor to the path that each individual makes for themselves in life.

Additionally, the educational path is highly influenced by motivation. However, researchers have found that pupils' motivation is alarmingly low in lower secondary, but slightly changes when the pupils enrol upper secondary (Aftret & Myhr, 1999; Ertesvåg, 2015; Gaasemyr & Døssland Nordre, 2017; Bakken, 2018; Simonsen, 2019). Some argue that this is due to changes in their lives, including everything from physical changes to social changes and changes in life at home. The majority, however, argues that the decrease in motivation is due to the educational system, where school life is uninteresting and monotonous (Simonsen, 2019; Strand, 2019; *Se Videre project*). This is not new information though, and the White Paper (Ministry of Education and Research, 2012) identify this as a factor in 2012. The Norwegian Government have issued multiple changes to the school's proposition and introduced more practical subjects and higher possibility of in-depth specialization in multiple subjects. However, the pupils are still lacking in motivation, and Jordet (2020) argues that this is due to the school's educational traditions, namely, letting the pupils be passive recipients of handed down knowledge.

Looking at Q6 from the questionnaire, where the pupils were asked if they were motivated to learn more English, the answers are surprisingly positive. See Q6 below.

### Spørsmål 6: Motivasjon for å lære engelsk \*

På en skala fra 1-5, i hvilken grad vil du si at du er motivert for å lære mer engelsk?

Svar	Antall	Prosent
1. Svært umotivert	3	4,3 % 
2. Umotivert	12	17,4 % 
3. Hverken umotivert eller motivert	20	29 % 
4. Motivert	26	37,7 % 
5. Svært motivert	8	11,6 % 
6. Ønsker ikke si	0	0 %

*Table 4.1. Respondents' motivation to learn more English*

The table is measured from 1-5, where 1. is “very unmotivated”, 2. Is “unmotivated”, 3. Is “Neither unmotivated or motivated”, 4. Is “motivated”, 5. Is “highly motivated”, and 6. Is “do not wish to elaborate”.

As Table 4.1. indicate above, most of the respondents (26) answered “motivated”. 8 respondents answered, “highly motivated”. When categorizing the answers by positive and negative answers, were left with 34, 49.28%, positive answers. 3 respondents answered 1. “highly unmotivated”, and 12 answered 2. “unmotivated”, these two added up equals 15, 21.74%, negative answers. 20 of the answers given rests in the middle, at 3. “Neither unmotivated nor motivated”, which indicate that 28.99% claims that they are neither motivated nor unmotivated to learn more English. At first glance this shows that the overall result is positive, however, depending on how you read the data, the pupils who chose “neither motivated nor unmotivated” rests in an indifferent state that leans towards the negative category. To elaborate, not seeing the need to, or neglecting the benefits of learning more English is negatively associated and supported by statistics from the CEFR levels (Council of Europe, 2021), EF Proficiency Index (EF EPI, 2020a), and Skjelde & Coxhead (2021). If we then add these two numbers together, we end up with 50,73% of the pupils negatively motivated towards learning more English.



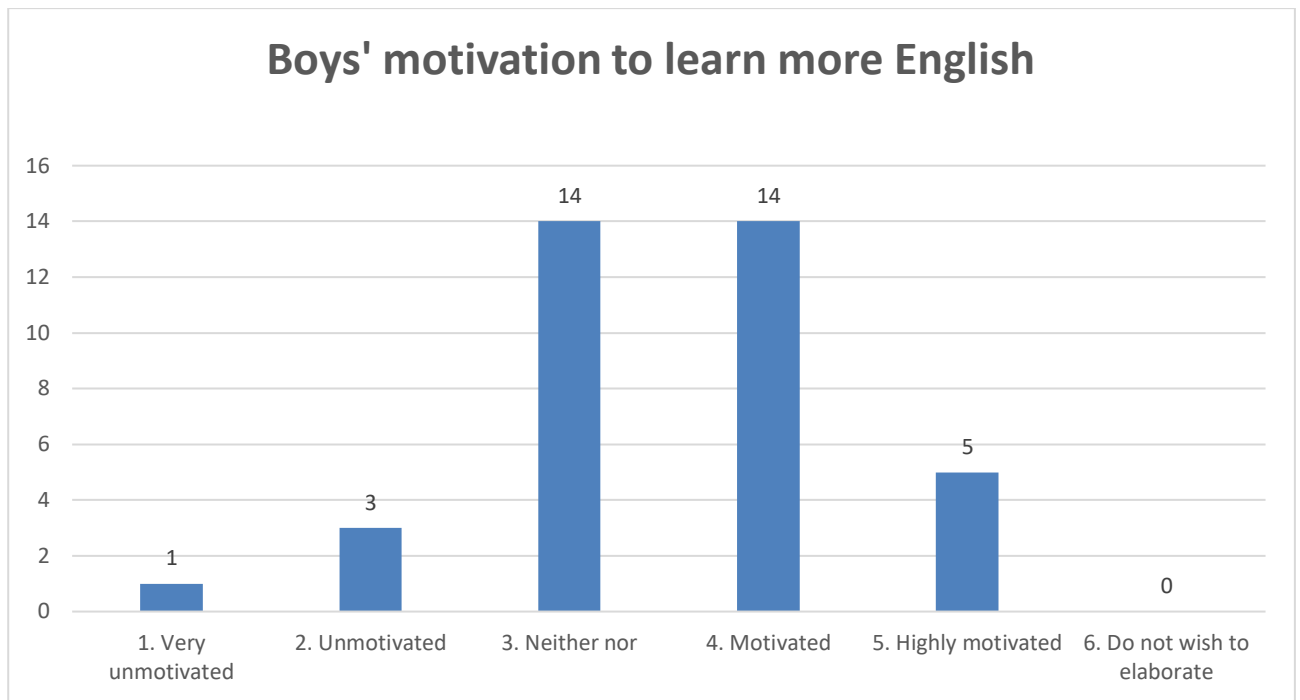


Diagram 4.1. Boys' motivation to learn more English

Diagram 4.1. show that the boys are generally more motivated than the girls, regarding learning more English. 19 of the male respondents are categorized on the positive side, which equals to 51.35%. 4 male respondents are negatively motivated, and this equals to 10.81%. 37.84%, or 14, male respondents have answered “neither motivated nor unmotivated” to learn more English. Similarly to the data presented in Table 4.1 above, this data can change reliant on how you read it. I read it as “indifferent to learn more”, which leans towards the negative side. This therefore equals to 48.65% males being negative. Some of the respondents may feel that they know enough English, or that their knowledge of English is sufficient, however, looking at statistic from CEFR levels (Council of Europe, 2021), EF Proficiency Center (EF EPI, 2020a), Skjelde & Coxhead (2020), and Hellekjær (2007) show that the overall knowledge of English is too low.

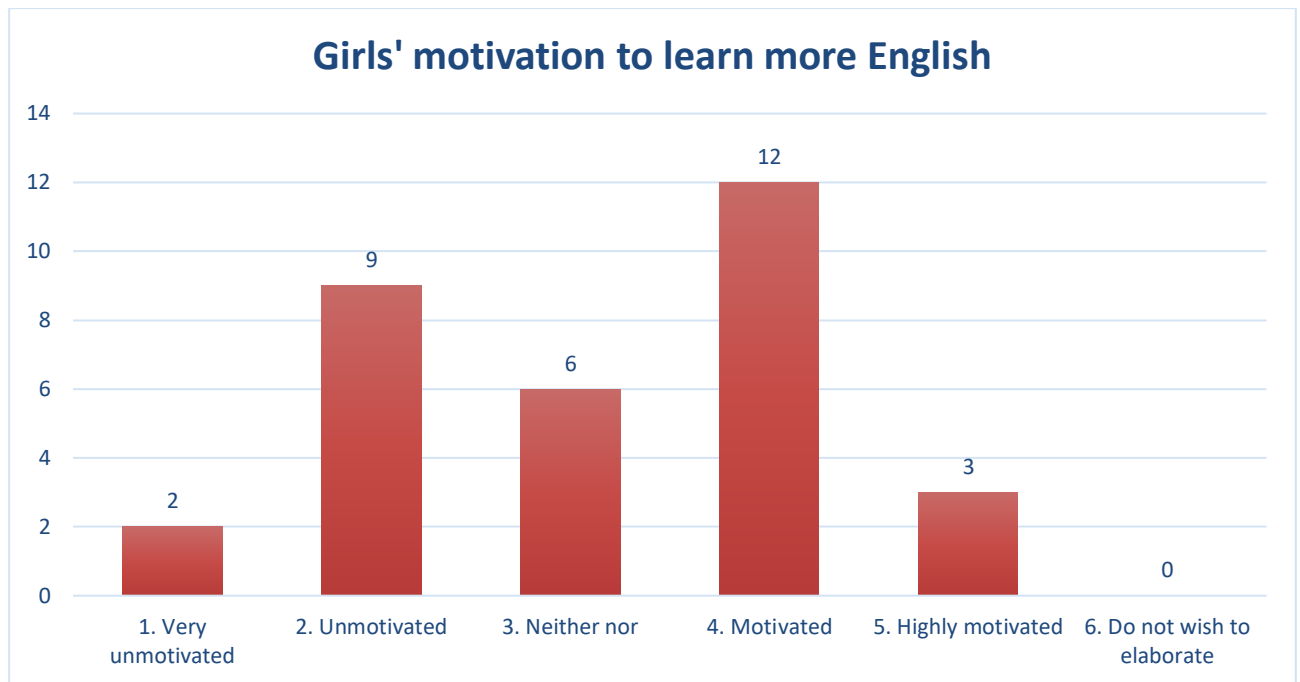


Diagram 4.2. Girls' motivation to learn more English

Diagram 4.2. show that 12, or 37.5%, of the female respondents are motivated to learn more English. 3 are highly motivated, and this equals to 15 positive respondents that wish to learn more English. These two answers added up equals to 46.88%, which leads to a 4.47% shortfall between the answers given from each gender. Therefore, we can conclude that girls are less motivated than boys. The statistic shows a higher percentage of girls who are unmotivated, specifically 28.13%. The two negatively motivated answers equal to 34.38%, which is a worrying number, and equals to a 23.57% discrepancy between the two genders. These numbers are very upsetting and should be investigated more thorough in further research. Sadly, there are no questions in the questionnaire supporting the question of motivation. Analysing the data after the fact demonstrates the need for an additional question supporting Q6, investigating why there is such a big gap between males and females. Moreover, these alarming numbers should be taken seriously.

In Q7 the respondents were asked how they perceived the obligatory English subject. This question was separated in two different questions, where Q7A asked for usefulness, whereas Q7B asked for interest. The question will be presented in the same manner as Q6, where a table of all respondents' answers will be presented first, before introducing the stratified answers.

### Spørsmål 7a: Hvordan opplevde du den obligatoriske engelskundervisningen? \*

Med obligatorisk menes det den undervisningen du må ha. Engelsk er obligatorisk i Norge fra 1.-trinn til første videregående.

På en skala fra 1-5, synes du at det du lærer i engelskundervisningen er nyttig for deg i hverdagen?

Svar	Antall	Prosent
1. Svært unyttig	4	5,8 %
2. Unyttig	1	1,4 %
3. Hverken nyttig eller unyttig	12	17,4 %
4. Nyttig	34	49,3 %
5. Svært nyttig	18	26,1 %
6. Ønsker ikke si	0	0 %

Table 4.2. Respondents' perception of obligatory English

The table is measured from 1-5, where 1. is “very useless”, 2. Is “useless”, 3. Is “Neither useful nor useless”, 4. Is “useful”, 5. Is “very useful”, and 6. Is “Do not wish to elaborate”. Table 4.2. above show that the majority of the answers are positively angled. A total of 34, or 49.28%, respondents answered “useful” and a total of 18, or 26.09%, respondents answered “very useful”. This equals to 75.36% of the respondents that found the obligatory English subject as positively useful. 12 respondents answered, “neither useful nor useless”, and this equals to 17.39%. 1, or 1.39%, respondent answered that the obligatory English subject was useless, and 4, or 5.8%, answered that the obligatory subject was “very useless”. This equals to 7.25%. We can therefore conclude that the obligatory English subject is overall useful to pupils in Norwegian educational system.

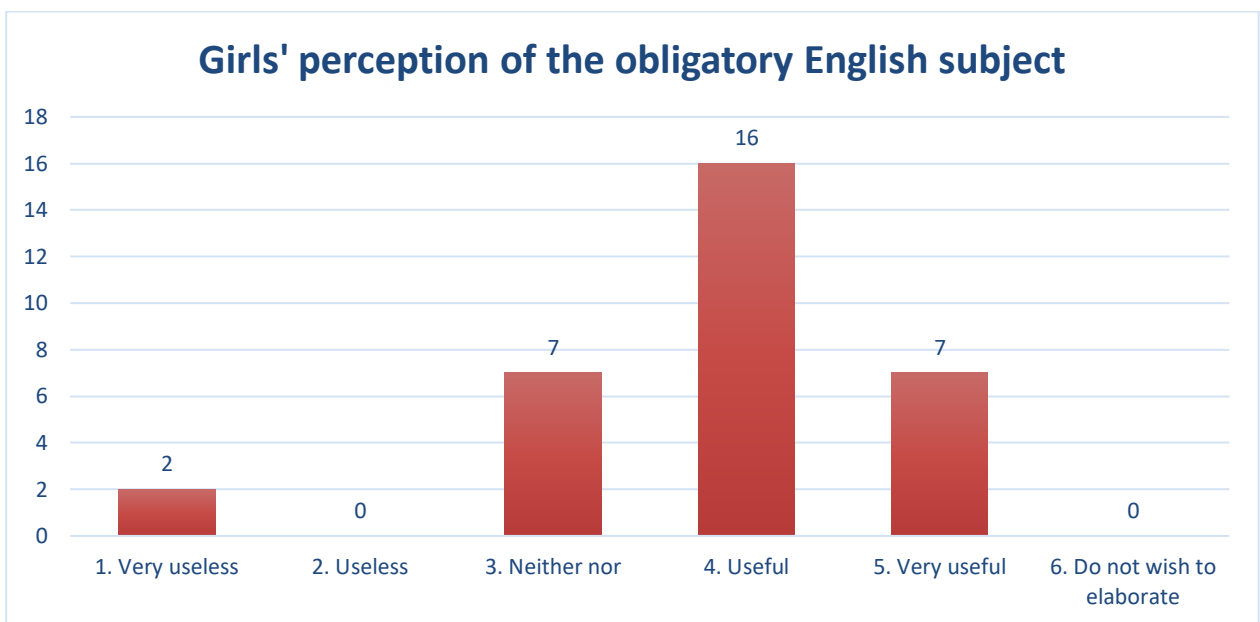


Diagram 4.3. Girls' perception of the obligatory English subject

Diagram 4.3. show that 2, or 6.25%, of the female respondents found the obligatory subject “very useless”. 7 respondents, or 21.88%, found the obligatory English subject to be “neither useful nor useless”, whereas 16, or 50%, respondents found the obligatory English subject to be useful. 7, or 21.88, respondents found it to be very useful. This shows that 71.88% of the female respondents found the obligatory English subject to be positively rewarding, and 6.25% found the obligatory English subject to be negatively rewarding. Whereas 21.88% of the female respondents were indifferent to the subject being useful or useless.

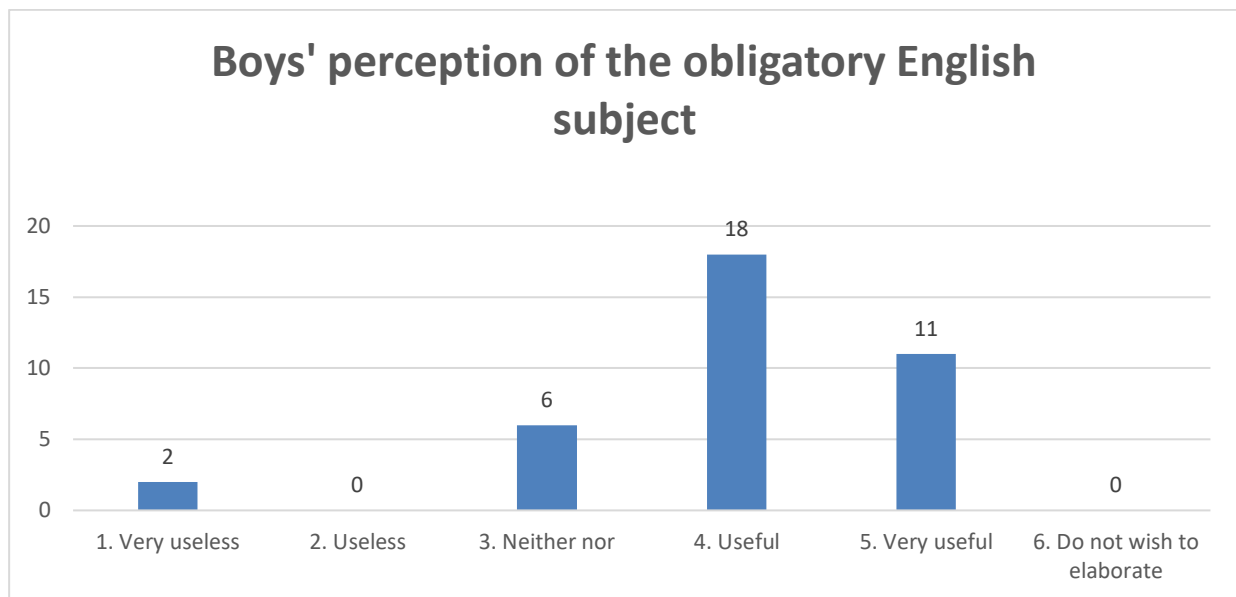


Diagram 4.4. Boys' perception of the obligatory English subject

In Diagram 4.4. we see that 2, or 5.41%, of the male respondents find the obligatory English subject to be very useless. 6, or 16.22%, of the respondents are indifferent regarding the obligatory English subject being neither useful nor useless. 18, or 48.65% of the male respondents found that the obligatory English subject was useful. And lastly, 11, or 29.73%, found the obligatory English subject to be very useful. This shows that 78.38% of the male respondents thought that the obligatory English subject was positively rewarding, whereas 5.41% found it to be negatively rewarding. 16.22% of the male respondents were indifferent toward the obligatory English subject.

Q7B asked the respondents whether they found the obligatory English subject interesting.

**Spørsmål 7b: Hvordan opplevde du den obligatoriske engelskundervisningen? \***

*Med obligatorisk menes det den undervisningen du må ha. Engelsk er obligatorisk i Norge fra 1.-trinn til første videregående.*

På en skala fra 1-5, synes du at engelskundervisningen i skolen er interessant?

Svar	Antall	Prosent
1. Svært uinteressant	5	7,2 % 
2. Uinteressant	14	20,3 % 
3. Hverken interessant eller uinteressant	28	40,6 % 
4. Interessant	19	27,5 % 
5. Svært interessant	3	4,3 % 
6. Ønsker ikke si	0	0 %

*Table 4.3. Respondents' view of the obligatory English subject*

The table was measured from 1-5, where 1. is “very uninteresting”, 2. Is “uninteresting”, 3. Is “Neither interesting nor uninteresting”, 4. Is “interesting”, 5. Is “very interesting”, and 6. Is “Do not wish to elaborate”.

Table 4.3. investigated how interesting the respondents found the obligatory English subject. 5, or 7.25%, of the respondents found the obligatory English subject to be very uninteresting, and 14, or 20.29%, respondents found the obligatory English subject to be uninteresting. The majority of the respondents, 28 or 40.58%, found the obligatory English subject to be neither interesting nor uninteresting. A total of 19, or 27.54%, respondents found the subject to be interesting, whereas 3, or 4.35%, found the obligatory English subject to be very interesting. This indicates that 40.58% of the respondents are indifferent, meaning that they did not find the subject interesting nor uninteresting. 27.9% found the subject to be negatively uninteresting, whereas 31.8% found it to be positively interesting.

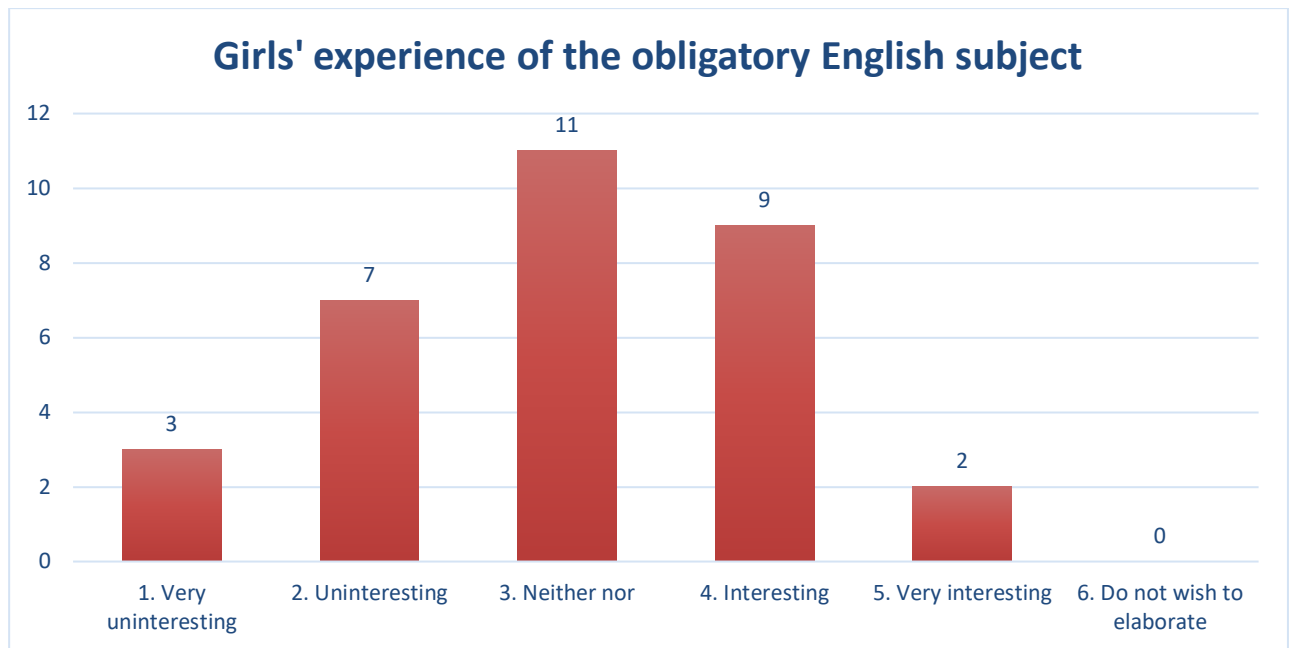


Diagram 4.5. Girls' experience of the obligatory English subject

Diagram 4.5. show that the 3, or 9.38%, female respondents found the obligatory English subject very uninteresting, and 7, or 21.88%, found the subject uninteresting. This equals to 31.26%. A total of 11, or 34.38%, female respondents found the obligatory English subject to be neither interesting nor uninteresting. 9, or 28.13%, female respondents found the obligatory English subject to be interesting, whereas 2, or 6.25%, found it to be very interesting. This equals to 34,88%. The statistics show that 31.26% of the female respondents experience the obligatory English subject as uninteresting, whereas 34.38% are indifferent to the subject being neither interesting nor uninteresting. 31.26% of the female respondents experience the subject as interesting.

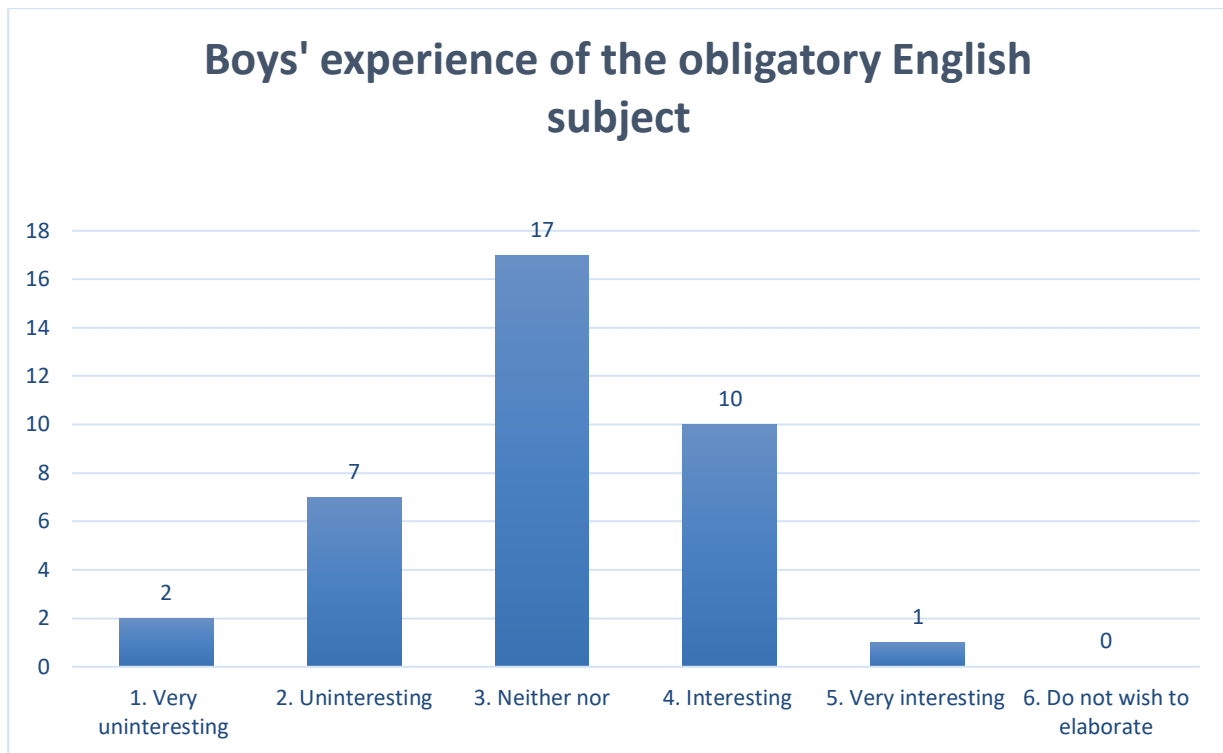


Diagram 4.6. Boys' experience of the obligatory English subject

In Diagram 4.6, 2, or 5.41%, of the male respondents find the obligatory English subject very uninteresting, whereas 7, or 18.92%, found the subject uninteresting. 17, or 45.95%, of the male respondents found the obligatory English subject to be neither interesting nor uninteresting. 10, or 27.03%, male respondents found the obligatory English subject to be interesting, whereas 1, or 2.7%, found the subject to be very interesting. This demonstrates that a total of 24.33% found the obligatory English subject uninteresting, whereas 45.95% were indifferent towards the subject being interesting or uninteresting. Lastly, 29.73% found the obligatory English subject to be interesting.

The discovery from Q7B is equally as interesting as Q6 and Q7A when comparing them to each other. The sum of the three questions indicates that more than half, 50.73%, of the respondents are negatively motivated or indifferent to learn more English, yet most of the respondents, answered that the obligatory English subject was useful. However, most of the respondents, 40.58%, found the obligatory English subject to be neither interesting or uninteresting, and were indifferent towards the subject. Based on the findings from the data presented above, the pupils' motivation and experience of English is negatively inclined. Conversely, the experience of the obligatory English subject is positively angled, but negatively angled in terms of interest. These respondents have been recipients of the LK06

curriculum. This means that the respondents may, in one way or the other, have been “passive recipients of handed down knowledge” (Jordet, 2020). This leads to, as Jordet (2020) and Lillejord, Børte & Nesje (2018) found, the pupils becoming less motivated to learn. This can be shown in the various data found from the questionnaire, where, in most of the answers, the recipients have been indifferent or negatively angled towards motivation and interest in and of the English obligatory subject. This is an interesting find and supports Jordet’s (2020) claim that the school’s processes, practice, and thinking must be challenged and changed. Hopefully we will see this change in LK20, where there will be more room for pupils’ self-realizing and active nature.

## 4.2 Pupils’ view on English as an elective versus other elective subjects

When looking at the numbers from Q6 and Q7 stratified, we find that numbers are very similar. This is an interesting find, when comparing it to the findings from Q6, where the girls were very negative regarding motivation to learn more English. There might be many factors present here, but the overall trend shows that the pupils have been positively rewarded from the obligatory English subject. However, how the pupils measure their knowledge of the English language is unknown. Furthermore, Skjelde & Coxhead (2020) found that pupils does not have sufficient language knowledge to comprehend the difference between formal and informal language. This results in a weak vocabulary and will impact reading comprehension and writing proficiency. The suspicion is, without having researched this, that the pupils may have the impression that General English, i.e., the English we speak in everyday life, is the same as academic language. This assumption will be further investigated in Q9 where the respondents are asked to rate how well equipped, they are in terms of higher education and working life. The majority of the respondents answered that they are sufficiently equipped. However, as Skjelde & Coxhead (2020, p. 3) state, “there is a danger of assuming academic language competence from evidence of fluency in everyday language”. There is another possibility encompassed in these answers that reflects upon the English Subject Curricula. After LK06, the teachers were left with more responsibility to educate the pupils after set competence aims. These competence aims included a variety of important themes that the pupils had to have some familiarity with. Conversely, seeing as the composition of the English subject was massive, some pupils may not have had the time to



familiarize themselves with every theme. Academic language in the obligatory English curriculum from LK06 is not included but is instead represented through formal language. However, how the teachers introduced these themes will be unknown, but we can assume that not all teachers have introduced formal language as necessary for higher education.

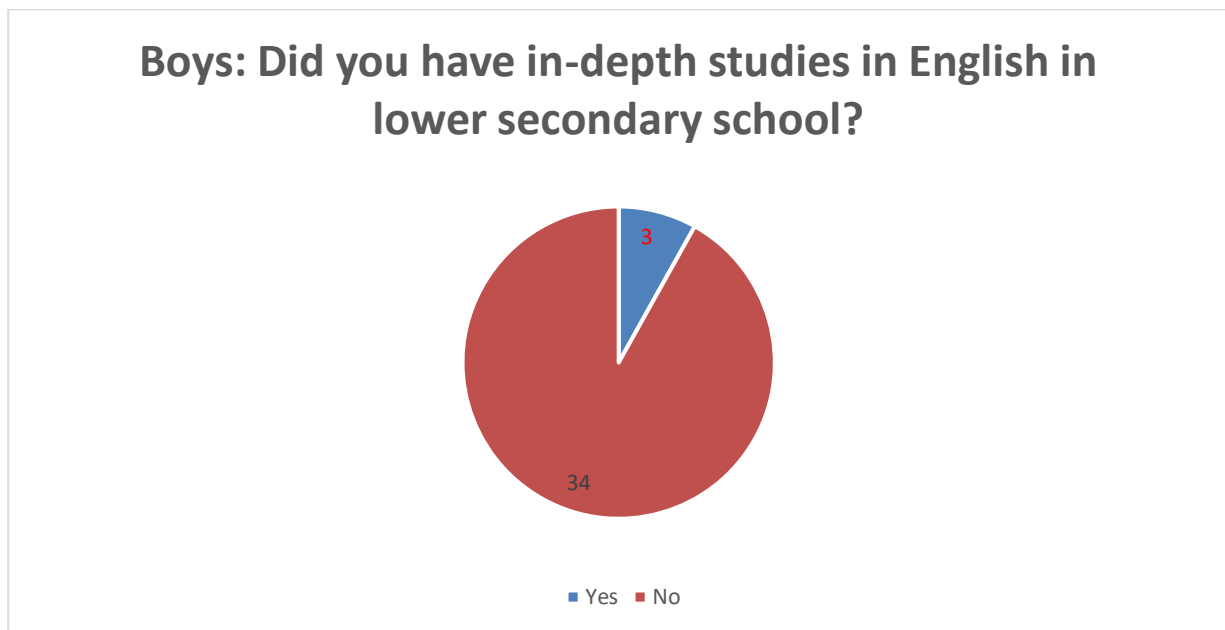


Diagram 4.8. Boys choosing in-depth studies in English in lower secondary school

Diagram 4.8. above illustrate the number of male respondents that had in-depth studies in English in lower secondary school. 3 out of 37 male respondents had in-depth studies in English in lower secondary school.

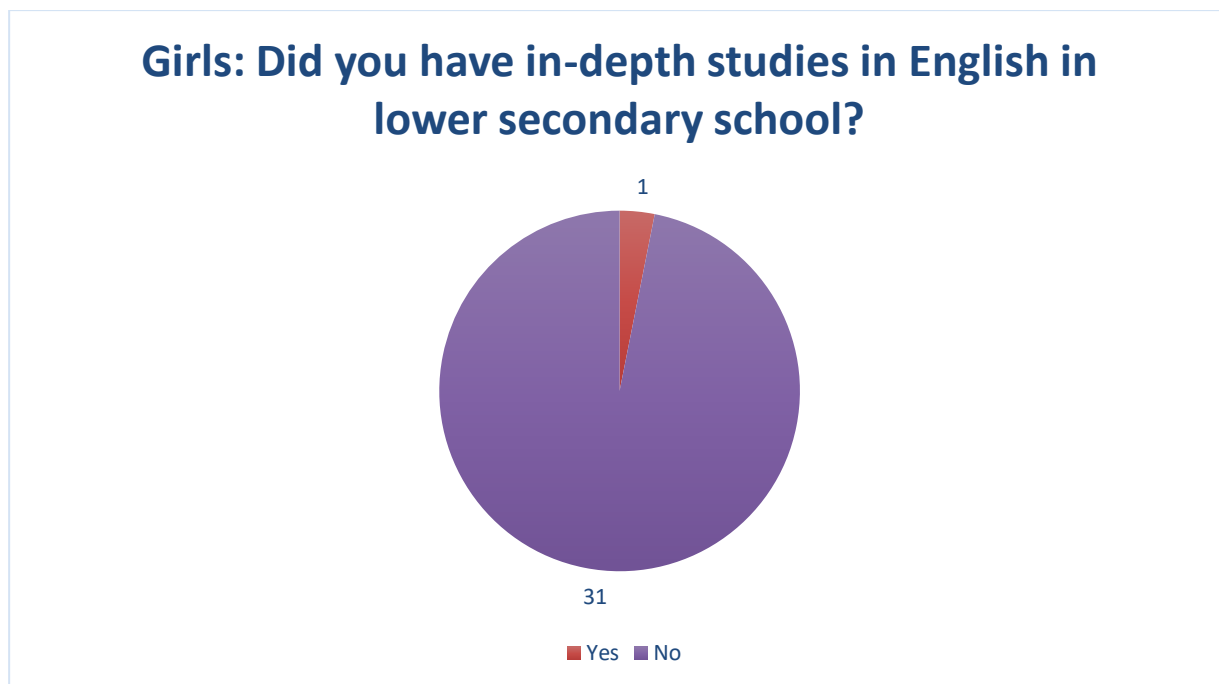


Diagram 4.9. Girls choosing in-depth studies in English in lower secondary

Diagram 4.9. illustrate the number of female respondents that had in-depth studies in English in lower secondary school. A total of 1 female respondent had in-depth studies in English in lower secondary school.

The respondents were asked one follow-up question. Question Q8A1 investigated what the pupils thought of in-depth studies in English in lower secondary. As mentioned in Chapter 3.3.3., the question allowed for multiple answers, where the respondents could tick of a maximum of three (3) answers. The answers ranged from “uninteresting” to “very interesting” and “had to choose something”, “not challenging enough”, and “more challenging than I thought”. The four respondents that had in-depth studies in English in lower secondary answered the following:

Q8A1

*Respondent 1:* “Uninteresting”

*Respondent 2:* “Neither uninteresting nor interesting” and “had to choose something”

*Respondent 3:* “A little interesting”

*Respondent 4:* “Neither uninteresting nor interesting” and “uninteresting”

*(Answers Q8A1. Respondents’ feedback on in-depth studies in English in lower secondary)*

The next follow-up question investigated whether the respondents had chosen English as one of their elective subjects in upper secondary. The question was measured by “yes” and “no”.

Q8B1

*Respondent 1: No*

*Respondent 2: No*

*Respondent 3: Yes*

*Respondent 4: No*

*(Answers Q8B1. Did the respondents choose English as an elective in upper secondary?)*

The last follow-up question investigated the respondent that answered “yes” to question Q8B1. This meant that the remaining three (3) respondents were out of this particular question-chain. These respondents got a different set of questions that will be presented after Q8D and did no longer answer questions regarding in-depth studies in English in lower secondary. Question Q8C investigated the difference in teaching from in-depth English and the obligatory English subject. It was measured from “To no/little degree” to “In a very large degree”.

Q8C

*Respondent 3: “To some degree”*

*(Answer Q8C. How different is the teaching in in-depth English to obligatory English)*

Q8D investigated why the respondent chose English as one of their elective subjects in upper secondary. It was measured by a variety of options, see Chapter 3.3.3., but for the purpose of this question, only *Respondent 3*’s answers will be listed.

Q8D

*Respondent 3: “Because it seems easy to get a obtain a good grade if you know a little English” and “I did not know what to choose”*

*(Answer Q8D. Respondent’s reasoning for choosing English as one of their electives”*

Q8B2 investigated why the respondents from Q8A1 did not choose English as one of their elective subjects in upper secondary. It is measured by a range of options, see Chapter 3.3.3., but for the purpose of this question, only the answers given by respondents will be listed.

Q8B2

*Respondent 1: “Could not choose English due to specialization and subject combination”*

*Respondent 2: “Boring”, “No longer interests me” and “It is enough with 11 years of obligatory English”.*

*Respondent 3: “Could not choose English due to specialization and subject combination” and “No longer interests me”.*

*(Answer Q8B2. Respondents’ reasoning for not choosing English as an elective in upper secondary)*

Statistics from The Foreign Language Centre (Øksenvåg, 2021) show an alarming trend concerning the popularity and the overall offer of English as an elective in upper secondary. Moreover, the number of pupils choosing foreign languages as one of their elective subjects have never been as low as it is now (Øksenvåg, 2021). This have, among others, led the English elective studies to decrease in number of pupils, and have never been as low as it is now. The number of pupils in English elective subjects are decreasing, whereas the number of pupils enrolling higher education increases. Therefore, one assumption is that pupils rather choose PSS, instead of LSE, due to the combination of elective subjects. When choosing PSS, pupils can choose elective subjects that will benefit them in many higher educational programmes, while these elective subjects are unavailable to LSE pupils. However, statistics from NDET (2019) show that LSE can account for 55% of all pupils in General Study specialization. This was investigated in the questionnaire as well and will be presented below in Diagram 4.7.

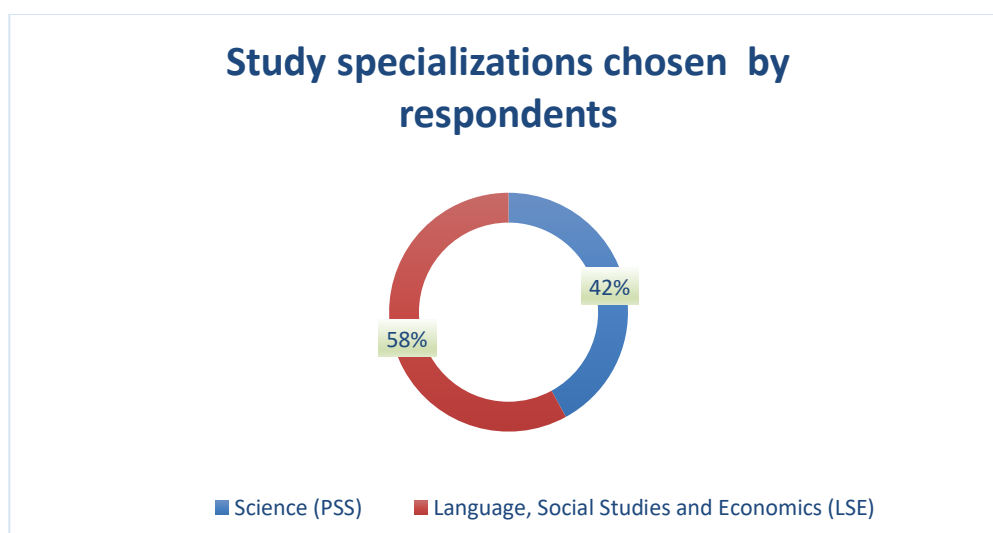


Diagram 4.7. Study specializations chosen by respondents

Diagram 4.7. illustrates that the assumption was false, because 58% of the respondents have chosen LSE. This implies that it is not the study specializations that prompts the pupils into not choosing English as one of their elective subjects.

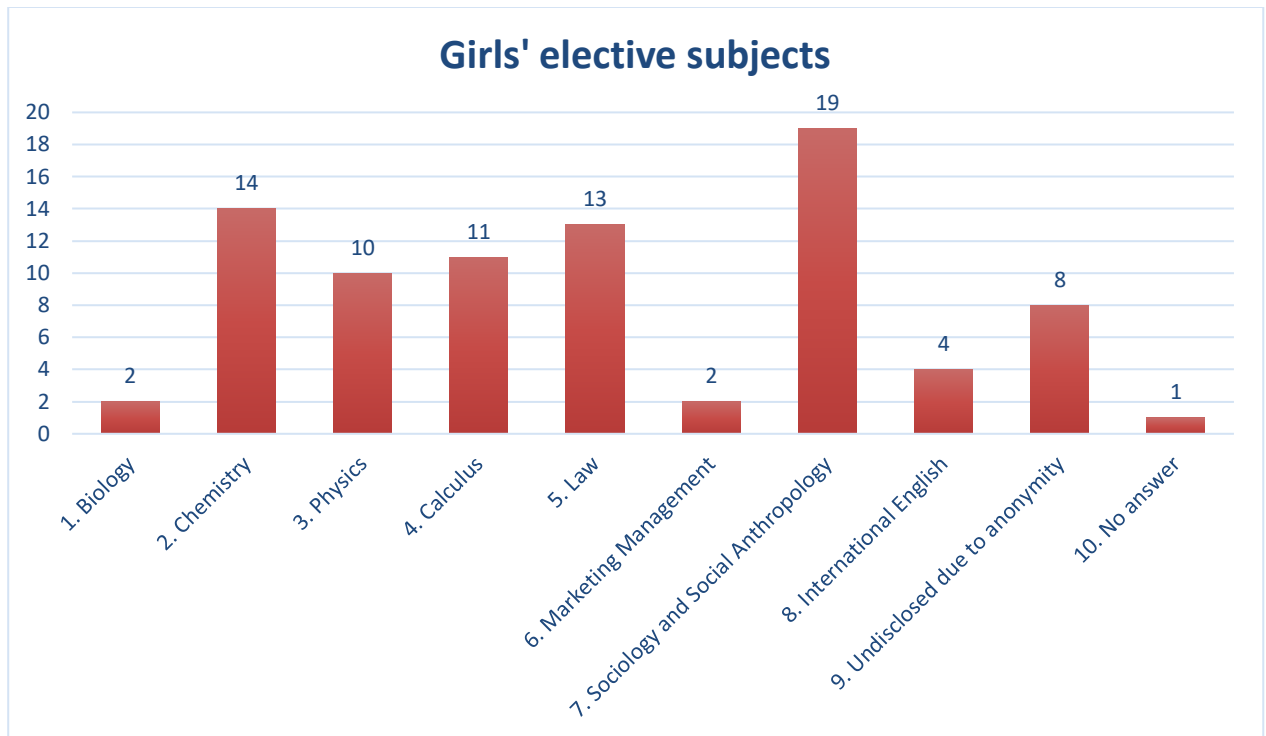


Diagram 4.10. Girls' elective subjects

As already illustrated above in Diagram 4.7., most of the respondents chose LSE as their programme specialization. This means that LSE elective subjects is the widespread choice in the statistic. The interesting find here though, is that 4 of 32 female respondents have chosen International English. This equals to 12.5%, and support the statistics in the literature review, namely, that the pupils choosing English as one of their elective subjects is decreasing rapidly. One of the female respondents enclosed something interesting that accentuates the suspicion that the English elective subject is much alike the obligatory English subject. Additionally, it also confirms the suspicion that the English elective subject is viewed as “easy”. See the comment from *RespondentF1* below. The comment will be directly translated and phrased as the respondent wrote it.

*RespondentF1:*

*“English in upper secondary is just social studies in english. it is boring, but i know what we are going to learn so it is easy to get a good grade. the language interests me, but not the themes we have. it fits me well because i have ... (undisclosed due to*

privacy and anonymity, but it is an elective subject that the private school offers.) ...  
*and that is like super demanding so i don't have time to do much school".*

*(RespondentF1 on why she chose English as an elective in upper secondary)*

The boys' elective subjects are equally interesting to look at. One of the male respondents chose to elaborate on why he chose the elective subjects that he did. This will be written in the same manner as *RespondentF1* and will be disclosed after the diagram showing the boys' elective subjects.

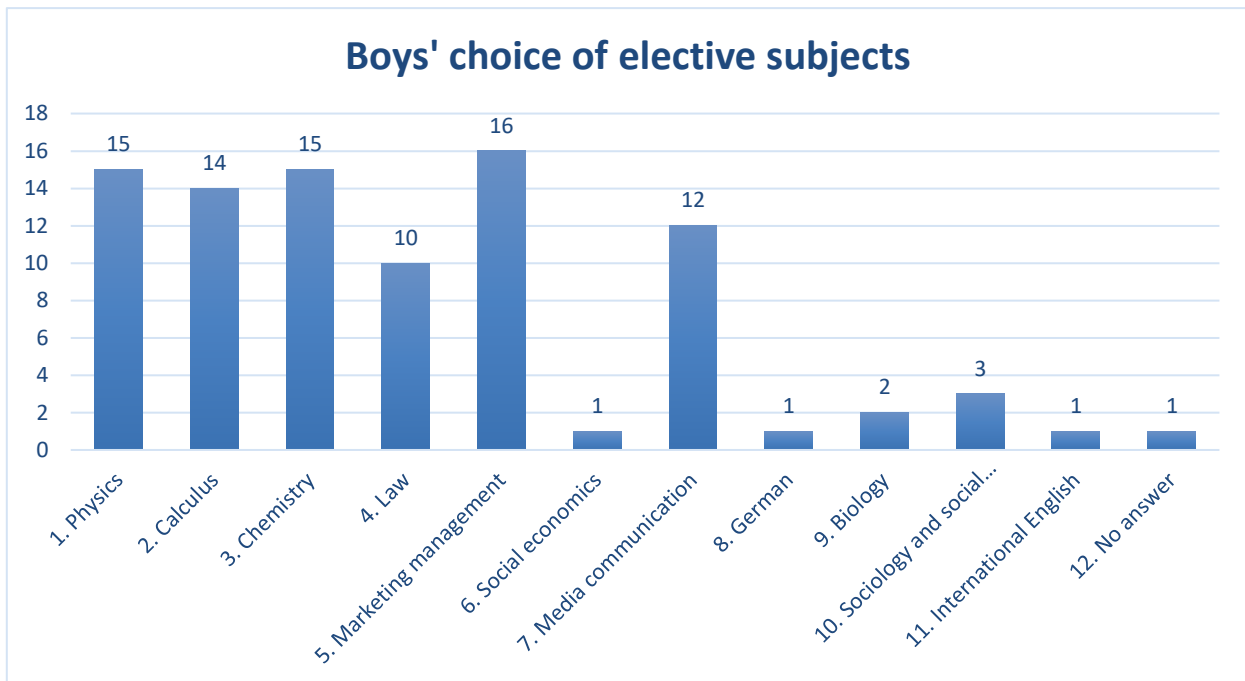


Diagram 4.11. Boys' elective subjects

Only one of the male respondents chose International English as one of his elective subjects. Most of the male respondents have chosen SSE, which is not a surprising find. Most of the girls chose LSE.

RespondentM1 chose International English, and when asked which elective subjects *RespondentM1* chose, he disclosed the following:

*RespondentM1:*

*"Because I want to spend my spare time working out and gaming, so I cannot spend much of my time on homework in the evening. + I do not remember anything when I read so it is just stupid of me to choose something where I have to do a lot of reading and working."*

*(Respondent M1 on why he chose the elective subjects that he chose).*

At the end of the survey, there was an additional box that gave the respondents the opportunity to supplement their answers if there was anything the respondents wished to elaborate. This turned out to be extremely valuable and will greatly help in answering the research question. The respondents' answers cannot be pasted in the thesis due to ethical considerations, as some of the respondents have written sensitive information (school and name) and will therefore be written out in text examples. Every elaboration will not be exemplified, as some of them have similarities.

*Respondent I: "If my school had offered English as an elective subject, I would have strongly considered it because I have plans to study abroad in the future"*

*Respondent II: "I wanted to choose English, but chose SSE instead due to the educational benefits of having [theoretical] heavy subjects"*

*Respondent III: "I wanted to choose English, but the English teaching was very bad, so I changed [elective] subjects after a few weeks".*

*Respondent IV: "If I did not feel the need to choose SSE, I would have chosen LSE and English"*

*Respondent V: "I did want English, but I wanted to choose biology and I could not [choose English]"*

*(Respondents' elaboration of elective subjects chosen)*

The number of respondents having English as one of their elective subjects equalled to 7.25%, which is alarmingly low. This might be a combination of respondents being tired of English after having obligatory English for 11 years. Furthermore, it may correlate to the negative views of in-depth studies in English in lower secondary. Moreover, it may also be because the English elective subjects in upper secondary are viewed as 'easy'. An interesting find is that many of the pupils in the private school would have liked to select English as one of their elective subjects but could not do so because the school no longer offered it. This was because the general interest in the English elective subjects were too low to offer it previous years. This is well argued for by the private school, however, the quantitative

findings found 12 respondents that would have liked to have English as one of their elective subjects. Furthermore, many of the respondents mentioned studying abroad as a factor to why they would choose English, and this illustrates that they might not be as sufficient as they first let out to be. This may indicate that the Norwegian school is ‘easier’ than international schools, however this is unresearched and is therefore just a speculation. Another big factor as to why the respondents choose the elective subjects that they do, is because many of the respondents feel that the schools offer of subjects and combination of subjects are limiting. The restraints of choosing one or the other specialization programme in terms of elective subject is outdated, and should, in my opinion be reformed.

### 4.3 Pupils’ view of their knowledge of English in academical, societal and work settings

The English language’s status as a lingua franca allows individuals of different native languages to communicate and understand each other (Hundstadbråten, 2020). Most people in Norway use English in everyday life. This is much due to Web 2.0, where English as a lingua franca allows for constant information and conversations to flow freely, independently of the individuals’ native language. This is a nice way of exposing oneself to a language and learning it by increasing its frequency. However, slang and different language variations may influence the language that is learnt and may affect the language-learning process negatively. LK06 curriculum aimed towards pupils acquiring sufficient language knowledge to comprehend, however, comprehending a language is not sufficient when the overall literacy in the English language is low. Skjelde & Coxhead (2020) found that first year pupils in upper secondary schools on average had high levels of meaning-recognition knowledge. However, 58.21% failed to reach minimum mastery levels of written academic English (Skjelde & Coxhead, 2020, p. 1). Scandinavian research has found that there is a deficiency regarding academic English vocabulary knowledge (Skjelde & Coxhead, 2020). Skjelde & Coxhead (2020) questioned whether the lack of knowledge in terms of academic English may suggest that pupils cannot comprehend and suffice in higher education with the simplicity of using General English. Q9 seeks to investigate how the respondents of the questionnaire feel equipped with enough knowledge of English to suffice in higher education and working life.







Q9 is separated in the same manner as Q7A and Q7B. Q9 investigates education and working life and attempts to see if there is a correlation between motivation, experience and perception of the English language, higher education and working life.

**Spørsmål 9a: Utdanning og arbeidsliv \***

*Hvordan ser du på engelsk videre med tanke på videre utdanning?*

*Flere studier i dag foregår på engelsk, eller innehar deler som foregår på engelsk. Dette innebærer at undervisningen kan gjennomføres på engelsk eller at man har engelske lærebøker eller tekster.*

**På en skala fra 1-5, hvor viktig tror du det blir å kunne tilstrekkelig med engelsk med tanke på videre utdanning?**

Svar	Antall	Prosent
1. Ikke viktig	1	1,4 % 
2. Litt viktig	10	14,5 % 
3. Viktig	25	36,2 % 
4. Veldig viktig	33	47,8 % 
5. Usikker/Var ikke klar over at dette var tilfellet	0	0 %

*Table 4.3. Respondents' view of the importance of English in higher education*

Table 4.4. is measured on a scale of 1-5, where 1. Is “not important”, 2. Is “a little important”, 3. Is “Important”, 4. Is “very important”, and 5. Is “Uncertain, was not aware that this was the case”. Underneath the question is a textbox explaining different way English is used in higher education. This ranges from lectures to texts used in teaching. 1, or 1.4%, respondent answered that English is not important in higher education. 10, or 14.5%, respondents answered that English is a little important regarding higher education. 25, or 36.2%, respondents answered that English is important in higher education, whereas 33, or 47.8%, respondents answered very important. None of the respondents answered that they did not know that English was important in higher education. See Diagram 4.7. and 4.8. for stratified answers.

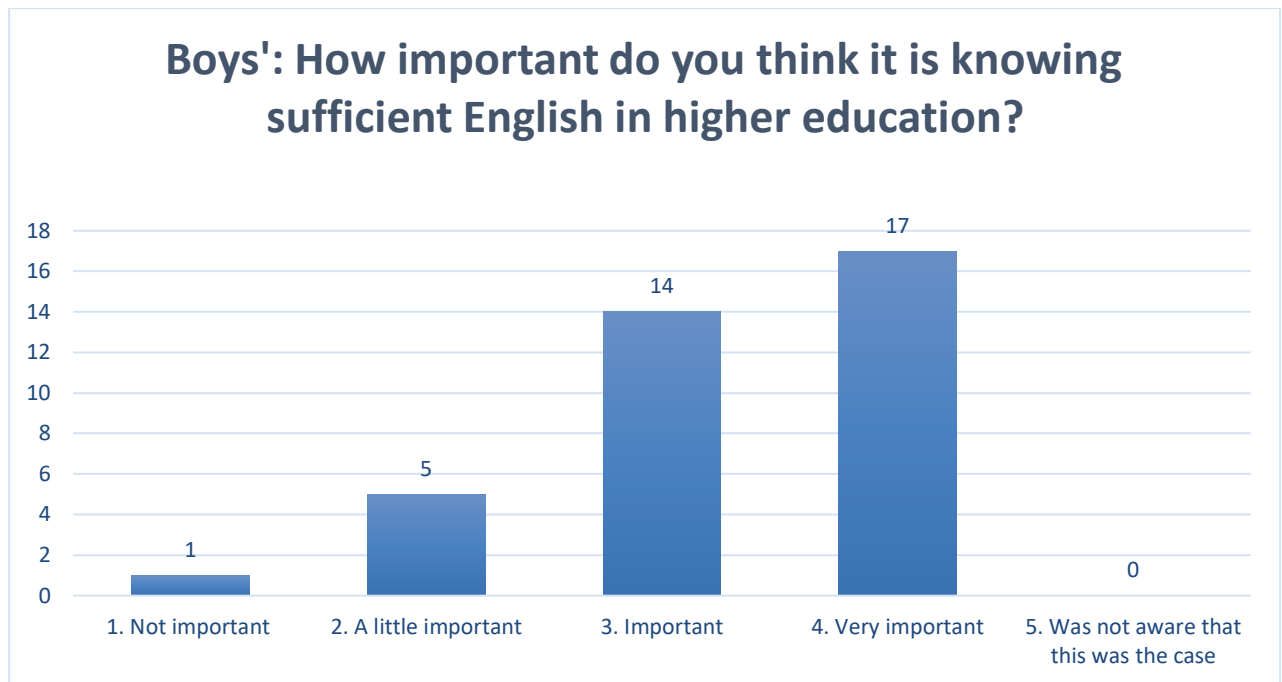


Diagram 4.7. Boys' view of English in higher education

One, 2.7%, of the male respondents did not think knowing sufficient English is important in higher education. 5, 13.51%, or male respondents thought that English was a little important in higher education. 14, or 37.84%, male respondents thought that knowing sufficient English was important in higher education, and 17, or 45.95%, thought that knowing sufficient English was very important. This equals to most of the male respondents to answer that knowing sufficient English is very important, by 45.95% of the answers given.

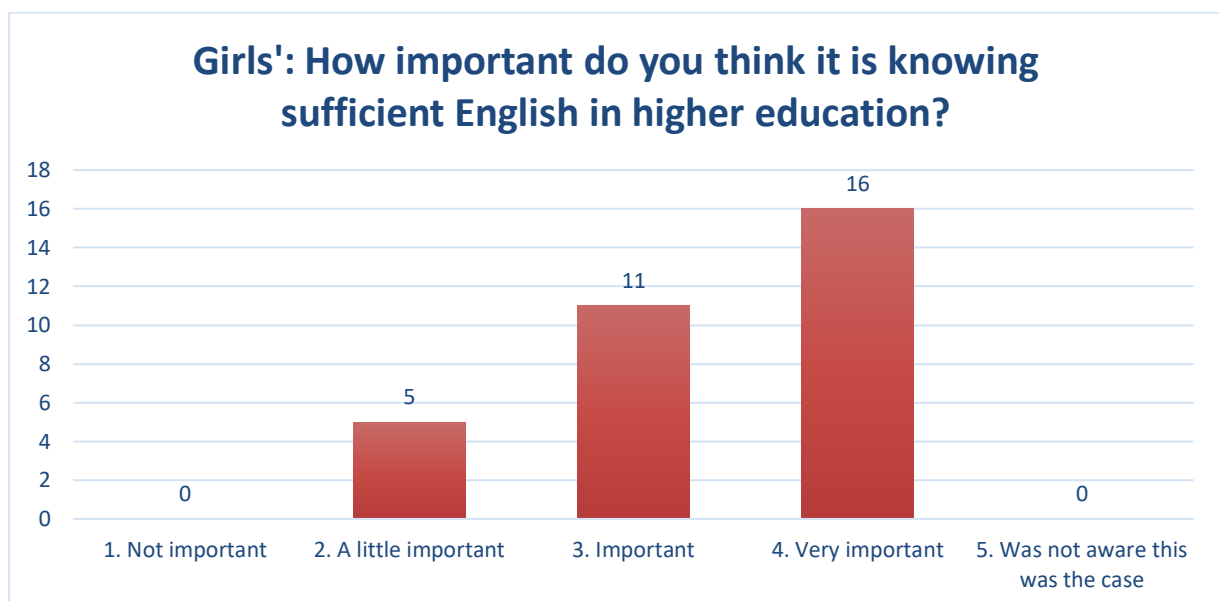


Diagram 4.8. Girls' view of English in higher education





5, or 15.63%, of the female respondents thought that knowing sufficient English in higher education was a little important. 11, or 34.38%, female respondents thought that knowing sufficient English in higher education was important, whereas 16, or 50%, answered that it was very important knowing sufficient English. The statistic shows that both male and female respondents think that knowing sufficient English in higher education is important. Looking at the numbers, they are somewhat identical, however, more female respondents have answered that it is very important to know sufficient English.

Before the pupils started the questionnaire, I informed them of what ‘sufficient’ meant, and gave examples of academical, professional and formal English.

In Q9B, the respondents were asked to elaborate on a scale of 1-5, how well equipped with knowledge of the English language they were, regarding higher education and working life.

**Spørsmål 9b: Utdanning og arbeidsliv \***

**På en skala fra 1-5, hvordan synes du at du etter 11 år med obligatorisk engelskopplæring er utrustet med tanke på videre utdanning og arbeidsliv?**

Svar	Antall	Prosent
1. Svært dårlig	0	0 %
2. Dårlig	4	5,8 % 
3. Hverken godt eller dårlig	14	20,3 % 
4. Godt	37	53,6 % 
5. Svært godt	14	20,3 % 
6. Vet ikke/Ønsker ikke si	0	0 %

*Table 4.4. Respondents' answer to how well equipped with knowledge of English regarding higher education and working life*

Table 4.5. is measured on a scale of 1-5, where 1. Is “very bad”, 2. Is “bad”, 3. Is “neither well nor bad”, 4. Is “well”, and 5. Is “very well”.

As seen in Diagram 4.6. above, 4, or 5.8%, respondents answered “bad”, meaning that they do not feel well-enough equipped for higher education and working life. 14, or 20.3%, respondents answered that they felt neither well nor badly equipped for higher education and working life. 37, or 53.6%, of the respondents answered that they were “well” equipped regarding higher education and working life. Lastly, 14, or 20.3%, answered that they were very well equipped regarding higher education and working life. The trend is definitely positive, where on one side, 26.1% do not feel well-enough or sufficiently equipped, and on the other side, 73% of the respondents feel that they are sufficiently equipped to attend higher education and working life. By means of stratification, it will be interesting to see if

the answers differ from gender, similarly in Q6 where the girls were less motivated than the boys.

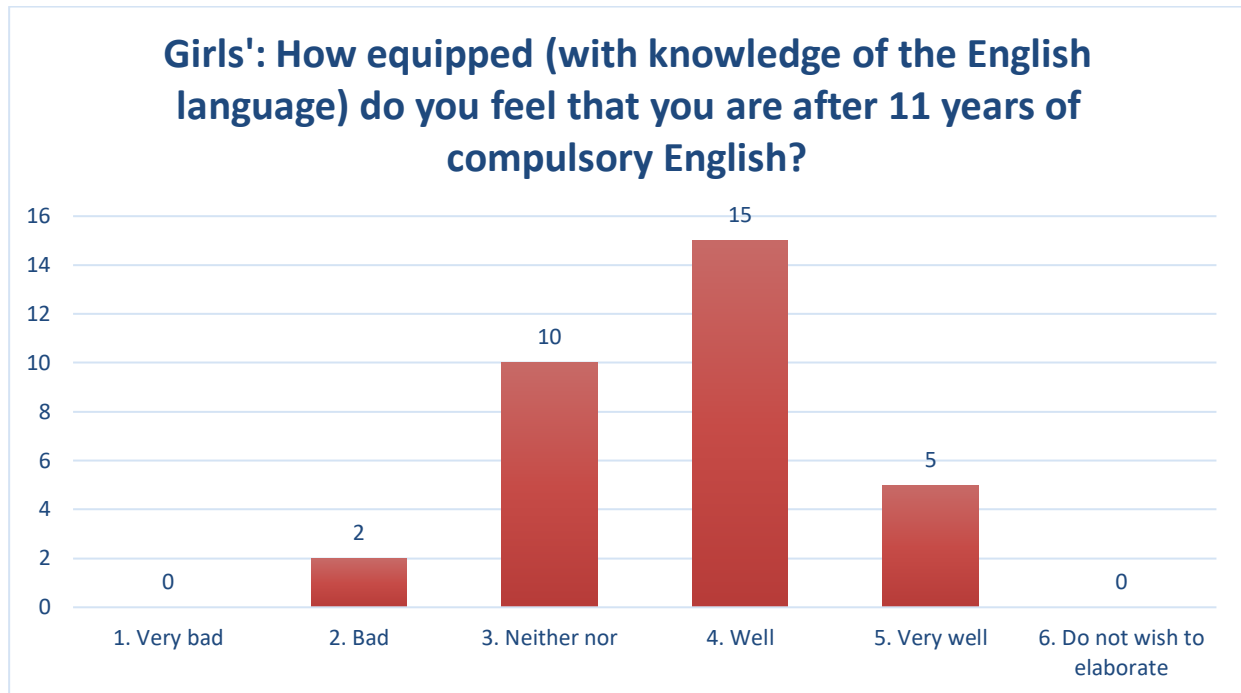


Diagram 4.9. Girls' answers to their sufficiency in English regarding higher education and working life

2, or 6.25%, female respondents answered that they were badly equipped with English knowledge in terms of higher education and working life. 10, or 18.75%, of the female respondents answered that they were neither well or badly equipped with sufficient English knowledge regarding higher education and working life. 15, or 46.88%, of the female respondents answered that they were well equipped with knowledge of the English language regarding higher education and working life, whereas 5, or 15.63%, answered that they were very well equipped regarding higher education and working life. Diagram 4.9. shows that the tendency is overall positive, however, the percentage of negative answers amounts to 37.5%. This means that the positive answers are equal to 62.5%. The negative percentage is quite alarming, seeing as 37.5% of the female respondents do not feel sufficiently equipped. This correlates to the literature review, where Skjelde & Coxhead (2020), Hellekjær (2007), and Council of Europe (2021) and EF EPI (2020b) have found that the general English knowledge is too low.

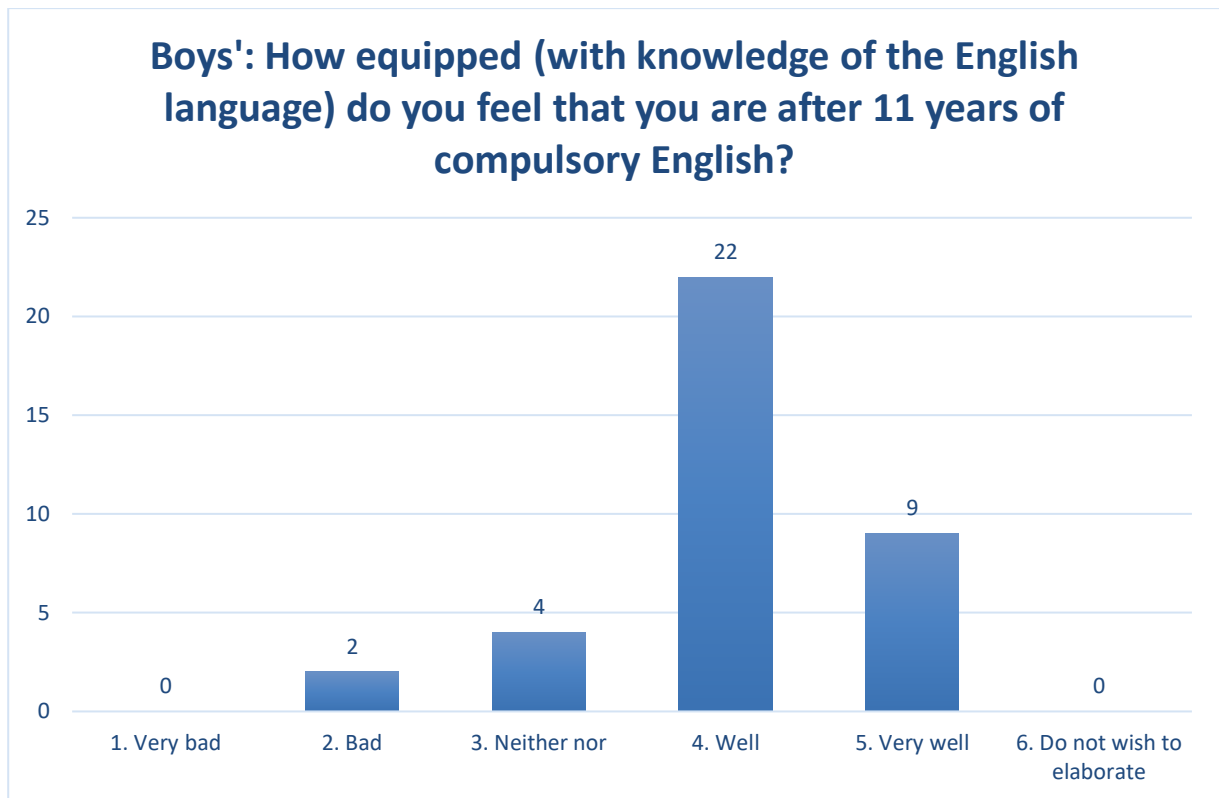


Diagram 4.10. Boys' answers to their sufficiency in English regarding higher education and working life

Diagram 4.10. shows that 2, or 5.41% of the male respondents does not feel well enough equipped regarding higher education and working life. 4, of 10.81%, of the male respondents feel that they are neither well or badly equipped for higher education and working life. 22, or 59.46%, of the male respondents feel that they are well equipped with knowledge of the English language in terms of higher education and working life, whereas 9, or 24.32% feel that they are very well equipped. Comparing the female and the male answers, illustrate that the male respondents are seemingly better equipped than the female respondents. The positive tendency in the male respondents' answer, equals to 83.78%, whereas the females' positive tendency equals to 62.5%. This leaves a deficit of 21.28%, which is an enormous difference seeing as the respondents are the same age and have all had 11 years of obligatory English teaching. However, how the respondents measure themselves regarding 'equipped' is uncertain, and whether the respondents are sufficiently equipped with professional English or General English is unknown, but the assumption is on the latter. LK06 did not specify that the pupils must learn professional and academic English, and seeing as the pupil's lack in motivation, and do not wish to learn more English, they feel content with the English they receive through social medias and Web 2.0.

The findings in Q9 show a variety of discoveries in relation to the research question addressed in this chapter. Pupils' constant stimuli from social medias, and the anglicization of the Norwegian language is advocating for General English. This may be one of the factors as to why the pupils feel that they are less motivated to learn more English and that they are well enough equipped. Furthermore, being constant exposed to the English language through social medias, TV, and Internet, may be a reason why pupils are content with their knowledge of the English language. Exposing oneself to a language is arguably one of the best ways of learning a language, however, there are many pitfalls of learning a language through spoken speech. Firstly, when learning a language through speech, you lose important grammatical constructions, such as sentence structure and syllables. Secondly, there are very few who speak academic or professional English language, and by listening to languages, you may acquire slang-words that do not belong in these settings. Nonetheless, some pupils may not wish to attend higher education, and that is completely fine. However, Hellekjær (2007) found that Norwegian people in general cannot master English in work, social and academic settings. Therefore, knowing sufficient English, and having a broad vocabulary allows you to suffice in multiple aspects of life and society. In terms of the research question, the findings does not correlate with the literature review and statistics presented there. The findings illustrate that the pupils know sufficient English to attend higher education and working life. However, various statistics, show that the sufficient English pupils might consider enough, is most likely not. One of the biggest causes as to why the English elective subjects are decreasing, is the number of pupils feeling sufficient in English, and well enough equipped to attend higher education and working life. The pupils no longer feel the need to educate themselves further. This is quite alarming, in relation to multiple sources expressing the need for pupils to advance themselves in English to be able to suffice and comprehend the academical level of higher education.

## 4.4 Addressing hypotheses

*The subject classification and combination limit the pupils negatively, resulting in pupils not being able to choose their desired elective subjects.*

In Q12, the respondents were then asked if they felt that the schools offer of subjects are limiting for them, in terms of not being able to choose whichever elective subjects they wanted.

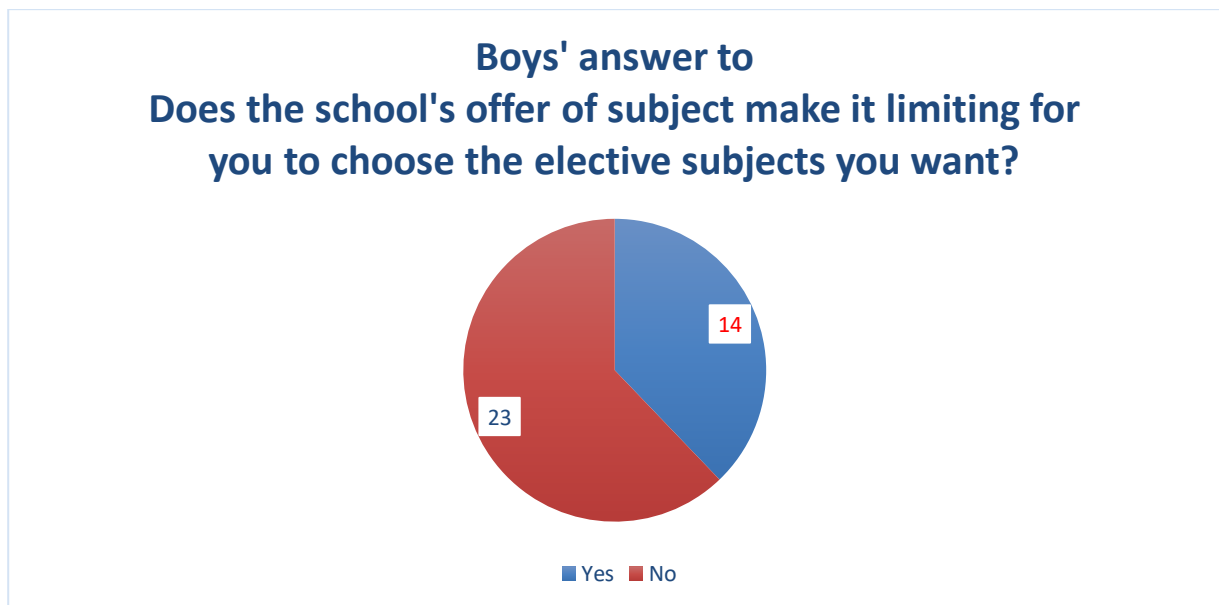


Diagram 4.12. Boys' answer to whether the schools offer of subjects are limiting.

As Diagram 4.12. illustrate above, 14, or 38%, of the male respondents feel that the schools offer of elective subjects and combination of elective subjects is limiting. 23, or 62%, male respondents do not think that the schools offer of elective subjects and combination of elective subjects is limiting.

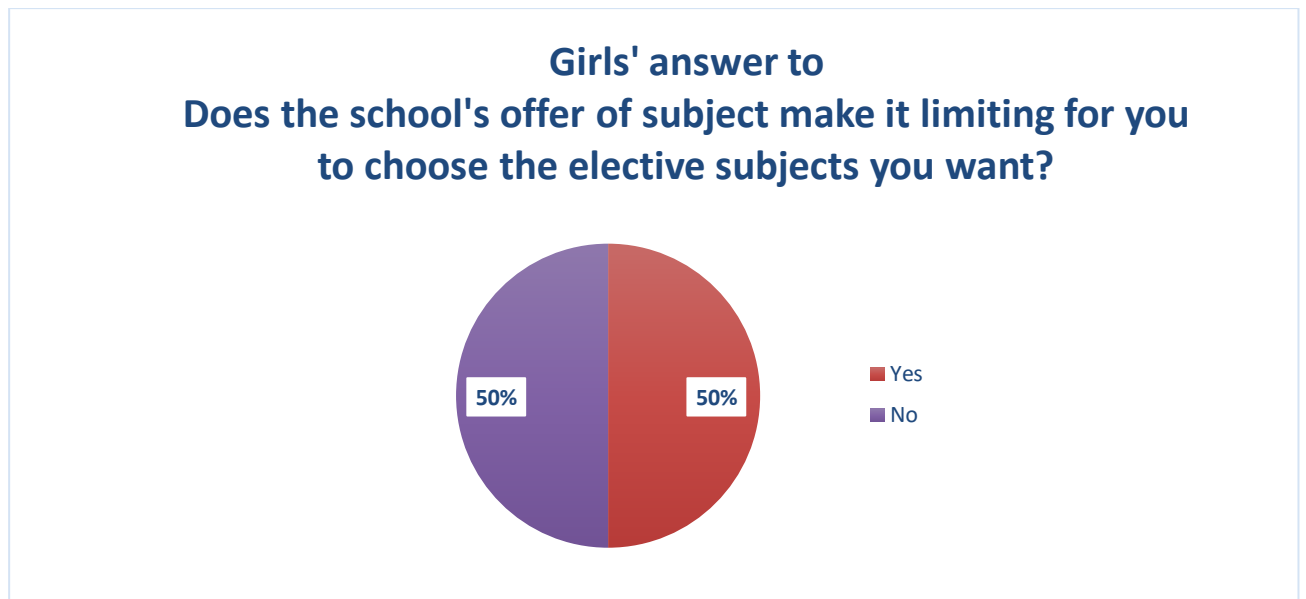


Diagram 4.13. Girls' answer to whether the schools offer of subjects are limiting.

The female respondents are split in half, where 16, or 50% of them feel that the schools offer of elective subjects and combination of elective subjects is limiting. The other half, 16, or 50% female respondents, does not feel that the schools offer of elective subjects and combination of elective subjects are limiting.

The difference between the genders may indicate that 'the girl problem' discussed in chapter 2.4. is true. However, the issue is complex, and it is difficult to provide a straightforward answer to the hypothesis. 'The girl problem' investigates the systematic difference in choice of study specialisation, and the choice of subjects in Diagrams 4.10 and 4.11 implies that females are choosing more STEM related elective subjects. Nonetheless, half the females researched perceive the school's offer of elective subjects as limiting, and that may indicate that the educational system should cater for, to a greater extent, the nature of females. To elaborate, females most often prefer occupations or studies oriented towards working with people, and STEM elective subjects does not accommodate for this. When analysing the answers given from females in relation to the hypothesis, indicate that the issue is multifaceted and complicated. The females are overall more negative than the males. The questions of motivation, notions, and attainment may correlate to females' need for a revision of the elective subject composition, that is, allowing them to become more self-realising.



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*The mixed implementation of English and its ambitious competence aims in lower secondary impact the pupils not choosing English as one of their elective subjects in upper secondary.*

Sadly, there are few answers from pupils who had in-depth studies in English in lower secondary school. The quantitative data found is not enough to obtain a representative view of the hypothesis and will therefore be difficult to answer. When creating the questionnaire, the thought was that more pupils would have had in-depth studies in English in lower secondary. The respondents investigated attend Vg2 in 2021, which means that many changes had occurred in programme subjects in lower secondary, in terms of sought-after practical programme subjects. However, this cannot be undone or changed at this stage, and will therefore be as is. The quantitative data support and assist the findings; thus, the data is still valid, and the hypothesis, “the mixed implementation of English and its ambitious competence aims in lower secondary impact the pupils not choosing English as one of their elective subject in upper secondary” is correct. This is based on the findings in Q8A1, Q8C, Q8D and Q8B2, which indicate that the in-depth studies in English were a mere simplification of the obligatory English subject. Additionally, it shows that the schools offer of subjects and combination of subjects are limiting. Seeing as the interest in in-depth studies in English in lower secondary have pummelled in the last few years, the number of respondents choosing in-depth studies in English as one of their programme subjects is not surprising (Bakken & Dæhlen, 2011). Contrary, the repercussion of English in-depth studies discussed in 2.1. may serve as a variable as to why fewer pupils choose this programme subject. Additionally, Sutton’s (2014) proposal to give all responsibility of the programme subject in the hands of teachers is not reasonable. This proposal meant prompting the teachers to advance in-depth studies in English into a practical programme subject, ignoring competence aims that was set in place for assessment criteria and instead treat these criteria as means of motivation is ignorant. Moreover, the competence aims for in-depth studies in English were too ambitious and did not serve the pupils positively. Therefore, due to time constraint and competence aims, specifically focusing on making one subject outstanding, will impact the teachers’ other subjects and decreasing their quality. Therefore, The Foreign Language Centre’s solution did not have enough grounds to mark a change in in-depth studies in English.

### *Boys' motivation and notion of the English subject is lower than girls' motivation and notion of the English subject*

There are 4 male respondents who are negatively motivated, which equals 10.81%. A total of 14 male respondents, or 37.84%, answered "neither motivated nor unmotivated" to learn English. The way you read this data can vary depending on how you interpret it. In my interpretation, it means "indifferent to learn more", which leans toward the negative. This would mean that 48.65% of men are negative. Even though some respondents may believe that they know enough English, or that their English proficiency is sufficient, looking at statistics from CEFR (Council of Europe, 2021), EF Proficiency Center (EF EPI, 2020a), Skjelde & Coxhead (2020), and Hellekjær (2007) confirms that the overall knowledge of English is too low. 37.5% of female respondents are motivated to learn more English. A total of 15 positive respondents wish to learn more English, 3 of whom are highly motivated. Together, these two answers add up to 46.88%, which results in a 4.47% difference in answers between genders. It can be concluded, therefore, that girls are less motivated than boys. This statistic indicates a higher rate of unmotivated girls, 28.13%. Combined, the two negatively motivated answers are 34.38%, which represents a worrying discrepancy between genders of 23.57%. Among the 19 male respondents, 51.35% were classified positively. This is definitely alarming and further investigation is warranted. Unfortunately, there are no questions in the questionnaire that support the question of motivation. Considering the data after the fact demonstrates a need for a question that supports Q6, to investigate why there is such a large gap among boys and girls. Furthermore, these alarming statistics should be taken seriously. The male respondents are much more motivated than the females. This proves that the hypothesis is false, and that 'the boy discourse' previously discussed in chapter 2.4 is not empirically true for the scope of this thesis.

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## 5. Concluding remarks

The conclusion of the findings summarizes the research questions and the results supporting the research questions.

Most respondents believe that the obligatory English subject is helpful despite the fact that 50.73 percent of pupils are negatively motivated or indifferent to learning more English. Of the respondents, 40.58 % found the mandatory English subject neither interesting nor uninteresting, and viewed it as an unimportant subject. As a result, the respondents may, one way or another, have been passive recipients of passed down knowledge (Jordet, 2020). The result of this, according to Jordet (2020) and Lillejord, Børte & Nesje (2018), is that pupils lose their motivation to learn.

In the opinion of the respondents, their English language skills are adequate and prepare them well for higher education, society, and the workplace. A comparison of the female and male responses shows that the male respondents appear to be better equipped. It is unclear how the respondents view themselves in terms of 'equipped' and whether they are sufficiently equipped with professional English or General English. My interpretation is that the respondents have learnt English, but in an uninteresting manner, and that these two combined, decreases the respondent's motivation to learn more English. This is alarming, when comparing this interpretation to the literature review, where the knowledge of the English language is too low regarding writing, reading and formal language. The answers are quite dissimilar, where the males are more motivated to learn more English than what the females are. It is not difficult to properly conclude whether 'the boy problem' is applicable to the data conducted for this thesis. The findings in relation to 'the boy problem' indicate that some of the male respondents did in fact appear more motivated and better equipped for higher education, society and working life than the female respondents. Thus, the hypothesis is false, and 'the boy discourse' is empirically false in the scope of this thesis. The deficiency between the gender in terms of motivation, is 23.57%, which is a significant difference.

The number of pupils choosing English as an elective equalled 7.25%, which is alarming, in relation to the need for adolescent to improve their English skills. Many of the respondents mentioned studying abroad as a factor to why they would choose English, and this illustrates that they might not be as sufficient as they first appeared. Choosing one specialization programme over another in terms of elective course requirements is an outdated practice, and should be revised accordingly, in my opinion. No harm is caused to pupils who study

Calculus, Sociology, Anthropology, and Physics, or English, Chemistry, and Marketing Management. If the pupils wish to do so, they should be allowed. The LK20 curriculum encourages pupils to become more self-realising and expressive. It is the pupils' choice, allow them.

## 5.1 Limitations

The first limitation of this thesis was the struggle obtaining enough participants. When setting out the research idea, I initially thought that the schools would welcome me with open arms. This was not the case however, and I do not know if this was due to Covid-19, or simply because the schools receive many requests. I called a total of 9 public schools, where the last school on the call list answered. Had this school decided to decline my request, I would have had to change the entire scope of the thesis and go beyond the county-municipality.

It is difficult to cater for every outcome when conducting research. Upon reviewing the data collected, I realised that there should have been a question following up on motivation in Q6. The big gap in motivation between females and males needs investigating.

I limited myself when creating questions revolving lower secondary. In my thoughts, there would be plenty of pupils choosing in-depth studies in English as one of their programme subjects in lower secondary. This, however, was not the case, and the programme selection in lower secondary has changed drastically from when I attended lower secondary. These questions should have been rephrased.

## 5.2 Future research

Firstly, in terms of internal reliability, the pupils were asked about motivation and interest in English as a subject. Therefore, they may not be 'counted', as motivation and interest may change, however, the pupils investigated have learned English under the old curriculum, and seeing as the curriculum is newly revised, the outcome of a future study based off the same methodology, may be different. This, however, is an interesting future research topic, and

can evaluate the newly revised curriculum, to see if there is an actual change in English as an elective in upper secondary school.

Secondly, it would be interesting to see how the newly revised English elective subjects, *English 1* and *English 2*, deals with the issues addressed in this thesis, and how the subjects may cater for motivation, perception of the pupils' English knowledge, and interest.

Thirdly, researching the knowledge of academic English versus General English, or conversational English, on pupils in lower and upper secondary to see if this can further explain the deficiency in pupils wanting to choose English as one of their elective subjects.

Lastly, to further investigate whether the pupils is negatively affected by the increased number of social medias, gaming, online platforms, and so forth, regarding English knowledge. Is the language changing?

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# Appendixes

## Appendix 1. Approval from NSD

### NSD sin vurdering

[Skriv ut](#)**Prosjekttittel**

Masteroppgave Lektor i språkfag, engelsk

**Referansenummer**

325269

**Registrert**

24.02.2021 av Kristin Rønningen - 205747@stud.inn.no

**Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon**

Høgskolen i Innlandet / Fakultet for lærerutdanning og pedagogikk / Institutt for pedagogikk og samfunnsfag - Hamar

**Prosjektansvarlig (vitenskapelig ansatt/veileder eller stipendiat)**

Knut Øystein Høvik, knut.hovik@inn.no, tlf: +4792460183

**Type prosjekt**

Studentprosjekt, masterstudium

**Kontaktinformasjon, student**

Kristin Rønningen, kristin\_ronningen@hotmail.com, tlf: 91863030

**Prosjektperiode**

01.03.2020 - 15.09.2021

**Status**

19.04.2021 - Vurdert

**Vurdering (1)**

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## Vurdering (1)

### 19.04.2021 - Vurdert

Det er vår vurdering at behandlingen av personopplysninger i prosjektet vil være i samsvar med personvernlovgivningen så fremt den gjennomføres i tråd med det som er dokumentert i meldeskjemaet den 19.04.2021 med vedlegg, samt i meldingsdialogen mellom innmelder og NSD. Behandlingen kan starte.

### TYPE OPPLYSNINGER OG VARIGHET

Prosjektet vil behandle alminnelige kategorier av personopplysninger frem til 15.09.2021.

### 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

NSD 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 viderebehandles 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

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

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).

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

NSD 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).

Nettskjema er databehandler i prosjektet. NSD legger til grunn at behandlingen oppfyller kravene til bruk av databehandler, jf. art 28 og 29.

For å forsikre dere om at kravene oppfylles, må dere følge interne retningslinjer og eventuelt 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 NSD 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/fyll-ut-meldeskjema-for-personopplysninger/melde-endringer-i-meldeskjema> Du må vente på svar fra NSD før endringen gjennomføres.

### OPPFØLGING AV PROSJEKTET

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

Kontaktperson hos NSD: Simon Gogl

Lykke til med prosjektet!

## Appendix 2. The questionnaire

### English as an Elective in Upper Secondary

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Obligatoriske felter er merket med denne stjernen \*

#### Velkommen til denne spørreundersøkelsen!

Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet. Dine svar fra spørreskjemaet blir registrert elektronisk, men vil holdes konfidensielt og er selvfølgelig anonymt.

Formålet med denne spørreundersøkelsen er å undersøke hvilke faktorer som påvirker elevene til å velge andre programfag fremfor engelsk. Dette innebærer blant annet å undersøke motivasjon for engelskfaget, påvirkning fra lærere og foreldre, erfaringer med faget fra skolen, samt interessen for engelsk.

Det er viktig å påpeke at svarene i denne spørreundersøkelsen blir holdt hemmelig, og det er kun jeg som har tilgang til svarene i spørreskjemaet. Dette betyr at lærere eller andre ikke får innsyn i dine svar.

**Les spørsmålene nøye og svar så godt som mulig. Til slutt i skjemaet vil det være en rubrikk kalt "Andre relevante opplysninger". Her kan du legge til tilleggsinformasjon hvis dette er ønskelig/nødvendig.**

Spørsmål 1: Kjønn \*

Jente

Gutt

Spørsmål 2: Hvilken fordypning har du valgt på Vg2? \*

Realfag

Språk, samfunnsfag og økonomi

Spørsmål 3: Kommer du fra et flerspråklig hjem? \*

Med *flerspråklig* menes det om du har vokst opp med to eller flere språk som du identifiserer deg med. Dette kan for eksempel være norsk og urdu eller tysk, polsk og vietnamesisk.

Det er viktig å presisere at du ikke trenger å være flytende i begge/alle språkene for at det regnes som flerspråklig!

Ja

Nei

**Spørsmål 3a: Hvilke språk har du vokst opp med? \***

**i** Dette elementet vises kun dersom alternativet «Ja» er valgt i spørsmålet «Spørsmål 3: Kommer du fra et flerspråklig hjem?»

*Skriv språkene nedenfor.*

**Spørsmål 4: Har du bodd eller tilbrakt lenger tid (mer enn seks måneder) i et annet land? \***

Ja

Nei

**Spørsmål 5: Pleier du/dere å reise på utenlandsopphold? \***

*Dette kan være ferie, besøke slektninger og lignende.*

Ja, flere ganger per år

Ja, en gang per år

Ikke hvert år

Har aldri vært utenlands

Vet ikke

**Spørsmål 6: Motivasjon for å lære engelsk \***

**På en skala fra 1-5, i hvilken grad vil du si at du er motivert for å lære mer engelsk?**

1. Svært umotivert

2. Umotivert

3. Hverken umotivert eller motivert

4. Motivert

5. Svært motivert

6. Ønsker ikke si

Spørsmål 7a: Hvordan opplevde du den obligatoriske engelskundervisningen? \*

*Med obligatorisk menes det den undervisningen du må ha. Engelsk er obligatorisk i Norge fra 1.-trinn til første videregående.*

**På en skala fra 1-5, synes du at det du lærer i engelskundervisningen er nyttig for deg i hverdagen?**

- 1. Svært unyttig
- 2. Unyttig
- 3. Hverken nyttig eller unyttig
- 4. Nyttig
- 5. Svært nyttig
- 6. Ønsker ikke si

Spørsmål 7b: Hvordan opplevde du den obligatoriske engelskundervisningen? \*

*Med obligatorisk menes det den undervisningen du må ha. Engelsk er obligatorisk i Norge fra 1.-trinn til første videregående.*


**På en skala fra 1-5, synes du at engelskundervisningen i skolen er interessant?**

- 1. Svært uinteressant
- 2. Uinteressant
- 3. Hverken interessant eller uinteressant
- 4. Interessant
- 5. Svært interessant
- 6. Ønsker ikke si

Spørsmål 8: Hadde du engelsk programfag på ungdomsskolen? \*


- Ja
- Nei

**Spørsmål 8a: Hva synes du om engelsk programfag på ungdomsskolen? \***

 Dette elementet vises kun dersom alternativet «Ja» er valgt i spørsmålet «Spørsmål 8: Hadde du engelsk programfag på ungdomsskolen?»


- 1. Uinteressant
- 2. Litt uinteressant
- 3. Hverken uinteressant eller interessant
- 4. Litt interessant
- 5. Veldig interessant
- 6. Måtte velge noe
- 7. Ikke utfordrende nok til å være engelsk fordypning
- 8. Mer utfordrende enn jeg hadde trodd

**Spørsmål 8b: Har du valgt engelsk programfag på Vgs også? \***

 Dette elementet vises kun dersom alternativet «Ja» er valgt i spørsmålet «Spørsmål 8: Hadde du engelsk programfag på ungdomsskolen?»

- Ja
- Nei

**Spørsmål 8c: I hvilken grad vil du si at undervisningen i engelsk programfag er forskjellig fra undervisningen i den obligatoriske engelskundervisningen? \***

 Dette elementet vises kun dersom alternativet «Ja» er valgt i spørsmålet «Spørsmål 8b: Har du valgt engelsk programfag på Vgs også?»

- 1. I liten/ingen grad
- 2. I noen grad
- 3. I ganske stor grad
- 4. I veldig stor grad
- 5. Vet ikke



Spørsmål 8b: I hvilken grad vil du si at undervisningen i engelsk programfag er forskjellig fra undervisningen i den obligatoriske engelskundervisningen? \*

**i** Dette elementet vises kun dersom alternativet «Ja» er valgt i spørsmålet «Spørsmål 8a: Har du valgt engelsk programfag på Vgs?»

- 1. I liten/ingen grad
- 2. I noen grad
- 3. I ganske stor grad
- 4. I veldig stor grad
- 5. Vet ikke

Spørsmål 8b: Hvorfor har du ikke valgt engelsk som valgfag på Vgs? \*

**i** Dette elementet vises kun dersom alternativet «Nei» er valgt i spørsmålet «Spørsmål 8a: Har du valgt engelsk programfag på Vgs?»

- 1. Kjedelig
- 2. Interesserer meg ikke
- 3. Kunne ikke velge det på grunn av fordypning og fagkombinasjoner
- 4. Føler ikke jeg trenger å lære mer engelsk
- 5. Det er nok med 11 år obligatorisk engelsk

Spørsmål 9a: Utdanning og arbeidsliv \*

*Hvordan ser du på engelsk videre med tanke på videre utdanning?*

*Flere studier i dag foregår på engelsk, eller innehar deler som foregår på engelsk. Dette innebærer at undervisningen kan gjennomføres på engelsk eller at man har engelske lærebøker eller tekster.*

**På en skala fra 1-5, hvor viktig tror du det blir å kunne tilstrekkelig med engelsk med tanke på videre utdanning?**

- 1. Ikke viktig
- 2. Litt viktig
- 3. Viktig
- 4. Veldig viktig
- 5. Usikker/Var ikke klar over at dette var tilfellet

**Spørsmål 8d: Hvorfor har du valgt engelsk programfag på Vgs? \***

**i** Dette elementet vises kun dersom alternativet «Ja» er valgt i spørsmålet «Spørsmål 8b: Har du valgt engelsk programfag på Vgs også?»

- 1. Fordi jeg synes engelsk er spennende
- 2. Jeg ønsker å lære mer/fordype meg innen engelsk
- 3. Fordi det virker enkelt å få god karakter hvis man kan litt engelsk
- 4. Visste ikke hva jeg skulle velge
- 5. Påvirkning av venner/familie
- 6. Læreren min anbefalte det
- 7. Få/ingen interessante alternativer

**Spørsmål 8b: Hvorfor har du ikke valgt engelsk som programfag på Vgs? \***

**i** Dette elementet vises kun dersom alternativet «Nei» er valgt i spørsmålet «Spørsmål 8b: Har du valgt engelsk programfag på Vgs også?»

- 1. Kjedelig
- 2. Interesserer meg ikke lenger
- 3. Kunne ikke velge det på grunn av fordypning og fagkombinasjoner
- 4. Føler ikke jeg trenger å lære mer engelsk
- 5. Dårlig erfaring fra engelsk programfag på ungdomsskolen
- 6. Det er nok med 11 år obligatorisk engelsk

**Spørsmål 8a: Har du valgt engelsk programfag på Vgs? \***

**i** Dette elementet vises kun dersom alternativet «Nei» er valgt i spørsmålet «Spørsmål 8: Hadde du engelsk programfag på ungdomsskolen?»

- Ja
- Nei

**Spørsmål 9b: Utdanning og arbeidsliv \***

På en skala fra 1-5, hvordan synes du at du etter 11 år med obligatorisk engelskopplæring er utrustet med tanke på videre utdanning og arbeidsliv?

- 1. Svært dårlig
- 2. Dårlig
- 3. Hverken godt eller dårlig
- 4. Godt
- 5. Svært godt
- 6. Vet ikke/Ønsker ikke si

**Spørsmål 10: Hvilke valgfag har du valgt? \***

Skriv hvilke valgfag du har valgt nedenfor.

**Spørsmål 11: Hvorfor valgte du valgfagene du har valgt? \***

- 1. På grunn av høyere utdanning
- 2. Fordi det interesserer meg
- 3. Påvirkning av venner/familie
- 4. Fordi det er lurt å velge de valgfagene hvis man er usikker på veien videre
- 5. Måtte velge noe
- 6. Visste ikke hva jeg skulle velge
- 7. Annet

**Spørsmål 11a: Hvorfor valgte du valgfagene du har valgt? \***

 Dette elementet vises kun dersom alternativet «7. Annet» er valgt i spørsmålet «Spørsmål 11: Hvorfor valgte du valgfagene du har valgt?»

*Skriv kort hvorfor du valgte valgfagene du har valgt.*

**Spørsmål 12: Gjør skolens fagtilbud det begrensende for deg å velge de valgfagene du vil? \***

*Det er forskjellige grunner til at man ikke nødvendigvis får velge de valgfagene man selv ønsker. Dette kan være ønske om høyere utdanning og krav, at skolen ikke kunne tilby disse valgfagene eller andre personlige grunner.*

- Ja, de er begrensende. Jeg fikk ikke velge de valgfagene jeg ønsket
- Nei, de er ikke begrensende. Jeg fikk velge de valgfagene jeg ønsket

**Andre relevante opplysninger**

**Tusen takk for at du deltok i dette forskningsprosjektet!**

### Appendix 3. Formal request to conduct questionnaire sent by mail, with approval letters

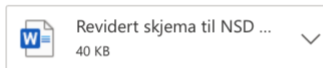
#### Forespørsel om deltakelse i forskningsprosjekt



Kristin Rønningen

Thu 4/22/2021 11:10 AM

To: [REDACTED]



Hei [REDACTED]

Håper alt står bra til med deg 😊

Det har vært litt frem og tilbake med masteroppgaven min grunnet covid-19. Jeg har derfor kommet frem til og besluttet at jeg må gjennomføre en spørreundersøkelse for å komme i havn med den.

Formålet med spørreundersøkelsen er å undersøke erfaringer med engelskundervisning og engelskfaget blant elever på Vg1. Bakgrunnen for dette

er at elever i videregående skole har mange valgmuligheter når det kommer til programfag etter Vg1. Det er generelt en nedgang i antall elever som velger engelsk som ett av sine programfag. Dette har over tid resultert i få elever på programfagene Internasjonal Engelsk og Samfunnsfaglig Engelsk, sammenlignet med andre programfag.

Jeg ønsker å se om det er en sammenheng mellom elevenes planer for fremtiden (høyere utdanning/realfagskompetanse), deres motivasjon for engelskfaget og generelt hva elevene vektlegger ved valg av programfag.

Jeg vil herved spørre om dere vil tillate meg å gjennomføre spørreundersøkelsen på Vg1. Spørreundersøkelsen tar om lag 10 minutter, og er anonym. De fleste spørsmålene i spørreundersøkelsen er utformet slik at de tar for seg det nasjonale rammeverket til engelskfaget. Dette vil si at ingen av spørsmålene spør direkte etter hvordan deres skole gjennomfører engelskundervisningen.

Legger ved NSD-skjemaet som vedlegg, da dette har litt mer utfyllende informasjon. Du kan også få spørreskjemaet hvis dette er ønskelig før du/dere gir meg et svar. Jeg venter på tilbakemelding fra veileder på et par punkter så det er derfor jeg ikke har lagt det ved som vedlegg.

Med vennlig hilsen  
Kristin Rønningen



[REDACTED]

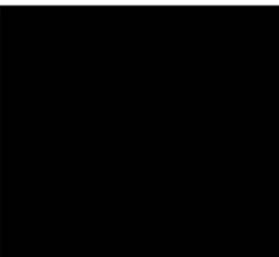
To: You



Hei, Kristin!

Godt å høre at du er i gang igjen 😊.

Dette kan vi være med på. Det ser ikke ut til å være krav om samtykke fra foresatte?



## Forespørsel om deltakelse i forskningsprosjekt

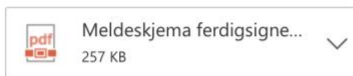


Kristin Rønningen

Mon 5/3/2021 11:15 AM



To: [REDACTED]



Hei igjen, [REDACTED]

Sender over informasjonsskriv fra NSD, som avtalt over telefon. Hvis du ønsker å se spørreundersøkelsen slik den ser ut for meg, kan jeg også sende denne!

Informasjonsskrivet fra NSD inneholder en del informasjon, så jeg legger ved et kortfattet sammendrag under:

Formålet med spørreundersøkelsen er å undersøke elevenes erfaringer med engelskundervisning og engelskfaget. Bakgrunnen for dette er at elever i videregående skole har mange valgmuligheter når det kommer til valg av programfag etter vg1. Det er generelt en nedgang i antall elever som velger engelsk som ett av sine programfag. Dette har over tid resultert i få elever på programfagene Internasjonal Engelsk og Samfunnsfaglig Engelsk, sammenlignet med andre programfag.

Jeg ønsker å se om det er en sammenheng mellom elevenes planer for fremtiden (høyere utdanning / realfagskompetanse), deres motivasjon for engelskfaget og generelt hva elevene vektlegger ved valg av programfag.

Ser fram i mot å komme til [REDACTED] mandag 10.05.21!

Med vennlig hilsen  
Kristin Rønningen

## SV: Forespørsel om deltakelse i forskningsprosjekt



[REDACTED]  
Tue 5/4/2021 7:44 AM

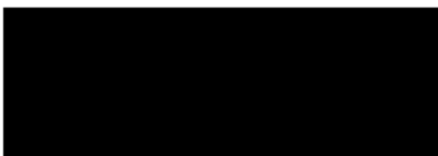


To: You

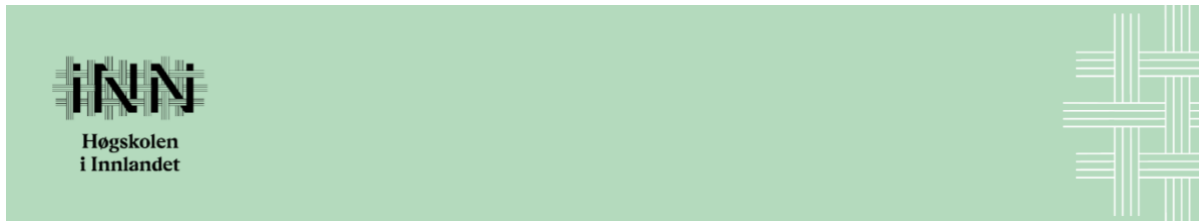
Da er du velkommen hit mandag 10.mai

Du får ikke treffe klassene helt rett etter hverandre, men klokken 11.00 i 1STB, og klokken 13.20 i 1STA. Håper det går greit.

Med vennlig hilsen  
[REDACTED]  
Avdelingsleder  
Studiespesialisering



## Appendix 5. Meldeskjema to NSD



### **Forespørsel om å delta i masterprosjekt: informasjon og samtykkeskjema**

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er å undersøke erfaringer med engelskundervisning og engelskfaget blant elever på Vg1 og motivasjon for å velge engelsk som programfag kontra andre fag i Vg2 og Vg3. I dette skrivet gir vi deg informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.

#### **Prosjektansvarlige:**

Knut Øystein Høvik

Kristin Rønningen

#### **Formål**

I forbindelse med min masteroppgave ved Høgskolen i Innlandet gjennomfører jeg et prosjekt der hensikten er å undersøke hvilke faktorer som ligger til grunn når elever velger engelsk som programfag i videregående skole.

Elever i videregående skole har mange valgmuligheter når det kommer til programfag etter Vg1. Det er generelt en nedgang i antall elever som velger engelsk som ett av sine programfag. Dette har over tid resultert i få elever på programfagene Internasjonal Engelsk og Samfunnsfaglig Engelsk, sammenlignet med andre programfag.



Formålet med dette forskningsprosjektet er å undersøke hva slags faktorer som påvirker elevene til å velge andre programfag fremfor engelsk. Dette innebærer

blant annet å undersøke motivasjon for engelskfaget, påvirkning fra lærere og foreldre, erfaringer med faget fra skolen, samt interessen for engelsk.

Målet med prosjektet er å bidra til en større forståelse for engelskfaget sett fra elevenes ståsted, samt å belyse den generelle interessen for engelsk programfag.

Utvalget til dette prosjektet baseres på elever i Vg1 som skal velge programfag. Om lag 60-120 elever vil bli spurt om å delta, slik at man vil få et representativt utvalg fra flere videregående skoler i Innlandet fylkeskommune.

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

Hvis du velger å delta i prosjektet, innebærer det at du fyller ut et spørreskjema. Dette vil ta deg ca. 10-15 minutter. Spørreskjemaet inneholder blant annet generelle spørsmål angående engelskfaget, din motivasjon for engelsk, samt hvorfor/hvorfor ikke du velger engelsk som ett av dine programfag. Dine svar fra spørreskjemaet blir registrert elektronisk, men vil holdes konfidensielt og selvfølgelig anonymt. Dine svar vil derfor ikke kunne spores tilbake til deg. Selve undersøkelsen forgår i Nettskjema, som leveres av Universitetet i Oslo og er en sikker og anerkjent løsning for datainnsamling. Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet. Hvis du velger å delta, kan du når som helst trekke deg fra deltakelse i prosjektet 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. Det er viktig å presisere at dine svar eller din deltakelse vil ikke påvirke ditt forhold til skolen eller lærer(e).



Vi vil bare bruke opplysningene om deg til formålene vi har fortalt om i dette skrivet. Vi behandler opplysningene konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Det vil kun være jeg, Kristin Rønningen, og min veileder, Knut Øystein Høvik, som vil ha tilgang til dine svar. Nettskjema vil anonymisere og kryptere din IP-adresse og annen informasjon som kan være identifiserbart, slik at ingenting kan spores tilbake til deg.

### **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 NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS 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



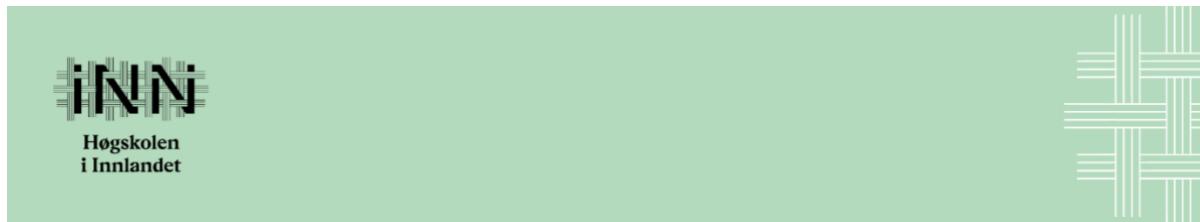
Opplysningene destrueres når prosjektet avsluttes/oppgaven er godkjent, noe som etter planen er høsten 2021.

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

- Prosjektveileder ved Høgskolen i Innlandet, Knut Øystein Høvik, med epostadresse [knut.hovik@inn.no](mailto:knut.hovik@inn.no).
- Student ved Høgskolen i Innlandet, Kristin Rønningen, med epostadresse [kristin\\_ronningen@hotmail.com](mailto:kristin_ronningen@hotmail.com).
- Vårt personvernombud: Seniorrådgiver Hans Petter Nyberg ved Høgskolen i Innlandet, med epostadresse [hans.nyberg@inn.no](mailto:hans.nyberg@inn.no).

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

- NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS på epost, [personverntjenester@nsd.no](mailto:personverntjenester@nsd.no), eller på telefon: 55 58 21 17.



Med vennlig hilsen

Knut Øystein Høvik Kristin Rønningen (V eileder) (Student)



## Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til:

• å delta i spørreskjema utviklet for prosjektet

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

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(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)