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Influences and Considerations Involved in EFL Teachers' Literature Selections

A Qualitative Interview Study

Master's Thesis in Didactics for English and Foreign Language Education

Trondheim, May 2018

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Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I will take this opportunity to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Delilah Bermudez Brataas. I am grateful for your exemplary support, guidance, and feedback towards the completion of this thesis, and for giving me useful assistance when I needed it. I also want to thank Anita Normann for arranging the very helpful Master-seminars throughout the course of this year, and for all of the participating supervisors who also provided their guidance, comments, and assistance. Then, I express my profound thankfulness to the seven participants who made this research possible. Thank you for taking the time to share your experiences, teaching practices and insights. Furthermore, a big thank you goes to my family and friends for their love and support, and for your patience during our endless conversations regarding this thesis. Lastly, I particularly owe my gratitude to my beloved fiancé Kim. As always, you have been my most dedicated and loyal motivator, supporter, friend, and listener, who have selflessly been there for me through the ups and downs of this process. Thank you.

Trondheim, May 2018

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Abstract

The benefits of literature reading in foreign language teaching and learning are numerous. It not only embodies contextualized and authentic language input, but also illustrates human experiences, foreign cultures, and historical contexts. Literary texts can also develop students' intercultural competence, and instil a lifelong relationship with literature reading in students. However, in order to achieve these benefits, it is essential that teachers make good literary choices adapted to their students' proficiencies, needs, and interests. Therefore, as a step towards understanding how to make successful choices, this study investigates the influences and considerations involved in seven teachers' literature selections in the upper secondary EFL classroom in Norway. Building on my preconceived hypothesis about the influence of a literary canon on teachers' literary selections, the findings of the qualitative interviews with each of the teachers highlight ten influences on teachers' decision-making.

Firstly, practical issues such as *time* and *access* to texts sometimes limit teachers' literary choices, as the teachers express a lack of time to read literature in class, and do not always have access to class-sets of appropriate books. Furthermore, other aspects such as *colleagues*, *textbooks*, and *personal interests* also influence the teachers. Nonetheless, the teachers emphasise *language level*, *development*, and *student interest* as the main influences on their literature selections. This involves selecting appropriate texts adapted to students' language proficiencies and interests, as well as to choose texts that will develop students' personalities, moral attitudes, and cultural insights. When the teachers select texts according to students' interests, their ultimate goal is to promote aesthetic pleasure reading and a positive relationship with literature. However, the findings suggest that the English subject curricula in *The Knowledge Promotion* prevent aesthetic reading from occurring, as its focus on fulfilling competence aims promote an efferent stance to literature reading. In all, the study concludes that the ten influences and considerations involved in teachers' literary selections affect the teachers to a varying degree, depending on the purpose- and desired outcome of the reading. The teachers in this study do, to some degree, show a canonical approach to literature selection; however, other influences and considerations often override this canonical influence.

Sammendrag

Fordelene med å lese litteratur i fremmedspråksundervisning er mange. Litteratur bringer kontekstualisert og autentisk språk til live for leserne, samtidig som det illustrerer menneskelige erfaringer, fremmede kulturer og historiske hendelser. Litterære tekster kan også bidra til å utvikle elevenes interkulturelle kompetanse, og frembringe et livslangt forhold til litteraturlesing. For å oppnå disse fordelene er det derfor viktig at lærere tar gode litterære valg, tilpasset elevenes ferdigheter, behov og interesser. Som et steg mot å forstå hvordan man tar gode litteraturvalg, utforsker denne studien hvilke innflytelser og hensyn som ligger til grunn for syv læreres utvalg av litteratur i engelskfaget i den videregående skole i Norge. Som bakgrunn for studien lå min forutinntatte hypotese om at en litterær kanon påvirket lærernes valg, men de kvalitative intervjuene med hver av de syv lærerne identifiserte snarere ti innflytelser og hensyn med påvirkning på lærernes litteraturvalg.

Først og fremst viser studien at praktiske saker som *tid* og *tilgang* til tekster begrenser lærernes valg, da lærerne uttrykker mangel på tid til å lese litteratur i klasserommet, samt at de ikke alltid har tilgang til klassesett av hensiktsmessige bøker. Videre har også aspekter som *kolleger*, *lærebøker*, og lærernes *personlige interesser* påvirkning. Likevel vektlegger lærerne elevenes *språkferdigheter*, *utvikling* og *interesser* i utvalgsprosessen, noe som involverer å velge tekster som er tilpasset elevenes språkkompetanser og interesser, samt tekster som vil utvikle elevenes personligheter, moralske holdninger og kulturelle innsikter. Når lærerne velger tekster etter elevenes interesser, er deres ultimate mål å fremme estetisk leseglede og et positivt forhold til litteratur blant elevene. Imidlertid viser studien at læreplanene for engelsk i *Kunnskapsløftet* ofte forhindrer estetisk lesing, da læreplanens fokus på å oppnå kompetansemål i stedet fremmer efferent lesing. Studien konkluderer med at alle de ti innflytelsene og hensynene påvirker lærerne i ulik grad, avhengig av formålet og det ønskede utfallet av litteraturlesingen. Til en viss grad viser lærerne i studien en kanonisk tilnærming til litteraturvalg, men andre innflytelser og hensyn er ofte ansett som viktigere, og påvirker dem derfor i større grad.

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1. Introduction

The EFL classroom is a melting pot of different interests. Students and teachers of different social and cultural backgrounds interact in a learning process where the goal is, amongst others, development of language skills and intercultural competence. Furthermore, the English Subject should also promote a personal and lifelong relationship with literature to students. Literature provides excellent ways into cultures and societies different from our own, promotes language- and reading skills, and gives students pleasurable reading experiences by allowing them to engage in someone else's world. For EFL teachers, this involves making decisions on *what* literature the students should read, *how* to work with the texts and *why*. Most studies and writings on the field of literature in language learning contexts revolve around the issue of *how* literary texts should be used in the classroom. However, teachers cannot expect their literature teaching to be successful and engaging if they make poor literary choices that are not adapted to their students' abilities, needs, and interests. Selecting *what* literature the students should read is only the first step in a complex instruction process, but it is one of great importance. Therefore, this study seeks to understand teachers' decision-making when selecting literature for the EFL classroom, and the considerations and influences involved in their choices.

1.1. Thesis Question, Purpose, and Scope of the Study

The task of selecting literature is an important one for all EFL teachers in Norway, especially since the Norwegian English Subject Curriculum has steadily moved away from recommending specific literary texts, towards a flexible curriculum where teachers are free to choose texts they find relevant for fulfilling competence aims (Williams, 2013, p. 163). Furthermore, EFL teachers also have a large pedagogic task in promoting and implementing literature in their teaching, as such texts should both encourage language learning and cognitive development through reading, as well as to create a lifelong relationship with literature. This suggests that EFL teachers are required to make informed choices of literature to use in the classroom throughout their entire teaching careers. Because of this, I emphasise the importance of understanding the influences behind teachers' literary selections, to promote awareness around a well-informed and thoughtful selection process.

With this in mind, I present the following thesis question: *What are the considerations and influences involved in teachers' decisions with selecting literature in the upper secondary EFL classroom?*

Within the frame of sociocultural theory, this qualitative interview study investigates what influenced seven teachers' literary selections, and explores which considerations the teachers made when choosing texts for the EFL classroom at upper secondary level. Through conducting semi-structured qualitative interviews with each of the teachers, I asked the teachers to reflect on their views of literary selection, and on what they believe influenced them to select the texts that they did. The aim of this study is to investigate and discuss the influences on teachers' literary decision-making as a way to inform about how teachers are making curricular choices. Moreover, the participants were selected according to their education and experience, as well as to which upper secondary EFL subjects they have taught. Common for all of the participants is that they are certified teachers, with a Master's degree in their respective fields. In all, the teachers have taught each of the English subjects offered at the Education Programme for Specialization in General Studies in Norwegian upper secondary schools. The participants' background and education will be elaborated on in chapter 3.

Overall, it must be stressed that when I discuss 'literature' in this thesis, I always point to literary works of *fiction*. This involves novels, short stories, poetry, song lyrics, and other forms of fictional texts; however, the focus will be on teachers' selection of novels and short stories. I have chosen this focus because novels and short stories are the principal written form of storytelling in our part of the world today; however, most young adults do not seek out and read such texts on their own initiative. Hence, it is important that students get to practice reading and experiencing such texts in the classroom, which emphasise the importance of a reflected and deliberate literature selection. In addition, it is also important to point out that the influences and considerations that emerged from the interviews are not only cognitive aspects, such as interest and language level. The interviews also requested practical elements (textbooks, time and access), as well as specific ideas and purposes to which they intended to use the literature (development, language purposes, and pleasure reading).

Teaching literature to students should not just be about teaching reading and language skills, it should also be about promoting a lifelong relationship with books and literature, to experience pleasure and enjoyment when reading. This involves students learning that books can be an integral part of their lives, and learning that literature can be valuable as opposed to

something they ‘have to’ read in school. Furthermore, literature can also be a resource for teaching students about culture and history, as narrative texts provide excellent cultural- and historical contexts from which the students can acquaint authentic first-hand experiences about the issues presented in the literature. In this way, the books that teachers use in their classrooms have the potential to influence the students’ lives (Weih, 2014), as engaging and appropriately selected texts can instil lifelong reading of literary works which can guide students on the path towards global awareness and citizenship.

1.2. The Current Situation: Literature Reading in LK06

The following chapter will present how the reading of literature in the EFL classroom is emphasised throughout the English Subject Curriculum for upper secondary school in *The Knowledge Promotion* (LK06). In order to understand the position literature has in our current curriculum, and to understand why teachers select literature, it is necessary to briefly discuss the role of literature in LK06’s two predecessors for upper secondary school, the Veierød Reform and Reform 94. However, the focus of this chapter will be to present how literature is evident in the purpose, main subject areas, and competence aims for each of the English subject curricula in LK06 for the Education Programme for Specialization in General Studies.

1.2.1. Literature in Previous Curricula

The Veierød Reform was an educational reform introduced for upper secondary schools in 1989, with an objective to strengthen the position of the English language in Norway. Many teachers look upon the period of this reform as the ‘golden era’ of literature teaching in upper secondary schools (Ibsen, 2000b, p. 82). Never had the position of English literature been stronger in the Norwegian school system, and never before had the subject been more popular (Ibsen, 2000b, p. 53). The first year after the introduction of this reform, the proportion of upper secondary students who chose the advanced English course rose to 33% of all students (Ibsen & Lie, 1990, as cited in Ibsen, 2000b, p. 54), and it rose even higher over the following years, attracting both boys and girls. This reform marked the peak in the interest for the advanced English courses in upper secondary schools in Norway, and a high percentage of the students left school with extensive knowledge of English literature and culture (Ibsen, 2000b, p. 80).

However, Reform 94 (R94) introduced a fixed syllabus of set texts and about 500 pages to be covered over the period of two years (VKI and VKII), including both literature and culture. A common national syllabus gave meaning to the teaching of literature, as the examinations in

the subject presupposed solid knowledge on particular works of literature, as well as developed language skills (Wiland, 2000, p. 82). Consequently, teachers of the previous Veierød Reform feared that literature would lose its place within the foreign language classroom, as students no longer needed knowledge about particular works of literature, literary history or literary terms. They feared that “the sad remains of a once canonical heritage would be odd pieces of literature only used as tools for language instruction, and as support for teaching culture” (Wiland, 2000, p. 82).

1.2.2. Reading and Literature in The Knowledge Promotion (LK06)

In order to understand the influences and considerations that go into teachers’ literary choices for the EFL classroom, it is important to understand the steering document to which all teachers must custom their instruction. The LK06 is characterised as an open and unrestricted curriculum, with high teacher-autonomy. Generally, autonomy is characterised by an individual’s control in the terms and content of their work and related issues, based on their professional knowledge (Mausethagen & Mølstad, 2015, p. 31). Hence, teacher-autonomy involves the individual teacher being free to select teaching methods and materials they consider as appropriate for their students, based on their professional, moral and ethical principles required through their education and teaching experience (Mausethagen & Mølstad, 2015, p. 31). According to the LK06, the EFL teacher is free to choose the literature he or she considers as relevant for their students, as long as the use of the texts contributes to fulfilling the competence aims for the subject.

One of the most significant changes in the LK06 as compared to the previous curriculum for the upper secondary school, R94, is the introduction of- and emphasis on competencies and skills. With the introduction of competence aims and five Basic Skills, the focus of the curriculum has clearly shifted from a prominence of the content and methodology of the foreign language to an insistence on concrete learning outcomes (Olsbu, 2014, p. 13). In LK06, the freedom of methods and content is combined with somewhat rigidly defined learning outcomes, which for the EFL classroom implies the promotion of testable language skills. This does not correspond well with the use of literature for pleasure and enjoyment but rather views literature in the EFL classroom as a means to achieve more measurable language skills in the form of “can do”- statements.

Nonetheless, changes to- and revisions of curricula are ongoing processes that will never end. In fact, many changes have occurred since the introduction of LK06, while some are currently revolving around the English subject in Norway, which could potentially influence how

teachers will work with classroom literature in the future. For instance, the new revision of the Core Curriculum was published September 1, 2017 (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017), which presents the common values from which all teaching should be constructed. In addition, the Ludvigsen-selection published their report, *NOU 2015:8 Fremtidens Skole* (The School of the Future), with a focus on ‘in-depth learning’, which means that there is a need for a renewal of the subjects in school with in-depth learning in focus. However, as new revisions are being drafted, teachers must still focus on developing and improving their practices according to the current syllabus.

Purpose of the English Subject

Each English subject curriculum in LK06 clearly state the purpose of the subject, expressed in an individual section of the syllabus. Generally, these purposes are related to authentic language usage, different forms of communication, and insight into social, cultural, historical, and political aspects of the English-speaking world. In relation to the use of literature, the English subject curricula for the Education Programme for Specialization in General Studies especially emphasise that the purpose of the subject is to promote intercultural competence and a personal relationship with reading literature.

Firstly, there is a prominent focus on the promotion of intercultural competence to students, as it will provide students with competencies to master our increasingly global world. For VG1, the purpose of the English subject is to “contribute to providing insight into the way people live and different cultures where English is the primary or the official language” (Norwegian Directorate of Education and Training, 2006a). Furthermore, for the English programme subjects at VG2 and VG3, the purpose section of the curriculum states:

Because English is used worldwide in all cultures, intercultural competence is a natural and necessary aspect of language skills. The programme subject can help increase one’s insight into other people’s living conditions, outlook on life and cultural expression, thus opening doors to the many countries and cultures that use English. (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2006b).

Furthermore, the English subject also aims to instil in students a personal and enjoyable relationship with literature. At VG1, the purpose of using literary texts in the English subject is that it “can instil a lifelong joy of reading and a deeper understanding of others and of oneself. Oral, written and digital texts, films, music and other cultural forms of expression can

further inspire personal expressions and creativity” (Norwegian Directorate of Education and Training, 2006a). Moreover, the purpose of the VG2 and VG3 English programme subjects concerning this is to provide students with “a wellspring of experience, satisfaction and personal growth” (Norwegian Directorate of Education and Training, 2006b).

Main Subject Area: Culture, Society, and Literature

Furthermore, all the curricula in LK06 are divided into main subject areas, which provide direction for how its respective competence aims should be interpreted and implemented in the classroom. For the English Subject Curricula, the main subject areas are ‘Language and Language Learning’, ‘Communication’, and ‘Culture, Society and Literature’. These subject areas constitute the English subject, and they must be understood in relation to each other in order to comprehend the contents of the subject (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2016). It should be mentioned that literary texts could be used as a means to achieve most of the competence aims in LK06; however, the following section will present how literature is explicitly evident in the different subject areas and competence aims for English at VG1, VG2, and VG3.

VG1:

The English subject curriculum for VG1 mentions literature in the main subject area Culture, Society, and Literature, where there is a focus on cultural understanding in a broad sense. Based on the English-speaking countries of the world, this area covers key topics connected to social issues, literature, and other cultural expressions (Norwegian Directorate of Education and Training, 2006c). The use of literary texts is described here as essential for developing knowledge about-, understanding of-, and respect for the lives and cultures of others. This is reflected in the competence aims, which, for instance, state that students should be able to “discuss and elaborate on different types of English language literary texts from different parts of the world” and to “discuss and elaborate on texts by and about indigenous peoples in English-speaking countries” (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2006d). These aims suggest that teachers must choose literature based on their cultural origin and context.

VG2: International English

In the VG2 International English curriculum, literature is emphasised as a key theme of the subject, along with international cooperation, cultural understanding, and different kinds of

media- and cultural expressions in the English-speaking world. Overall, the subject is concerned with challenges facing international society, and with communication that spans distinctions and dissimilar value systems (Norwegian Directorate of Education and Training, 2006e). Nonetheless, literature is not as evident in the competence aims of this subject, as compared to the others; however, some competence aims still mention it explicitly. Firstly, students should be able to “elaborate on and discuss a selection of literature and factual prose from the period of 1950 up to the present” (Norwegian Directorate of Education and Training, 2006f), an aim that restricts the choice of literature to a specific time period. Secondly, students are expected to be able to “analyse, elaborate on and discuss at least one lengthy literary work and one film”, which guides teachers to choose literary works according to the length of texts.

VG3: Social Studies English

In Social Studies English, the main subject area of Culture, Society, and Literature promotes literature reading in relation to culture and society in the English-speaking world. The subject deals with political, social, and economic circumstances in various English-speaking countries, including both historical- and current events and processes that have affected the development of these societies (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2006e). One competence aim that specifically mentions literature states that students should be able to “interpret at least one major work of fiction, one film, and a selection from other English-language literature from the 1900s up to the present” (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2006g). This aim is very broad, and it requires the reading of more than one literary work. However, the aim does guide teachers in selecting literature, as it is restricted in terms of time-period and length.

Nonetheless, literature is also implicitly mentioned in relation to the main subject area Language and Language Learning. The students are required to be able to “elaborate on and discuss the relationship between form, content, and stylistic register in sentences in social texts” and to “analyse linguistic tools in texts in dissimilar genres and assess their impact” (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2006g). This suggests that literary texts should be used in the EFL classroom to analyse and discuss language features, content, and literary devices, and implies that teachers should choose texts that illustrate these forms.

VG3: English Literature and Culture

Lastly, the programme subject English Literature and Culture has the curriculum with the most direct and explicit references to literature reading. Linking literature and culture, this subject includes literary texts, theatre, music, and visual art from various time-periods and different parts of the world. A focus is on the relationship between text, culture, and society, as well as historical processes and current issues in international culture (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2006e). There are many competence aims directly connected to literature reading in all main subject areas. Among other requirements, the competence aims state that students must “have a command of the terminology needed for analysing works of fiction”, be able to “use a nuanced, well-developed, and precise vocabulary to communicate on literature and culture”, and to “interpret a representative selection of texts from literary historical periods in English literature, from the Renaissance up to the present time” (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2006h).

1.3. Previous Research

The debate and research concerning literature and its position in Norwegian schools are described and discussed in numerous master theses, doctorates, journals, and other media platforms. However, the topic of text selection in EFL classrooms in Norway is a field still in need of further research, as there is a knowledge gap concerning how the LK06 influence teachers’ literary choices. Thus, the majority of the research that underlies this thesis is research on text selection in educational contexts from other countries, but that is still relevant for a Norwegian EFL context. Nonetheless, I have also included some insight from research on literature selection in the Norwegian subject. In the following, I present previous research on the field of literature selection for EFL classrooms, which I will use in the later discussion to interpret the teachers’ explanations of what influenced their text selection.

Firstly, a study examining the reasoning four teams of middle-grade teachers in the US provided for their text selections for struggling readers, showed that teachers choose texts according to their own knowledge on the field of literature, access to texts, and institutional constraints on text selection (Friese, Alvermann, Parkes & Rezak, 2008). Teachers’ knowledge about literature and availability of texts are influences that could also be relevant for text selection in a Norwegian context, however, the issue of institutional constraints are not directly transferable. As discussed, The Knowledge Promotion does not restrain teachers

from selecting specific literature but allows teachers to choose freely the texts they want to use.

In relation to this, in her Master's thesis about literature selection in the Norwegian subject, Pernille Reitan Jensen (2017) discovered that the teachers in her study selected literature that would teach students *about* literary periods and canonical works, and not texts that would allow them to learn *through* or *from* literature. Jensen emphasises how this suggests that the teachers she interviewed showed a loyalty to previous teaching traditions, as all of them had been teaching under L97 (the previous curriculum for the primary- and lower secondary education). Furthermore, studies also show that teaching strategies in the EFL classroom in Norway tend to heavily rely on traditional textbooks, without further reading materials (Drew, Oostdam & Toorenburg, 2007, p. 335). This implies a sense of insecurity and inflexibility among Norwegian teachers, and a lack of awareness of the role of extensive reading in EFL teaching and learning.

Further, Rosenkjar (2006, p. 128) found that teachers should consider the appropriateness of the literature for their students, both when it comes to length, basic richness, and transparency of stylistic features in the text. Additionally, teachers must consider the familiarity of the content, context in the text, as well as the extent of deviation from the standard form of the language. To illustrate, most FL learners might have difficulties reading long and complex texts about unfamiliar contents placed in foreign contexts, which is why teachers must choose texts with which students can familiarise.

In addition, Butler (2006) conducted a case study at the University of North West, South Africa, about the importance of literature in language teaching and learning. He concluded the study report with four “practical ideas” for literature teachers, where two of them proved useful in relation to selecting literature for the EFL classroom. Butler's first relevant advice is to choose texts that are appropriate for the learners, and he specifically points to appropriateness in terms of knowledge and experience, age, gender, social background, and political interest (2006, p. 11). He also emphasises that texts must appeal to the learners' imaginations and emotions. Secondly, he suggests that teachers should extend their definition of “literature”, and include popular fiction, traditional stories, narratives, and comic strips in their teaching. He emphasises that this does not necessarily mean that these forms must replace “serious” literary works, but can serve as introductions to them, and may bridge the gap between the known and the unknown for the learners.

In his doctorate about literature selection and instruction in lower secondary school, Hallvard Kjelen (2013) found that few of the teachers he interviewed considered the gender- and minority perspective in their text selection. The teachers mainly used texts from the traditional (male-dominated) western canon in their teaching, and few emphasised intercultural literatures as important. Furthermore, the teachers in his study did not teach many contemporary literary works, nor did they use literature specifically intended for young adults. Although Kjelen's study concern literature in the Norwegian subject at lower secondary school, I still see it as relevant insight literature selections at upper secondary school.

So far, the studies presented have revolved around the considerations teachers make when selecting literature for their students. However, teachers sometimes make deliberate decisions to allow their students to select literature independently. A study investigating the effect of using student-selected literature as opposed to instructor-selected literature demonstrates that students reading self-selected materials scored higher on autonomous motivation and perceived competence of the texts than the students reading instructor-selected materials (Wijnia, Loyens, Derous & Schmidt, 2014). The students choosing their own literature also scored lower on perceptions of mental effort during studying. This indicates that letting students choose their own literature will be beneficial in terms of reading motivation, perceived competence, as well as the students' perceptions of mental effort invested during reading. Furthermore, Sutphin (1992) showed how allowing students to select their own literature will increase student authority, responsibility, and freedom, as well as allow the students to experience the political implications of choice. By selecting their own texts, students can actively take responsibility for their own learning, a process many students deny themselves.

1.4. The Structure of the Thesis

This chapter has examined the purpose, background, and thesis question of this study, elaborated on the contents of the English subject curricula in LK06, and presented previous research in the field of literary selection. Chapter 2 will present the theoretical foundation of this thesis, including literary reader-response theories, reading strategies, different approaches to literature teaching and canonization tendencies in the English Subject. Chapter 3 will present my approach to the research field, the methods I have used, as well as the procedure and justification behind the choices I have made. The chapter will also elaborate on the validity and reliability of this study, as well as present the research participants, my

subjectivity and the analysis method used to make sense of the data. Chapter 4 will introduce a summary of the interviews, organized in categories according to the influences and considerations involved in the literary decision-making. Chapter 5 will discuss the study's findings in light of previous research and the theoretical foundations for this thesis. Lastly, chapter 6 will provide a conclusion to the thesis question, and conclude which didactic implications the findings of this study should have for literature teachers.

2. Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical foundation of this thesis includes various reader-response theories, which is relevant for understanding and discussing why the teachers select the literature that they do, based on their views of the purpose- and the processes involved in literature reading. The chapter will also present ways of reading for different purposes, which will be crucial for the discussion of the teachers' didactic intentions with the literature. Furthermore, a model of the intersection between literature and language in literature teaching will be presented, as well as a brief introduction to different approaches to literature instruction. These aspects will also be relevant for understanding and explaining the considerations and influences involved in literary text selection. Lastly, the chapter will explain the term canon, and discuss it in a Norwegian EFL context. I will also problematize how a literary canon can be seen as an expression and enforcement of power structures in the classroom, as it could reinforce differences in cultural capital amongst students.

2.1. Literature Reading and Reader-Response Theory

Reading and engaging in literature is both an affective and a cognitive process. Firstly, a meeting with a literary text could give the reader an emotional and personal experience, as well as give the reader room for reflection (Ibsen, 2000a, p. 144). The reader can discover new things about him/herself through the reading of the text, which ultimately will involve the students in a learning process. On a personal level, fiction also provides students with a chance to meet others. Literature presents readers with the comfort of meeting someone like themselves, and students are likely to find literary characters they can identify with, regardless of who they are (Iversen, 2013, p. 212). Fiction is also an entryway into people and cultures different from ourselves, and may therefore help promote intercultural understanding and help build empathy in students (Iversen, 2013, p. 212).

Furthermore, the cognitive stimulus is catered for through an analysis of words, content, structures, discourse patterns, and interpretation of meaning (Ibsen, 2000a, p. 144). When the reader enters a world of fiction, he or she will discover how literary effects are created through language, and how words are consciously used to convey meaning. In addition, the reading of literature can also be a means for literary analysis. A literary analysis starts with studying the elements of fiction with the goal of achieving a deeper understanding of the functions of texts and their meaning (Iversen, 2013, p. 212). Although literary analysis is an

intellectual activity, it also aims to enrich the readers' understanding and enjoyment of the text.

As I will elaborate on later, the main influences and considerations involved in the teachers' literary selections revolved around how their students perceived and interacted with the text. Due to this, I find it crucial to present the most influential researchers and ideas of the reader-response theory, to provide insight into different ways readers enter the world of fiction. Reader-response theory primarily outlines how readers understand a literary work, where the emphasis is on how readers receive and decipher the text, without having a fixed meaning forced upon them (Flemin & Schofer, 2017, p. 446). In other words, a readers' reception is more important than a hidden meaning in the text.

One of the most influential researchers on reader-response, Wolfgang Iser, argues that a text has no meaning without a situational context and the readers' subjective contributions to the reading process (Iser, 1978, p. 19). The text comes to life in the reader, even when its message has become so historical that it is no longer relevant to us. By reading, we are able to experience and understand things that are totally unfamiliar to us, and that possibly no longer exist. Furthermore, Iser states that the true meaning of any text is situated between the author's intentions with the text, and how the reader understands it. In this way, the reader will not find meaning in the text, but in the *reading* of the text. "As the reader passes through the various perspectives offered by the text and relates the different views and patterns to one another he sets the work in motion, and so sets himself in motion too" (Iser, 1978, p. 21). In an EFL context, this implies that teachers can never aim to teach students the true meaning of a text, or ask them to produce a 'correct' literary analysis, as there is no such thing.

In order for the reader to connect with and understand the text, Iser (1978) argues that the two following aspects must be fulfilled. Firstly, the text must resemble reality, so the reader can identify with the text and see it as relevant to their lives. Secondly, the reader must have a preconception and a prior understanding of the text, which is activated when he encounters the text. In the reading, the reader applies his own experiences and expectations during the reading process, which will determine what he looks for and finds important in the text. This means that when students in the EFL classroom encounter texts, they apply their previous experiences and knowledge about literature and life, which will essentially determine how they interpret and read the literary work.

Similarly, Hans Robert Jauss' ideas centre on the readers' prejudices, which include the individually, culturally, and historically determined attitudes, understandings, experiences, and knowledge that the reader uses to interpret new meaning (as cited in Claudi, 2013, p. 112). These prejudices make up the readers' *horizon of expectations*, which is the structure by which a person comprehend a literary work (Jauss & Benzinger, 1970). The theory emphasises the reader as important in the processing and interpretation of texts because the reader encounters the text with his previous knowledge and experience gained from interactions with other texts. "A new text evokes for the reader the horizon of expectations and rules familiar from earlier texts, which are then varied, corrected, changed or just reproduced" (Jauss & Benzinger, 1970, p. 13). Besides, texts can either fulfil the reader's expectations, modify them or break them down, and Jauss argues that the aesthetic value of a literary work can be placed along a linear axis. The lowest ranked texts are texts that comply with the reader's expectations, whereas texts that do not meet the expectations of its readers are ranked highly.

In line with Iser's ideas, another central reader-response researcher, Rosenblatt, argues that a text has no other meaning than simply being ink on a paper until the reader evokes from it a literary work (1994). She refers to this as a *transactional relationship* between the reader and the text, as she argues that the text and the reader have a mutual influence on each other in the process of reading and meaning-making. As a result, teachers of literature are helping their students to perform in response to a text (Rosenblatt, 2005). "The reader performs the poem or the novel, as the violinist performs the sonata. But the instrument on which the reader plays and from which he evokes the work – is himself" (Rosenblatt, 2005, p. 27). Generally, in the field of literary theory, she states, the reader is usually cast as a passive recipient of the impact of the text, whereas her transactional theory acclaims the reader a different sense of visibility as he or she actively engages in applying meaning to the text (Rosenblatt, 1994, p. 4). Furthermore, in line with Iser and Jauss, Rosenblatt also emphasises that the students' personalities, previous experiences, and current worldviews will essentially influence how they experience the literary text (Rosenblatt, 1995, p. 292). The reading of literature will therefore affect their feelings, fantasy, and their perception of reality, something that makes the reading of literary works in classrooms a crucial activity (Rosenblatt, 1995).

As the interaction and mutual relationship between the reader and the text is of such importance in Rosenblatt's theory, meaning cannot possibly occur where only one of the contributors are evident. Hence, a text will not have a meaning without a reader, and a reader

will not achieve meaning without a text. Besides, reading is a personal experience, and readers will encounter texts differently depending on their backgrounds and previous experiences. In a class of students, the readers will experience the same literary work in their own unique ways, as their different worldviews and understandings will influence how they understand the text. Accordingly, literature teachers have a great responsibility in selecting texts, as they must consider the students' backgrounds to find works that are appropriate for each individual student. In order to do this, it is important that the teacher knows his or her students, what interest and engage them, as well as their cultural- and social backgrounds.

Moreover, Rosenblatt also points out that readers will experience the same text differently if they read it again after a few years, as they will bring new experiences and understandings into the interaction with the text (1995, p. 34-35). This complies with Jauss' theory, as our horizon of expectations is a dynamic structure where our prejudices and experiences can be changed and replaced with time. This means that if the use of a specific text is not successful the first time it is applied in the classroom, it does not necessarily mean that it also will be unsuccessful the second time. As readers require new experiences and understandings, they will also adapt and develop new ways of interacting with texts. Consequently, different texts require different experiences and horizons of expectations from the readers, which brings in the matter of maturity. A literary work can be beyond readers' horizon the first time they read it, whereas it can be exactly right the second or third time.

Additionally, Rosenblatt (1995) points to different experiences the students can derive from reading literature. She points to how literature allows students to participate in situations and worlds different from their own, which will make students more emphatic and understanding of other peoples and cultures. This will also help readers identify with the characters in the text. In conclusion, these aspects strongly suggest the importance of using literature in the EFL classroom. It also emphasises the importance of selecting texts to which students can identify and recognise, which are relatable to their current understandings of the world, interests, and backgrounds.

2.2. Reading for Different Purposes

The way the reader approaches a foreign language text depends primarily on the purpose and reason for reading (Koryakovtseva, 2017, p. 584). For instance, such purposes could be to obtain information, to stay updated on a topic or for enjoyment. There are various reading strategies suited for different purposes, and efficient readers skilfully adjust their strategies to

the reading purpose and characteristics of the text. However, EFL teachers must also consider the purpose of the reading when selecting literature, as different types of texts require different reading strategies. In the following, I will present a selection of different strategies and their purpose in EFL reading, in order to establish a theoretical backdrop for understanding the reasoning behind teachers' text selections.

2.2.1. Efferent and Aesthetic Reading

Building on her ideas about the reading of literature as a transaction, Rosenblatt (1994) distinguishes between efferent and aesthetic reading. In efferent reading, the reader's attention is focused primarily on the results of the reading – the information to be acquired, the logical solution to a problem or the actions to be carried out. Furthermore, efferent reading focuses the reader's attention to the public meaning of the text, which means that the reader must aim to remember information from the text and to select public referents of words and ideas evoked during reading (Tutas, 2006, p. 135). Such efferent tasks may include analysis of characters, settings or plots, information extraction tasks, and activities that use literature to practice reading skills. Tutas also claims that many students typically engage in efferent reading regardless of which texts they are reading, because they know that the teacher usually quizzes them on factual aspects of a text (2006, p. 135). Through their schooling, students have learned that they will be successful if they focus on facts in the text rather than on the experience of reading.

In contrast, aesthetic reading entails reading with a focus on the lived experience and enjoyment of the text, and the reader's primary concern is with what happens during the actual reading event (Rosenblatt, 1994, p. 24-25). The readers concentrate on their personal thoughts, images, feelings, and associations evoked during the reading. When reading aesthetically, students repeatedly make associations between their own life experiences and the experiences of the characters in the stories they read (Tutas, 2006, p. 136). Aesthetic readers will also immerse themselves in the literary work, and participate in its world (Paran, 2006, p. 4).

Through a case study on the possible effects of aesthetic or efferent reading on EFL student's responses, Tutas (2006) concluded that an aesthetic approach is preferable because it will help to extend students' growth not only as readers but also as individuals. By participating in aesthetic classroom activities about the literature they read, her students were able to get to know their peer students and to realize that there were alternative perspectives to life. The

students also understood that there were many ways of solving a problem and that they were not alone in their feelings.

Regardless of the benefits of aesthetic reading, it is not always a simple task to ask students to read in this manner. Many second language learners have experienced a narrow view of literature, and view the literature used in classrooms as having a fixed meaning that the teacher must help them access (Paran, 2006, p. 5). Through an unfortunate socialisation into viewing the reading of literature as an efferent activity, students often make no connection between the reading in the literature classroom and the reading of fiction they do for pleasure (in fact, many students might not be reading for pleasure at all). Paran, then, argues that language teachers must guide the students to unlearn these attitudes, re-engage them in texts in order to spark an interest and recapture a sense of enjoyment for literature, as well as helping them see why and how literature is relevant to their own lives.

2.2.2. Intensive- and Extensive Reading

Intensive reading is a didactic approach to reading which involves carefully investigating a text for word selection and language features (Hedge, 2000, p. 195). Hence, intensive reading is equivalent to the bottom-up processing of texts. Furthermore, intensive reading activities often involve the close study of texts and familiarising students with the features of written language (Hedge, 2000, p. 202). Although the general aim of intensive reading is to understand the text, the procedures involved direct a lot of attention to the vocabulary, grammar, and discourse of the text (Nation, 2013, p. 220). Intensive reading is often used in the study of shorter texts, usually of texts between 100-500 words, which is why it is most frequently used when working with poetry in the EFL classroom.

In contrast, extensive reading is used for several purposes related to the reading of longer texts. Although there is a lack of consensus among researchers about the true definition of extensive reading, Hedge (2000, p. 202) suggests that an ideal definition involves the reading of large quantities of different types of texts, over time, for various purposes. Similarly, Nation (2001, p. 219) defines it as the reading of a large number of texts mainly chosen by the learners, where there are 5% or less unknown running words in the text. Nation also emphasises that the aim of extensive reading is for it to be a pleasurable activity with a focus on the quantity of enjoyable reading. Extensive reading strategies typically involve the top-down processing of texts, as students read large quantities of materials, and apply their previous knowledge in order to understand them.

The reading materials used in extensive reading are typically authentic literature. Authentic materials in language teaching are texts that have a real-life purpose, where the language data is genuine and may embody characteristics that specially-devised teaching materials often fail to capture or which they distort (Rixon, 2017, p. 70). Because authentic texts are primarily written for native speakers, such literature can place a very heavy vocabulary burden on second language learners. However, Hedge argues that authentic texts are appropriate for intermediate and advanced students, as their existing language competence will enable them to tackle such texts (2000, p. 207). Students at upper secondary schools in Norway are generally expected to have achieved an intermediate to advanced language level, so the use of such texts should ideally not offer many problems. Nonetheless, teachers must still evaluate the texts they consider including in their classrooms and assess if the texts are appropriate for their students' current language proficiencies.

Furthermore, Krashen (1993) proposed an extensive reading strategy called Free Voluntary Reading (FVR), which includes students reading whatever they want, because they want to. Krashen argues that students read more when they are allowed to choose their own materials. Nonetheless, FVR will not produce the highest level of reading competence in students, as students are often reading relatively easy materials. However, it will rather produce a foundation of language competencies and reading skills, so students can develop their proficiencies with time and eventually advance to more complex materials.

According to Nation (2001), the idea that learners can develop their language skills through extensive reading is attractive due to several reasons. Firstly, since reading primarily is an individual activity, learners of different proficiencies could learn the language at their own level, without being dependent on an inflexible class programme. Secondly, learners can choose texts according to their own interests, which can increase reading motivation. Thirdly, since the learners can read these texts in their spare time, language learning also occurs outside the language classroom. Fourthly, it provides the students with large quantities of comprehensible input and authentic language, which is otherwise not available where English is taught as a foreign language.

Although extensive reading typically involves each student selecting their own literature, the strategy can also entail the teacher selecting texts for the class to read together. There are two major vehicles available for extensive reading, the class-reader method and the class-library method (Hedge, 2000, p. 215). In the class-reader method, the teacher chooses a book and each student has a copy of it to read. The teacher plans a time specified reading programme

often including pre-reading activities, intensive reading of extracts for analysis, and individual reading in class or at home. Teachers who wish to obtain a degree of control by checking readings often favour this method, and many see it as a springboard to assign work that is more individual in the future. The class-library method, on the other hand, argues that because each student has different interests, reading competencies, and motivations, it is not sufficient to provide all students with the same book to read (Hedge, 2000, p. 215). It is pointless to assign the same readings to the whole class and expect the same enjoyment from everyone, which is why teachers who use this method offer their students a wide selection of books that are appropriate for the students' age and language proficiencies, or even allow their students to choose texts freely. These two vehicles to extensive reading are also evident in the data and discussion of this thesis; however, I have chosen to call them 'teacher-selected literature' and 'student selected literature' consistently throughout this thesis.

2.3. Literature Didactics

2.3.1. The Intersection of Literature and Language Teaching

Paran (2008, p. 466-467) presents a model about literature teaching, which concerns the relationship between literature- and language teaching within an educational context. The model includes two intersecting axes; the horizontal axis represents the extent to which the reading instruction focuses on literature, whereas the vertical axis represents the extent of engagement with language learning through literary texts. The intersection of these two axes results in four quadrants. Quadrant 1 represents a programme or situation in which both areas are focused equally. Quadrant 2 represents a situation where there is little focus on the literary qualities of the text; however, the text is typically used as a representational text for language instruction. Quadrant 3 exemplifies a situation where students discuss literature as literature, meaning that there is hardly any focus on language learning. Paran emphasises that this requires students with high proficiencies in the target language, as literary discussions often involve advanced vocabulary and elaborations. Finally, the fourth quadrant represents situations where extensive reading is used in classroom contexts. Extensive reading involves no focus on the literary qualities of the text, and where there is essentially no language learning because texts used for this purpose are typically below the reader's proficiency level ($i - 1$). However, extensive reading is still very beneficial, especially for weaker students, as it could enhance reading motivation.

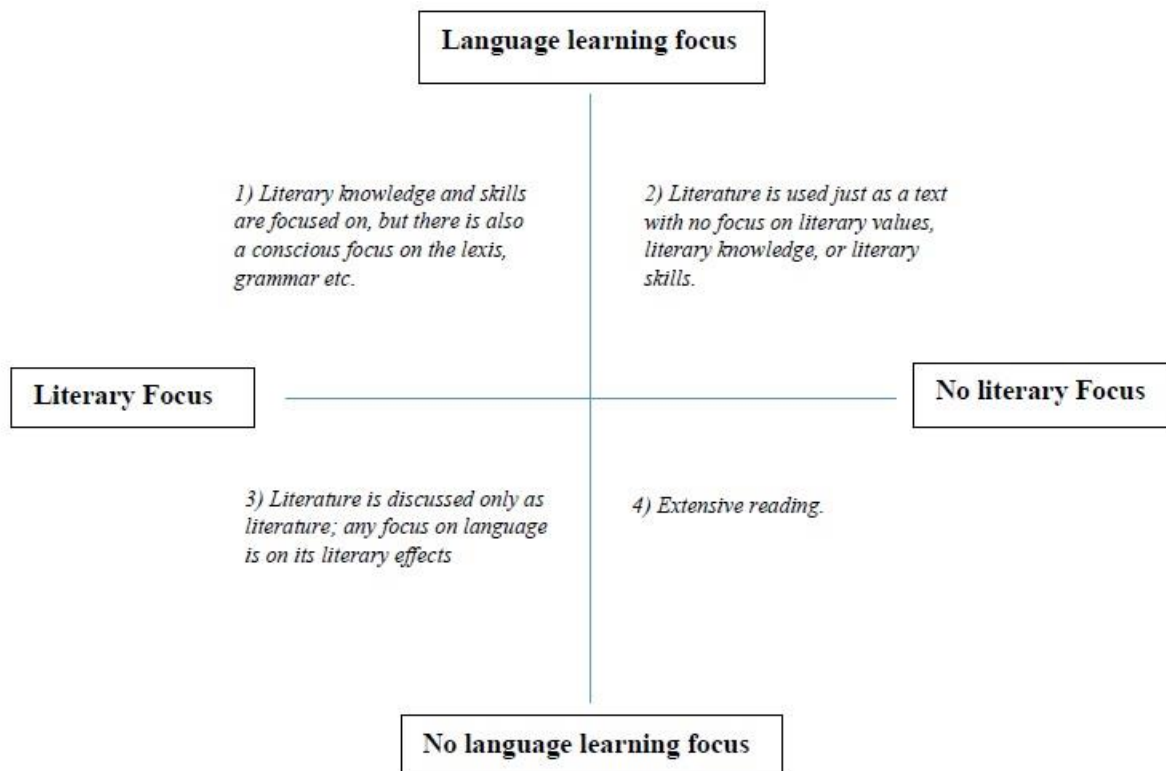


Figure 1 as inspired by Paran's model on the intersection between literature and language in literature teaching

Nevertheless, Paran points out that his model is a simplification of the practice of literature teaching, as other important elements also could interact with literature instruction. He mentions the study of reading comprehension, cultural knowledge and intercultural competence as important factors, and concludes that a true picture of the model would resemble a web (2008, p. 467).

2.3.2. Approaches to Teaching Literature

In an article in *Acta Didactica*, Inger Olsbu (2014) outlined the main didactic and epistemic perspectives on the use of literature in the foreign language classroom. These perspectives are necessary to present in order to discuss the teachers' perspectives on literature instruction, and to understand the influences and considerations involved in their literature selection.

Nevertheless, Olsbu points out that such a classification of approaches into categories imply a danger of simplification (2014, p. 2). She also stresses that these categories do not always appear in an exclusive form; rather, they are often combined in the language classroom.

The Task-Based Approach

The theoretical foundations of the task-based approach are found in communicative- and task-based language teaching, and view thus literature as a resource for language teaching and learning (Olsbu, 2014, p. 2-3). The literary text is primarily used as a basis for a variety of activities, meaning that the literature could provide an opportunity for learners to develop all aspects of their language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing and spontaneous communication). Furthermore, this approach promotes a pragmatic use of literature in the FL classroom, as opposed to a “pedestal-view” of texts with a focus on literary value. Olsbu argues that the strength of the task-based approach lies in its applicability on all language levels, as well as its focus on active learners and opportunities for creative production of language (p. 3). This is especially important because literature traditionally has been perceived as most adequate for advanced language learners, because of its focus on receptive skills and literary analysis. Olsbu suggests that teachers should use the task-based approach at introductory levels as a springboard to introduce cultural themes, or as language material for linguistic activities. At more advanced levels, the task-based approach should always be combined with approaches with more attention to reading and the interpretation of literary texts.

The Stylistic Approach

The stylistic approach suggests that the main purpose of studying literary texts is to gain insight into language use (Olsbu, 2014, p. 4). Literary discourse is considered as particularly valuable for FL classrooms, and by studying discourse, learners become aware of how subtle nuances of meaning are created in texts. Olsbu agrees that the stylistics can be a means to integrate language and literary studies, and believes that this approach may have an empowering effect on students who are not familiar with FL literature. Nonetheless, Olsbu suggests that using exclusively the stylistic approach at an introductory level, would prove to be too specialized and advanced, as it requires both a certain level of FL skills and linguistic competence in general (p. 4). The stylistic approach also tends to dissociate from context, which includes a risk of forgetting the social and political nature of literary texts. Again, the importance of combining approaches to literature teaching is emphasised.

The Experiential Approach

The experiential approach emphasises the *encounter* between the literary text and the reader, and it suggests that the learner experience new perspectives of the world and human relations through literature (Olsbu, 2014, p. 4). The theoretical foundations for the approach lie in the

idea that the literary text is more “open” and multi-layered than other texts, as well as the idea that the literary text acquires its meaning through the reading process (p. 5). The experiential approach values the *meaningfulness* of the literary text, as it involves the learner affectively. Reading literature is considered something that involves the whole person (feelings, attitudes, reflections), as well as including a dimension of personal growth or development. In order to make this approach result in meaningful and motivating reading for learners of different FL competencies, teachers must carefully select texts that linguistically, culturally and cognitively match the proficiencies of the learners (Olsbu, 2014, p. 5).

The Intercultural Approach

Like the experiential approach, the intercultural approach to literature teaching also emphasises the interaction between the reader and the text, however; it also stresses intercultural theory, postcolonial theory and cultural studies (Olsbu, 2014, p. 6). A fundamental didactic and epistemic reason behind the use of literary texts within this approach is that it promotes intercultural competence, which means that we are able to see the world from a different perspective than our own. The term intercultural competence is defined as students’ “ability to ensure a shared understanding by people of different social identities, and their ability to interact with people as complex human beings with multiple identities and their own individuality” (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002, p. 10). Moreover, Olsbu states that the intercultural approach views the literary text as a cultural product that expresses intercultural relations and conflicts. The reader brings his previous experiences, beliefs, and values into the literary encounter, resulting in learning that might parallel a real intercultural encounter, without the stress a real-world situation involves (p. 6).

The Canonical Approach

Traditionally, the use of literary texts in the FL classroom was associated with the term *cultura*, both in a sense of cultivation and as canon (Olsbu, 2014, p. 7). The use of literary texts aimed to cultivate analytical and logical skills in the students, while at the same time; literature was associated with exceptional, cultural achievements. The canonical approach was broadly used in Norway at the beginning of the 20th century, as students read Shakespeare in English classrooms all over the country (Ibsen, 2000a, p. 38). The approach involves a view of literature as “big C” Culture in close relation to *nationhood*, and includes literature that is seen as national contributions to cultural heritage. Olsbu argues that this approach is outdated and irrelevant, due to the extended canon-debate and the introduction of the pragmatic view of culture. However, she does not reject the idea that canonical works can play a significant role

as a historical “archive” of culturally influential texts, especially relevant in higher education, as long as they are considered in their cultural and historical context.

The No-Literature Approach

Although it seems incredible to a literary enthusiast like myself, there are researchers within the field of FL teaching and learning that argue against the use of literary texts in the language classroom. Olsbu specifically points to Edmondson (1997), as he claims that there are no valid arguments what so ever for the use of literary texts in the language classroom (p. 52). He states that in order to focus more efficiently on the job of teaching languages, a focus on “extraneous goals, aspirations and traditions” (refers to literature in FL learning) should be carefully examined, “and possibly abandoned in consequence” (Edmondson, 1997, p. 53). However, Olsbu clearly states that she disagrees with this argumentation, and claims that his view of FL teaching and learning is reductive.

Other researchers also agree with Olsbu. In her book *Not for Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities*, Martha Nussbaum (2012) explains how literature and the humanities are disappearing from the education system, a process she refers to as ‘The Silent Crisis’. She vividly describes,

Thirsty for national profit, nations and their systems of education, are heedlessly discarding skills that are needed to keep democracies alive. If this trend continues, nations all over the world will soon be producing generations of useful machines, rather than complete citizens who can think for themselves, criticise tradition, and understand the significance of another person’s sufferings and achievements. (p. 14).

Because literature helps us become critical thinkers and emphatic ‘citizens of the world’, Nussbaum argues that the aesthetic approach to arts and humanities should be central in our schools and curriculum. However, education does not take place only in schools, so she emphasises that literature must also be nurtured in the family, both in the early years and as children mature.

Nonetheless, some researchers argue against an aesthetic view of literature in schools. Scholes (1998) suggests a weakening of the aesthetic approach to literature teaching, with a strengthening of the rhetoric approach. He argues that students today do not need ‘deep’ interpretations of older texts, but a general competence about texts, which will enable them to understand both the past and the present. In our increasingly global, multicultural and technological world, students today engage in an English subject that is very different from that of the previous generations and curricula. Therefore, Scholes argues, the literature teacher must assimilate a different view of what literature really is. Instead of promoting a romantic

aesthetic view of literature, teachers must view both older- and contemporary literature as expressions of values and conflicts in the world, such as culture, class, majority groups, and minority groups. Consequently, the task of the literature teacher is to enable students to handle and give purpose to the endless stream of texts they encounter. This involves providing them with an understanding of the rhetorical power these texts have over its readers, and a meta-language to talk about texts.

2.4. The Literary Canon

With the amount of literature available in the world today, no readers have the time or effort to spend on reading it all. This speaks for the introduction and selection of a canon so readers can become acquainted with the most important and influential works in the history of literature. The word canon originally means ‘a scale’ and ‘a guideline’, and the term was historically used in theology to refer to biblical texts, which the Early Church considered as real and important to church teachings (Penne, 2010, p. 209). However, the term is also used in literary studies where it refers to a selection of literary works, central in education and research that are considered exemplary and are subject to intertextuality and new editions (SNL, 2018).

Because we cannot possibly read every work ever published, it is important that we do not waste our time reading poor literature. This is Harold Bloom’s main argument for literary canonization in his most famous work *The Western Canon* (1994), where he defends the concept of a literary canon as a tool for cultural education, by discussing 26 writers whom he sees as central to the canon. In the beginning and concluding chapters, Bloom mourns the current loss of concern for preserving a tradition of great literature and claims that is why we should value these canonical works. At the time of its publication, the literary canon as a phenomenon was starting to lose its cultural meaning and importance, so Bloom’s work initiated an intense debate in many countries. Furthermore, *The Western Canon* is considered Bloom’s testimony to the writer he considers “the largest writer we will ever know” (p.3) and the centre of the canon, William Shakespeare. The book made a great impact on the literary field, and on what is considered the ‘western canon’ in general. Therefore, when discussing the literary school canon in relation to text selection in the English classroom, one simply cannot avoid mentioning Bloom’s most famous work. *The Western Canon* is central for this study, as the initial hypothesis and idea for this study derived from this book. In addition, the text should be seen in relation to reading lists and what we value as ‘quality literature’ in the

western world, and cannot be overlooked in this context. However, one should be aware that it is the subjective writings of *one* man, and it is highly criticised in literary circles and academia. Amongst others, Schenck (1996) argues that the canon is *too* western, as it overwhelmingly privilege white, Anglophone, and male authors. According to Schenck, a francophone or hispanophone audience would not even recognise many of the writings discussed in Bloom's work, which theoretically are as much part of the west as an audience from English-speaking countries.

Meanwhile, others have also defined the concept of a canon. Trond Berg Eriksen describes a literary canon as guidelines for the contents and purpose of literature, while at the same time being representative and declare affiliation of cultures (1995, p.19). This implies several things. Firstly, it suggests that a canon contains texts of literary quality, as the word 'guideline' strongly suggests an assessment of quality. Due to the large teacher autonomy in Norwegian classrooms, it is up to the individual teacher to make this assessment of literary quality, according to his or her own understanding of what makes up a 'quality' text. In relation to this, one must also mention personal canons, which are unique and personal, consisting of texts individuals find valuable and of importance for the target culture. This implies that the literature selection in Norwegian EFL classrooms will be based on the teachers' personal canons and experiences with literature, as they can ask students to read the texts they find valuable and enriching.

Secondly, Eriksen's definition implies that a canon will present and demonstrate the culture from which it has derived. For the case of the EFL classroom in Norway, this means that a potential literary canon in the English subject would present and demonstrate for students the 'target culture' and the culture of the canon. However, this is somewhat problematic, as the English Subject Curriculum revolves around issues from English-speaking countries all over the world. Hence, there is no specific 'target culture' for the subject, and therefore no specific canonical culture.

More specifically, since there is no mention of specific literature in The Knowledge Promotion, a potential school canon in the English subject in Norway will, on the one side, be a personal one, based on teachers' personal opinions and experiences, and the texts presented in textbooks. However, on the other side, such a canon can also be described as a *hidden canon*, which means that it does not exist a full list of its content published by any authority. Rather, the contents of the canon become evident by analysing the authors and literary works that frequently appear- and are being read in classrooms (Weinreich, 2004, p. 14-15). For

instance, a hidden canon can appear as an overview of the authors and texts most students or the population have read, with the intention of revealing what literature students actually encounter in schools.

The arguments against a literary canon in the Norwegian school system are endless. However, Weinreich (2004) argues that it is hardly the contents of the canon critics are sceptical of, it is rather the issue that someone else is making the literary choices for them, as it decreases teachers' autonomy. Nonetheless, most teachers essentially accept this on a daily basis anyway, as they use literature chosen and published by the editors of their textbooks. Although teachers do not use everything in the textbook in their teaching, as they make choices of what to include or not, they make a choice based on an already established and preselected text selection (Weinreich, 2004, p. 26). Another argument against a literary canon claims that it will prevent the use of student-selected literature, which often are contemporary texts. Critics argue that the use of such preselected literature will hinder students in reading texts they find interesting and engaging, which could decrease reading motivation in students. However, Weinreich argues that this would not be the case, as the canonical texts would only make up about 20-25% of the total literature instruction in classrooms, where the remaining time could be spent on contemporary texts (2004, p. 33). Of course, Norway do not have such a literary canon, so we do not need to worry too much about this issue.

Nonetheless, the selection and implementation of a literary canon can be considered as an execution of power, and as a way of maintaining structures of power and inequality. Because canonical texts are chosen according to their literary quality, value, and representation of the target culture, it implies that the texts have a purpose of distributing cultural capital to its readers. Bourdieu (1986) broadly defines cultural capital as the knowledge, values, social resources and cultural goods of a person acquired through educational qualifications. The accumulation of cultural capital takes place both in the home, through access to experiences and materials, and in school, where the schooling adds to these already acquired resources in significant ways. In addition, the theory of cultural capital also explains how the academic achievement of students are unequal due to their various social classes (Friese et al., 2008, p. 76). Students who have not accumulated sufficient cultural capital from home will achieve considerably less in educational settings than what students with a higher cultural capital will. Therefore, one can argue that a literary canon in schools promote an elitist view of literature, which will essentially only benefit the students with a high cultural capital – and thus maintain class distinctions.

3. Methods

In the following chapter, I will elaborate on and discuss the process of data collection and the methodological fundament for this thesis. I will explain the reasoning behind selecting qualitative interviews as the method for this thesis, as well as present the questions in the interview guide. This chapter will also introduce the research participants, where the focus is on their education, teaching experience and relationship with literature. Then, the ethical considerations behind this research project are explained, as well as a critical assessment of the study, including a discussion of reliability, validity, and subjectivity. Lastly, I will present the analysis method and explain the process behind the analysis and interpretation of the data.

3.1. Qualitative Interviews

This study investigates the influences and considerations behind upper secondary school teachers' choice of literature in the English classroom, and is thus seeking the perspectives and experiences of the participants. Because of this, my chief means of data collection was semi-structured qualitative interviews, as it would allow the possibility for in-depth reflections and experiences to appear from the participants. I decided to conduct a qualitative interview study for this master thesis because such research aims to investigate social interaction in realistic situations, and more specifically, to reveal the shared experience of a selection of participants (Postholm, 2005, p. 28 & p. 17). In this case, this means that I not only describe and repeat the data from the interviews, I also interpret its meaning and implications for the participants, and for other upper secondary teachers of English. However, the latter is a matter of representativeness, which will be discussed later.

Interviews are the most common way to collect qualitative data because it is a flexible method that opens up for rich, detailed descriptions and reflections from its participants (Johannessen, Tufte & Christoffersen, 2011, p. 135). More specifically, semi-structured interviews typically involve an interview guide with predetermined topics as a basis for the conversation, while the order of the questions and topics discussed can vary depending on the course of the interview (Johannessen, Tufte & Christoffersen, 2011, p. 137). The semi-structured interview is very open, and not as restrictive as structured interviews or surveys. I had prepared an interview guide with an introduction, six key questions as well as one additional question to be asked after the reveal of my hypothesis. I had also prepared follow-up questions for each key topic discussed. The interview guide will be elaborated more in-depth in chapter 3.4.

There are many benefits to choosing qualitative interviews as a means of collecting data in this study. Firstly, a semi-structured interview gave the teachers the opportunity to express themselves freely about the topics discussed, and to include reflections about their attitudes towards- and experiences with literature teaching. In addition, when elaborating on their experiences, the teachers were also asked to reconstruct real-life incidents from their teaching practice, which opened up for additional topics and follow-up questions. They also told stories about their education and background, which brought valuable information to the data.

3.2. Selection of Participants

In qualitative research, one of the main aims of the data collection is usually to get to know the participants and their experiences with the research field. Therefore, it is important to conduct what Patton (2015) refers to as *purposeful sampling*, which is a strategic selection of participants. It involves selecting information-rich cases to study and to select participants that “by their nature and substance will illuminate the inquiry question being investigated” (Patton, 2015, p. 264). In the case of this study, this means that I had to decide on a target group to function as participants, and then purposefully select individuals from that target group to participate in the interviews. In the following, I will explain how I strategically selected the teachers, as well as elaborate on the characteristics that made the teachers appropriate and valuable.

After deciding on a thesis question and research method, I needed to select both a target group and individuals as participants in my study. As I wanted to investigate upper secondary English-teachers’ reflections and perspectives on literature selection and ask them to share ideas and experiences from their teaching practices, it was natural to choose English teachers as the target group. However, in order to limit the scope of the study, I chose to focus the thesis on the use of literature in the English subjects in the Education Programme for Specialization in General Studies. Therefore, my selection of participants is a homogenous selection, which means that there is little variation in their key characteristics (Johannessen, Tufte & Christoffersen, 2011, p. 108). The selection was chosen to reveal potential common and/or different experiences and reflections on literature selection in the English classroom.

In order to establish contact with the teachers, I wrote a general e-mail with information about the project that I planned to conduct and requested teachers’ participation. I sent this e-mail to all the upper secondary schools in the county that offered all the English programme subjects at the Education Programme for Specialization in General Studies. I chose to contact the

teachers through e-mail and not through personal contact because I wanted to give them an opportunity to consider my request, check their calendars to make sure they had time, and prevent them from feeling pressured into participating. However, this also proved to have some downsides, as it is easier to forget or avoid replying to an e-mail than it is to direct inquiries. I quickly learned not to take this personally and continued contacting teachers regardless. In the end, this proved to be a positive thing because the final selection of teachers were truly eager to participate in the study and brought excellent reflections to my questions.

In all, the final selection of participants consisted of seven teachers, of which five were experienced and two were novice teachers. They all had a Master's degree, were qualified teachers, had experience with teaching literature to adolescents, and were- or had been working at an upper secondary school in a larger city in Norway. The novice teachers did not have much teaching experience, but they did have experience with literature selection from their teaching practice and didactics classes in university. Another similarity, which in fact I did not expect, was that they were all life-long and enthusiastic readers. They proved to have a passionate relationship with literature, and each had read many novels, poetry and short stories. Put together, their reading experiences were extremely broad, and not as homogenous as I initially imagined.

Although the group of participants is a homogenous group, I still argue that the selection is representative for English teachers at upper secondary schools across the country. *Diversity* was a key concept in the recruitment of the participants, in order for the group to be as representative as possible. This is reflected in the fact that the teachers differ in age, gender and experience. Furthermore, the teachers are educated at different universities across the country, and some even in different parts of the world. In addition, the selection is representative because together, they have experience teaching all the English subjects in upper secondary school. Although the novice-teachers did not have much teaching experience, I see their contributions from teaching practice as valuable insight into influences on literature selection, which could possibly even illustrate contrasts between new- and experienced teachers.

Moreover, I collected the data in the winter of 2017/2018, more specifically from October 2017 to January 2018. The data was collected from upper secondary schools in a larger city in Norway, and the participants either were currently- or had previously taught English at the Education Program for Specialization in General Studies. The interviews took place at the schools where the teachers worked, either in the school cafeteria, at the teachers' office or at

study rooms. I asked the teachers for permission to record our conversation prior to the interview, so they were recorded on two mobile phones that were placed within reach so the audio could easily be transcribed.

3.3. Participants

The following section will introduce the teachers, with a focus on their education, teaching experience and relationship with literature. It is important to emphasise that the names of the participants are fictional, and identifying information anonymised.

3.3.1. Rebecca

Rebecca has a Master's degree in English literature from a large Norwegian University, in which she also studied subjects concerning politics and religious studies. Her MA thesis focused on Southern American literature, a topic for which she had a deep fascination, interest, and engagement. Rebecca describes her younger self as an engaged reader, and as a student who enjoyed both the Norwegian and English subjects in school. She has always loved literature, and due to this interest, she chose to become an English teacher. Even more, she has a long experience with teaching English to Norwegian students, adding up to more than 12 years of teaching in upper secondary schools across the country. This includes English at secondary education for adults, Health Work, and all levels at Education Programme for Specialization in General Studies (English at VG1, International English at VG2, and Social Studies English at VG3).

3.3.2. Daniel

Daniel has a Master's degree in English linguistics and didactics, also from a large University in Norway. He has several years of experience teaching English and literature at different secondary schools across the country, for students at all grades from Vocational Studies, Education Programme for Specialization in General Studies and for candidates at external examinations. Daniel now teaches English linguistics at University level. Moreover, Daniel loves reading, and he has engaged in literature since he was a child. Growing up in the US, Daniel participated in a school-reading programme in collaboration with "Pizza Hut"; rewarding students with pizza for every fulfilled reading requirement. This was the beginning of Daniel's engaged relationship with literature, and he has never since stopped reading. When describing his childhood memories with reading, he mentions being "super-hooked" on J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* (1937-1949) and indulging in "a Stephen King-binge".

3.3.3. Elinor

Elinor is one of the most experienced English teachers in this study, as she has been teaching for fourteen years, since 2004. She is also one of the two teachers in this study who have experience teaching the programme subject English Literature and Culture. Additionally, she has written a Master's thesis in English literature, where she focused on feminism and fantasy literature. Elinor has always loved to read books for entertainment and pleasure, and she reads a wide range of texts and genres. Elinor also enjoys reading fantasy-, science fiction-, and dystopian literature, as well as the currently popular 'LGBTQI' genre. In addition, she also mentions that she enjoys reading a range of young adult literature, and values having read the same books as her students, as it opens up a common frame of reference. She has a life-long relationship with books, stories, and narratives, and she always reads books in English.

3.3.4. Emma

Emma is also an experienced teacher, and have taught EFL in upper secondary schools for many years. In addition to teaching English, she also teaches Norwegian and French, as well as being proficient in German. Emma just returned to teaching after a 12-year long break, where she worked with developing textbooks, exams, and standardized tests. However, she now teaches International English and English at VG1. Furthermore, she has a Master's degree in English from a large Norwegian University, and her thesis concerned a Native American tribe and their involvement in the wars of the 20th century. Her relationship with literature is a passionate one; she loves reading, and she reads books as often as she can, usually in their original language. Emma is a life-long reader, as she has been reading books since she was at the age of six- or seven years old.

3.3.5. Sandra

Sandra has been teaching for about 16 years and is thus the most experienced teacher of this study. She has been teaching English at all levels from VG1 to VG3, including English Literature and Culture, as well as many of the vocational classes. With a major in British literature and the gothic era, Sandra has extensive knowledge in the field of literature, as well as being an engaged and active reader. Having grown up in America, Sandra was enrolled in a school system that is quite different from the Norwegian one. Literature has a greater place in the English subject in the US, as there is naturally not a focus on foreign language learning. Consequently, Sandra read a lot of literature in school, something she enjoyed very much. The texts she read in school were all part of the canon of that time, and she did not read much contemporary literature. Sandra exemplified that they were reading novels from the Brontë

sisters, Shakespeare plays and Greek tragedies. She early achieved an appreciation for these texts, and states that she enjoys canonical literature in general.

3.3.6. Lisa

Lisa is one of the two novice teachers in this study, which naturally means that her teaching experience is limited. She completed her teaching Master's degree with a major in history in the spring of 2017. Her secondary subject is English, and she is currently studying Norwegian as her third teaching subject. Lisa has experience from teaching practice both in lower- and in upper secondary school, and she has incorporated literature into her teaching in both cases. Her relationship with literature started at an early age, as her parents frequently read stories for her as a child. This quickly developed into independent pleasure reading, and a passion for literature that also originates from the *Harry Potter* series. In addition to reading literature for personal enjoyment, Lisa stays updated on young adult fiction trends, as it can be relevant for her future teaching practices.

3.3.7. Jennifer

The second novice teacher in this study is Jennifer. She finished her teaching Master's degree with a major in English in the spring of 2017, where her thesis focused on English linguistics. Unlike the other teachers in this study, Jennifer wishes to teach at university level, and she plans to take a PhD in linguistics. Although she does not plan on teaching at upper secondary level, I still believe her ideas and reflections to be relevant for this thesis, as she is a qualified teacher for this student level. Like Lisa, Jennifer also has experience from teaching practice at both lower- and upper secondary school, where she has taught language, literature and social studies. As a child, Jennifer was never a bookworm. Although she did enjoy reading some books, she did not actively seek out literature herself. The books she did read were mostly fantasy fiction, such as the *Harry Potter* series, *The Narnia Chronicles* and cartoons. Jennifer admits that she now does not have time to read literature for pleasure, as she mostly reads factual prose related to her job.

3.4. The Interview Guide

As mentioned previously, the interview guide consisted of an introduction, six key questions and a final discussion about my initial hypothesis, followed by an additional question (See Appendix 3 and 4 for full document). The interview guide included the same key questions for the interviews with each of the teachers; however, as expected from a semi-structured interview, the order of questions and alternative topics discussed varied. I chose to introduce

the questions in the interview with presenting myself, as well as the purpose of the study. I also explained what my project was about, and described what sort of questions I would be asking them during the interview. In order to avoid influencing the teacher's responses to my questions, I did not tell the teachers about my hypothesis before asking the questions. This was to ensure that their answers were as truthful and unaffected as possible.

After presenting them with the background for my research project, I moved on to asking about the participants' background, both in terms of education, work experience and relationship to reading literature. This was to achieve an understanding of who the participants were, both as teachers and as readers, as well as to attain a context to understand their perspectives and reflections. I asked if there were any texts they remember reading and enjoying in their upbringing, and if they had ever used these texts in their English classrooms. This question worked as an organic transition to my first key question, which asked the teachers what they believed to be the *purpose* of teaching literature to upper secondary students. The follow-up questions for this key topic contained questions about values, knowledge or skills they wished their students to attain through literature.

The next key question asked the teachers to reflect on what they considered as "quality literature" for the English classroom. They were asked to define "quality" according to their own beliefs, and I did not give them any clues as to what I was asking for with this question. I also asked them to give examples of texts they believed to fit under this category and to explain why they believed this text to be valuable.

The third key topic in the interview guide was the process of their text selection, more specifically how they proceeded when choosing literature for the classroom. I asked them to describe their process, as well as where they found the texts. An important follow-up question was what affected their choices. We then moved on to discussing the frequency with which they taught certain types of literature, and what types of texts they believed to dominate their classrooms. This included discussions of both types of text as well as genres of literature, something I clarified to the participants. They were also asked to reflect on what they think make this type of literature more valuable, interesting or important than other types. This question also opened up for a discussion about their relationship with textbooks, and the frequency in which they were using them.

Another key question in my interview guide asked the teachers to describe how they experience their freedom to choose texts to the English classroom. Key elements in the

discussion were access to texts, economics, the Knowledge Promotion, time, and students' proficiency levels.

The last key questions asked the teachers if they were aware of, or could see any patterns of texts that were occurring more frequently than others in upper secondary English classrooms or textbooks. After the participants had answered this question, I chose to tell them about my hypothesis about a canon in the English subject (see chapter 3.7). I asked the teachers about their thoughts on this matter, and about what implications they believed this would potentially have on their teaching practices. I knew the dangers of telling a participant about hypothesis or preconceptions on a research field during data collection, but decided to tell them at the end because it could provide important reflections from the teachers without affecting their previous answers.

3.5. Ethical Considerations

All research must subordinate ethical principles and legal guidelines, as all activities that can cause implications for other people must be assessed and evaluated according to ethical standards. The term "ethics" concerns moral principles, rules, and guidelines for assessing if an action is, either directly or indirectly, right or wrong (Johannessen, Tufte & Christoffersen, 2011, p. 89). For instance, a research project that causes its participants psychological pressure or stress, would not be considered ethical. To conduct ethical considerations, entail that the researcher must consider how to investigate a research field without it having unjustifiable ethical consequences for individuals, groups or societies (Johannessen, Tufte & Christoffersen, 2011, p. 91). Literature teaching and text selection in the English classroom is not a research field that opens up for many ethical implications or issues with legal guidelines, but it was still important for me to be aware of issues that might occur.

The Norwegian National Committees for Research Ethics (2014) has prepared general guidelines for research ethics, which can be summarised into three main categories. Firstly, the guidelines state that the participant has the right to have full autonomy and to control his own participation in the study. This means that the participant must give an informed and voluntary consent to participate in the study, as well as having the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any point in the research process, without having to provide a reason to the researcher (Johannessen, Tufte & Christoffersen, 2011, p. 91). I maintained this consideration by providing the teachers with detailed information about my project in the e-mail requesting their participation; so that they knew exactly what they were agreeing to if they wished to take

part in the study. If they volunteered to participate, their e-mail acted as their written consent. We then planned a time and date for the interview, and I offered them a written transcript of it, in case they wished to add to-, retract or change some statements.

The second main category of the guidelines for research ethics is the researcher's responsibility to avoid hurting someone, a category that is perhaps most relevant for medical research. However, researchers of social research must also assess if the study concerns sensitive issues that might be upsetting or disconcerting to the participants. I was not too worried about this category, as I was not asking personal or upsetting questions, and most teachers do not have a sensitive relationship with literature selection.

However, the last category of ethical guidelines is more relevant to my project, as it concerns the researcher's responsibility to maintain the privacy of the participants. The participants in a study should be able to decide what information the researcher can access about them. This also involves that the researcher must safeguard confidential information about the participants, and he must apply the information in a way that prevents the participants from being identified (Johannessen, Tufte & Christoffersen, 2011, p. 92). I maintained the ethical considerations of this category in three ways. Firstly, I only used the information the teachers chose to give me through the audio-recorded interviews. The teachers voluntarily provided answers to my questions and told me only what they wanted to tell me about their teaching practices. Secondly, I have made all personal information such as names and workplaces anonymous. The information about the teachers have been anonymised, so it will not be able to identify them. I have used fictional names and left out identifiable information about the schools the participants work at. Lastly, I stored the audio recordings and the transcripts of the interviews respectively on a password-protected mobile phone and personal laptop. No information was kept in a cloud or external hard drive without password protection.

All research at Norwegian universities that manage personal information about individuals must be notified to the Norwegian Centre for Research Data. In this context, personal information refers to any information relating to an identifiable person (NSD, no year). Such information could for instance be the person's name, image/video, e-mail address or identifiable information about the person's background. Even though the recordings of the interviews did not contain the names or sensitive information about the teachers or students, I still applied for an approval from the NSD. I did this because I handled the teachers' contact information and names in the e-mail correspondence described above. NSD's approval for this research project is attached in Appendix 1.

3.6. Critical Assessment of the Research Process – Reliability and Validity

A fundamental question connected to all research is the credibility of the data, more specifically, if the data is reliable and valid. Reliability in a research project is assessed according to the accuracy of the data, the type of data used in the study, how the data is collected and how it is processed (Johannessen, Tufte & Christoffersen, 2011, p. 40). These elements will also depend on the purpose of the study, and on what the study intends to investigate. For instance, if a researcher wishes to investigate how funny a person is based on how loudly people laugh at their jokes, the reliability of the study depends on the researcher managing to conduct accurate measurements of the volume of their laughter in decibels under conditions that are equal for all the participants (Nyeng, 2012, p. 105). If the researcher can do this, he has acquired reliable data. Then, the data can be compared between each participant, as well as to data from similar studies. The researcher then has a solid empirical fundament to assess whose jokes raised the loudest laughter; however, if this data actually measure how funny people are, is another matter.

The researcher can enhance the reliability of the study by providing the reader with a thorough description of the context, and an open and detailed explanation of the research process (Johannessen, Tufte & Christoffersen, 2011, p. 230). To maintain the reliability of this research project, I have thoroughly presented and explained the process of data collection and context of the study previously in this chapter. In chapter 1.3., I have also presented several studies which resemble mine, and that discuss influences and considerations on other teachers' literature selection. In addition, the reliability of a study is also enhanced if the interviews are recorded, so quotations can be reproduced as accurately as possible (Tjora, 2010, p. 178). I recorded and transcribed all the interviews, and was careful not to take quotations out of context. However, when transcribing the interviews, I did encounter one issue with translation. Apart from Daniel and Sandra's interview, the interviews were conducted in Norwegian, which means that I had to translate the quotations before including them in this thesis. This could potentially distort the essence and meaning of the data, as translation also involves an interpretation of meaning. However, as a Master's student in English, I argue that my English language skills are sufficient to reproduce meaning correctly, and thus maintain the reliability of this thesis.

Furthermore, reliability in a research project is also based on *consistency* in the findings over time, meaning that you should be able to acquire the same results if you repeat the study (Nyeng, 2012, p. 107). I argue that this research project will result in the same findings if it

were to be repeated, as long as The Knowledge Promotion is still the National Curriculum. As I will show in the discussion chapter, the curriculum is determining for the teachers' text selection and their teaching practice in general.

It is important to emphasise that the data in a research study is not the actual reality of the field being studied; it is rather a representation of the reality in the research field (Johannessen, Tufte & Christoffersen, 2011, p. 70). Hence, it is important to question how good, or how relevant the data represents the reality of the field. To relate this to the previous example, to study and assess how funny a person is, based on how loud people laugh at their jokes, is probably not the most valid research. Validity in a research project involves the validity of the findings, and are assessed according to if the research measure what it sets out to measure (Nyeng, 2012, p. 109).

In the case of this study, this primarily indicates two things. Firstly, the data from the interviews do not indicate what influence the text selection of all upper secondary English teachers in Norway. Rather, it represents the influences and considerations involved in the literary choices of *these seven teachers*, but implies that other teachers might choose texts due to the same reasons. Secondly, the findings in this study are solely based on the teachers' statements concerning their literature selection and teaching practices, and I will thus not be able to say anything for certain about which literature the teachers actually use or how they use it in the classroom. To be able to do so, other methods and means of data collection would be more beneficial for producing a valid result. However, the purpose of this study is not to investigate the effectiveness or successfulness of literature teaching, but to promote awareness around influences and considerations behind literary choices. Therefore, I argue that the qualitative interviews in this study will result in valid data concerning influences on teachers' text selection.

One way to ensure reliability and validity in a study is through triangulation, which is a strategy for improving quality in a research project (Golafshani, 2003, p. 9). It entails the researcher using several and different sources in his or her writing, several strategies for collecting data as well as previous research from a selection of researchers, to support his or her findings (Patton, 2015, p. 661). If several sources or types of data can confirm one another, it will reinforce the quality of the study. In this study, I have only obtained one type of data; however, I have presented a variety of studies and sources that will prove the quality and credibility of my study. These have been presented in chapter 1 and 2, but will also be used to support my arguments in chapter 5.

3.7. Subjectivity

The researcher's observations and understandings of the data are never completely objective, because his or her theoretical perspectives and paradigms, as well as cultural biases and values, will essentially affect how the data is interpreted (Ringdal, 2014, p. 254). Conclusions one researcher draws from a set of data material may vary greatly from the conclusions of another researcher, due to their different moral, cultural or theoretical perceptions of the field of research. Therefore, it is important that the researcher reflects on preconceived ideas and biases prior to the analysis, which is what I will be doing in the following.

I have always been a reader. As a child, I became fascinated with the wonderful worlds of fantasy fiction, through series such as *Harry Potter*, *Narnia*, and *Twilight*. I was a pleasure reader, and read exclusively to entertain myself. After choosing English literature as one of my A-level courses in the UK, I was "forced" to step into the adult literary world, and encountered texts I learned to appreciate with time. In this class, we read texts such as *Othello*, *The Great Gatsby*, *Of Mice and Men* and *A Streetcar Named Desire*, texts I found challenging but enjoyable. I had not heard of any of these texts when I first encountered them, however, when I came to University it became clear to me that many of my peers had read the same texts through their education here in Norway. It was interesting to me how I could interact with people I had just met, about our common references from these texts. I learned to appreciate the concept of a canon and wished to investigate its existence in a Norwegian educational setting through my Master's thesis.

I entered this field of research with a clear hypothesis about what influences teachers' choice of literature in the English classroom, and had clear preconceived ideas about what the data from the interviews would show. Based on my own experiences from both secondary- and higher education, I was convinced that teachers chose texts based on a literary canon in the English subject, because I could see a pattern between what my peers and I were reading in school and the contents of the reading lists my English didactics course at University level. Through my own engagement for literature, I had also become familiar with many of the texts in the western canon and recognised many of them from educational settings. Hence, I was intent on proving that the canon in fact set expectations for what is considered "quality school-literature" and that teachers chose literature accordingly.

In a reflection note, dated September 25, 2017, I wrote the following about my hypothesis:

As a contrast to previous curricula, The Knowledge Promotion does not list any specific literary texts teachers must or should include in the English classroom. However, there seems to be a

certain expectation about what “quality literature” is, as there are evident patterns of recurring books in English classrooms at Secondary Education.

This statement is solely based on my personal ideas about the research field, and I did not base this statement on information from any sources.

Nevertheless, as this thesis is a result of my work over several months, it is peculiar if it is not characterised by my reflections and hypothesis. In my opinion, this is inevitable. However, it was crucial that my subjectivity did not lead to a distortion of the data, where I was simply ‘looking for answers’ to my hypothesis. Although I did my best to enter the research field with an open and ‘objective’ mind, I still expected the data material to show evidence of a literary canon. Nonetheless, after conducting the two first interviews, it surprised me to see that the teachers’ answers implied something else; that the teachers also select literature due to several practical, affective and cognitive reasons. This was a real ‘wake-up call’ to me, which reminded me of the importance of being open and receptive to all aspects of the data.

Although I was aware of my own preconceived ideas and subjectivity when analysing the data, it is impossible to say if they have influenced the results or even the decisions I made when designing the study. However, by thoroughly elaborating on the methodological decisions behind this study, I attempt to highlight my subjectivity to create trust between the participants, potential readers of this thesis and myself. Even though my ideas about- and insight into the research field have altered significantly after concluding this thesis, I still believe a literary canon could have a fundamental impact on some teachers’ choices of literature.

3.8. Relevance

As discussed in the introduction chapter, there are innumerable studies on the use of literature in EFL contexts, but few studies on the influences and considerations involved in teachers’ text selection. This knowledge gap argues for the relevance of this study, as we know a lot about what characterizes successful literature teaching, but less about what influences a selection of appropriate texts. Although this field to some degree has been researched in other countries, I could not find one single study concerning this in a Norwegian EFL context. Due to this, I argue that this thesis contributes to new knowledge in the field of literature selection in EFL teaching and learning.

Furthermore, it is relevant to research what influence teachers’ selection of literature in the English classroom due to several reasons. Firstly, it can contribute to a more scholarly

reflection for why teachers choose the texts that they do, as well as to what texts teachers find valuable in educational settings. Furthermore, it can help readers of this study (other educators or people who are interested in literature selection) to choose relevant and appropriate literature for young adult readers. If teachers make conscious and deliberate choices of literature, it will essentially benefit the students. For instance, having a clear purpose for the reading could potentially avoid reading ‘just for the sake of reading’, which is not a very motivating task. Such awareness concerning text selection amongst teachers could also enhance the quality of literature teaching and reading in general, as a thoughtful selection of literature adapted to purpose, skill-level, and student interest is both motivational and engaging. Lastly, such a study could also indicate what literature is being taught in English classrooms at upper secondary schools, which again could inspire and influence other teachers to make similar choices.

3.9. Analysis Method

After collecting and transcribing the data, my next step was to analyse the material. In short, qualitative analysis involves transforming data into findings. The main challenge of qualitative analysis lies in making sense of a massive amount of material, which entails reducing the volume of data into significant, identifying patterns (Patton, 2015, p. 521). For the researcher, this means that he or she must fairly represent the data, and communicate what the data reveal given the purpose of the study. Each of the transcribed interviews in this study consisted of about 10 pages of printed text, so a reduction of the data was essential.

The methods used to analyse the data material in this thesis is content analysis and cross-case thematic analysis. Content analysis refers to searching text for recurring words or themes (Patton, 2015, p. 541). I started by printing the transcripts for each of the interviews, read and reread them, and started noticing and colour-coding recurring themes. For instance, it quickly became evident to me that student interests and language level were themes that reappeared in all the interviews, so I gave them a colour each, and started highlighting all the places where the teachers discussed these aspects. I created codes for the themes that appeared in the data, and when discovering how the codes were connected into recurring themes and units of meaning, I started coding for patterns. These codes were the starting point for what later became the categories of the data. The categories that appeared from the data directly answered the thesis question, as they were all influences or considerations behind the teachers’ literary selections.

At first, I coded and categorized the content of each interview individually, without seeing them in relation to each other. After identifying and creating categories for each interview, I started the cross-case thematic analysis, which involves searching for recurring or similar themes and categories across the interviews (Patton, 2015, p. 551). I looked for repeating themes and codes across the transcriptions, and created categories according to the similarities in the interviews. Ultimately, I did this in order to be able to express directly the influences and considerations behind these teachers' text selection.

In the following chapter, I will present the findings of the interviews through rich descriptions of the data. I find it important to present the reader with detailed descriptions and an understanding of the data before explaining my interpretations of them.

4. Analysis

The analysis chapter allows the voices of the teachers to communicate with each other, in order to create the impression of a debate between the participants. This will highlight and emphasise the teachers' positions and oppositions concerning each of the categories. The following chapter will introduce each category individually, describing what the categories entail, and present the teachers' statements concerning the different topics. Although some of the categories overlap, it is important to distinguish between them and see them as individual influences and considerations. At this stage, it is beneficial to repeat the research question in its entirety: *What are the considerations and influences involved in teachers' decisions with selecting literature in the upper secondary EFL classroom?*

4.1. Language Level

Four of the seven teachers in this study state that they consider the language level of their students when selecting literature for the English classroom. More specifically, the teachers state that they assess the language level of the class, and choose texts that essentially would be suited for everybody. Lisa emphasises the importance of assessing the students' proficiencies before choosing texts, and she states that an important part of doing so is to get to know the students. She professes that she "would assess the reading competence of the class as a whole before making a choice". Furthermore, she explains how she did this in her teaching practice, by asking her students to make and present a digital story about their best reading memories and experiences with reading. This provided Lisa with an overview of their relationship with reading literature, as well as an indication of their proficiency level. "If the students had to dissect their minds to come up with a single reading memory, it could imply that they had not read that many books and that they had an indifferent relationship with literature". Getting to know the students and their reading habits made it easier for Lisa to select a text for the class, as she had an indication of their reading competencies and experiences.

Similarly, Daniel also states that it is important to get to know the students and their language- and reading abilities before choosing literature. He explains how he did not do this with the first English class he taught as a novice teacher. In a VG3 Social Studies English class, Daniel had suggested Stephen King's *The Green Mile* (1996) as one of the reading options for his students, and the class chose to read it due to their familiarity with the film adaptation. He explains how he suggested *The Green Mile* because its language was not too difficult, "at least not compared to some other authors". However, he did not expect that some students still

would have trouble reading the text, as it proved to be “too much for them”. His students generally had low language proficiencies, and several had a very low self-esteem in English. He states that he did not know the individual students’ language abilities and background knowledge well enough, and concludes that he might have made a different choice if he had known them better.

Moreover, after getting to know their students and their relationship with reading, teachers must select which texts are appropriate. In relation to this, Lisa states that she would choose something that is written specifically for young adults and that she is unsure if she would use “adult literature” at all in upper secondary school. However, she adds that this depends on the students’ language level.

Quality literature for the upper secondary English classroom is literature that is appropriate for the weaker students, as well as challenging for the stronger students. (...) It should not be too difficult and not too easy, it has to be just right

Furthermore, Lisa explains how she has used Sherman Alexie’s *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian* (2007) in both lower- and upper secondary school, and that students at all levels enjoyed reading it and were sufficiently challenged by it. Quite similarly, Sandra states that it is important to choose literature that works for everybody regardless of the students’ language level. “So, a quality text for the English classroom has a deeper meaning, but you can read it at different levels”. According to this, a well-chosen classroom text should allow students with a lower language level to read the text and comprehend the plot without difficulty, as well as providing a deeper meaning and possibilities for analysis for the stronger students.

In general, if the students’ English proficiency level is low, the teachers tend to choose literature that demands less from the students in terms of both reading comprehension, analytical skills, and language abilities. When teaching literature to students with lower English proficiencies, Rebecca’s focus is on extensive exposure to language. To help students build vocabulary and to learn common collocations in the English language, she provides students with opportunities to do extensive reading by asking them “to read many pages over a long period of time”. She believes this to be an elementary task for a language teacher, and that “it will always justify the use of literature in the classroom”.

Sandra explains how she has seen a change in the reading habits and reading abilities of her students since she started teaching in 2001, and that she has specifically noticed three things. Firstly, she states that when asked to read, students “get tired very fast, and they can’t

concentrate on what they are reading”. Secondly, Sandra describes how her students’ language has gotten weaker, and how;

(...) maybe they are better at speaking informal English, but I have seen in their writing, their vocabulary – it is a lot less rich, simple, much more informal, and even their sentence structures are weaker. Because with reading, that is where you pick up how sentences are constructed. And a lot of the collocations – which is what make you fluent, right.

Lastly, Sandra has noticed that her students are a lot less creative, which she believes to be due to not reading literature. “They do not have that creativity, that imagination – so if we look at a piece of literature or even poetry... they can’t make that jump. They are very literal”. This change in reading habits and reading abilities of students has resulted in a change of the texts Sandra uses in the classroom. She explains how she in her first years of teaching taught William Golding’s *The Lord of the Flies* (1954) several times at VG1, whereas “you couldn’t do that now”. Since her students’ language- and reading abilities have become so much weaker over the years, Sandra is now teaching easier texts at VG1, such as for instance *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian*.

When choosing literature for higher proficiency students, the teachers tend to choose texts that challenge the students’ analytical skills. Emma, Daniel, and Rebecca specifically mention this in their interviews. Firstly, Rebecca expresses that she does this by selecting texts that illustrate various literary terms and devices well, so she can use them as examples to teach the vocabulary and skills of literary analysis. For her VG1 class, she states; “the students should know a set of basic literary terms, such as plot, characterization, setting, theme and all of these things”. For instance, she has used Nadine Gordimer’s *The Moment before the Gun Went Off* (1988) to illustrate narrator voice and ‘point-of-view’ in a story. While in her VG2 and VG3 classes, she focuses on more advanced literary devices such as allusions and metaphors, and discusses the effects these devices have on the text.

Additionally, Daniel states that he frequently used short stories to teach literary terms and devices, as they often illustrate it very well. For instance, when discussing the dramatic point and structure of a story, Daniel expresses,

Well, you have typically one dramatic point in a short story, right... It hits the dramatic point pretty much right before the end, and then it is done. ... it is easier to see than let’s say in a novel, where you might have many peaks throughout.

Because the structure of a short story is often set, Daniel used short stories to illustrate literary devices concerning its form and composition. However, he also states that he used short stories when teaching literary terms such as themes and motifs. Again, this is because of the

length of these texts, as there are only so many themes and motifs in a 5-10 page long text. On the other hand, Daniel states that he sometimes had to be careful when selecting short stories, as they are often “really difficult”. This required him to select texts that were appropriate for the language proficiencies of the students, like discussed above. Emma’s statements concerning this are very similar to the ideas of both Rebecca and Daniel, as she states that she uses literature that illustrates literary devices well. However, she adds that even though she has previously used texts she believes to highlight these aspects well, she continuously searches for texts that do it even better. “I found pretty good texts to illustrate irony last year, but I think I have found a selection of texts that will help them understand the concept even better this year”. To help her students understand the concept of irony better, Emma assesses her own text selection and make better choices of texts from year to year. This could indicate that teachers not only alter their literature choices according to the students’ language abilities, but also according to the quality of the texts.

4.2. Time

Only two of the seven teachers do not explicitly mention being pressured for time in relation to the use and selection of literature. This implies that time has a major influence on teachers’ literature practice and that it affects their choices of literature greatly. This category consists of two different aspects; ‘time to read literature’ and ‘time to plan’. The teachers confess that they generally do not have enough time during the school year to implement as much literature as they would like, which often results in rushed and insufficient reading situations for the students. Additionally, the teachers state that they do not have enough time to plan and prepare for literature teaching, which involves not having enough time to stay updated on contemporary literature and create teaching plans for new texts.

4.2.1. Time to Read

More specifically, the teachers express that there is not much time to read novels in the English classroom, as there is so much to get through in one school year. Sandra states that they often do not have time to read full novels in class, “because there is so much social studies” in the English subject. As a result, they “do not have the time to read stories as well”, which both Sandra and many of her students think is a shame. Elinor shares this opinion and states that even though they have five hours of English a week, time is scarce. She states, “I consider, what do we have time for? Naturally, we read many short stories, as that is what we

have time for. (...) We do not have much time to read novels”. Rebecca agrees on the fact that there is limited time to read full novels in class,

In the English courses I am currently teaching, we do not have a lot of time to spend on reading literature. In terms of novels, we read one novel in VG1, if I think we have enough time for it. I have to choose one that is relatively short, to ensure that all the students have the capacity to read it within the time limit.

She chooses short texts to ensure that students have enough time to read it, something that is also related to motivation. If the book is too long, many students might see it as an impossible task and they will not read it. The length of texts in relation to time is also something Daniel has considered in his teaching. Due to low proficiency levels and reading motivation in his students, he tended to teach novels and short stories that seemed achievable to the students and that would not take too long to read. Daniel states,

I like very short stories that you could get through in one, let’s say 90-minute session you would be able to both read the text and work with some information that you might need to understand the context outside of it.

Overall, he expresses a belief that short stories are easier to incorporate into the English classroom than what novels are, as they do not take up as much time. Additionally, pointing to a time when his students read *Holes*, a young adult comedy novel by Louis Sachar (1998), length was a determining issue. The novel is short, “but at the same time, there are themes that run through it, and that gives opportunity for analysis”.

Moreover, instead of reading full novels, all five of the teachers that mentioned time as an influence on their choice of literature state that they have read excerpts of novels in class. However, Lisa voices that it does not provide students with an optimal and pleasurable reading situation, as “you do not get the same reading flow when you read excerpts of novels, almost without any context”. Even though it saves time spent on reading in the classroom, it is not a motivating reading experience for the students.

As a novice teacher, Lisa does not have much experience teaching a subject over a longer period. However, she expresses that she underwent the time pressure of teachers in her last teaching practice in upper secondary school while teaching *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian* in relation to the topic of Native Americans. She did not feel that she had sufficient time to teach and read literature with the students, as there was so much to discuss in relation to the social studies aspect of the topic. Lisa admits,

As we were reading the excerpts, I felt that we were spending too much time on these texts. Time we could have spent on something else. Nevertheless, I think it is a shame that I felt that

way, as I think it is important to spend time on literature. (...) When I enter the teaching profession, I would not mind spending a lot of time on literature.

Though the other teachers agree with Lisa on the importance of literature in the English classroom, they have experienced the time pressure of English teachers. In relation to this, Rebecca states, “It is so easy to sit here and speak in dreamy terms about the importance of literature, but then you are immediately brought down to earth when you start teaching”. Rebecca refers to how she dreams accomplishing so much with literature in the English classroom, however, time often restricts her from doing so.

4.2.2. Time to Plan

The teachers also mention experiencing the lack of time to plan and prepare for literature teaching. Rebecca states that she often uses the same texts she has used before, because she does not have time to read updated literature and make new teaching plans.

I have to admit that I use a lot of the texts I have used before. The selection of texts I have used in my years of teaching is not very large. “Oh, is it this time of year already, well, then we will do the text we did two years ago”, because I already have the teaching plans and class-sets ready to go.

Additionally, she expresses that she does not have time to read and stay updated on literature and new publications. Although she tries to read English novels she can use in the classroom in her spare time, she states, “There is simply not enough time, but I would like to have some time set aside in my teaching position to read and stay updated on literature. (...) Of course, that is a utopian idea”. Furthermore, Elinor also reveals that she has little time to plan her teaching, which often results in her relying on the textbook.

With five hours a week, there is limited time and capacity to plan for alternative options, and to disregard the textbook. Luckily, textbooks usually include questions and exercises to the texts, which are often very good. Somebody has helped you to think, so you do not have to spend all your time planning sessions.

This suggests that the teachers tend to rely on textbooks in their literature instruction, due to a lack of time to plan new teaching plans and read updated literature.

4.3. Textbooks

Elinor’s previous quote introduces the next category of influences and considerations behind teachers’ selection of literature – textbooks. Textbooks can be wonderful language learning resources for both teachers and students; however, if relied upon as the sole resource of texts, it could result in a unilateral classroom. All the teachers, apart from Jennifer, explicitly mention textbooks as an influence on their text selection. Most state that the books

definitively influence them, but that it does not determine which literature they use in the classroom. When asked how textbooks influence her, Sandra expresses “I do not think any of us really follow the textbooks”, referring to her fellow English teachers at the school she works. Daniel also makes a similar statement; “I follow them at times, and then not follow them at other times. It depends”.

The teachers also state that they are not always satisfied with the selection of literature in their specific textbooks. This often leads them to use texts from different textbooks than the one they are originally using, something Elinor states in the following,

Sometimes I want to use texts from older textbooks, for instance, if that other textbook had a short story that was really good, or if a topic is not adequately covered in the textbook that we use. (...) So I do some “shopping” between textbooks.

Besides, Rebecca states that she uses textbooks to provide the students with a form of structure for the school year, “because it seems like the students find a sense of security in this structure”, something she also admits enjoying herself. However, she expresses that she does not always follow the set structure of the textbook chronologically, but that they jump back and forth between topics. Similarly, Emma states that she uses the literature selection and structure of textbooks quite frequently, because “the students want to avoid too many loose sheets of paper”.

Nonetheless, not all teachers believe textbooks to be beneficial for language classrooms, something Lisa expressed in her interview,

I believe in exposing students to extensive amounts of authentic language, English written for those who have English as their native tongue, and not necessarily as many textbook texts. I am not really a fan of those. (...) A lot of textbooks are also very easy, and underestimate the students’ language abilities.

Lisa voices that the quality of textbooks often vary greatly, a statement Daniel agrees with,

I have worked with textbooks that I thought were really good. (...) Some of the newer textbooks in Social Studies English are really good. (...) But I have also used other textbooks that I thought were really, really bad, and I pretty much threw them out right away and would find my own texts.

The teachers do not point to what specific aspects of textbooks they find of varied quality, however, I interpret it as it is the selection of literature in the textbooks to which the teachers are referring. Furthermore, despite using textbooks quite actively in her teaching, Rebecca states that she is somewhat hesitant to use certain texts and textbooks because they quickly become outdated. “If the textbook was published four years ago, it will not include anything about Donald Trump or Brexit, or anything that is currently on the news, which is really

relevant for the English subject”. Because of this, Rebecca often chooses texts she has found elsewhere, to make sure that the students find it current and relevant.

Lastly, as Emma has worked for a publishing company, she has insight into how the publishers select literature to include in their textbooks. She states,

The most important aspect was to select texts that fulfilled the competence aims for the subject, and to find texts that were engaging for the students. Another important aspect was to select excerpts that highlighted topics that could make the textbook stand out from other books, possibly by finding texts that had not been used in other books before. Meanwhile, you must also consider that the text should engage both teachers and students, which is a challenge because you must imagine two different audiences.

As some teachers are creatures of habit, Emma emphasises that the literature in textbooks cannot be too experimental. It is important that the teachers see the texts as useful and applicable to their teaching, as well as being engaging for both the students and themselves.

4.4. Student Interest

Student interest is the largest and most complex category in this study, and is also one that all the teachers stated to influence their choice of literature. The teachers mainly considered the students’ interests in two different ways; they either chose literature they believed to appeal to the students, or they let the students choose their own texts. However, an overall emphasis in the interviews was placed on pleasure reading, which is why this influence is described and presented independently.

4.4.1. Teacher-Selected Literature

Sandra usually plans for her students to read two novels a year; she chooses one novel that they read together as a class, and lets the students choose whatever they want to read for the second novel. She expresses that both books are read for pleasure, and they are thus adapted to the students’ interests. When asked about why she chooses the texts that she does in relation to what she believes to be quality literature for the language classroom, Sandra voices that:

Quality literature is a book that has something to say. So, it has a good message, it can still be entertaining and have a good message... but that has good characters that kids can relate to, and that you can talk about.

She continues by explaining how she used *Miss Peregrine’s Home for Peculiar Children* (Riggs, 2011) last year in her VG1 class, and that the students loved it because they found it entertaining and could relate to its characters and themes. This is also something that Rebecca considers when choosing literature, and she expresses that it is important that the students can

recognise and identify with the experiences of the narrator, and that the text deals with topics in which she knows the students are interested. For instance, she chose *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* (Haddon, 2003) for one of her classes where the majority studied science subjects, because the novel contains many references to science and technology. Furthermore, she chose George Orwell's *Animal Farm* (1945) for her students in the Social Studies English class, as she knew they were interested in social issues and history. She explains how many students were really engaged in this text, however, some did not like it at all. She links this to an understanding of context and references,

If you do not understand the connection and are not interested in the Russian Revolution, this book is insignificant. So, after having worked with the text for three weeks, some students still believed it was about animal welfare.

Despite this, she ensures that most of the students understood the text and provided great reflections, and that they generally found it interesting and engaging. Rebecca also states that it is sometimes difficult to predict what students find interesting, so she aims to have a selection of texts that appeal to different student groups. She continues, "My aim is to provide a varied selection of literature, so that I at least appeal to some students each time".

Furthermore, when discussing how she chooses texts that students can relate to, Sandra expresses that she also considers gender in her text selection. She explains how she struggles to find texts with "a female main character that is not a princess and that is not something that is in a fantasy... Real women doing real things!" She tries to find such books to appeal to the girls in her class, and to find texts that will interest them as well. Moreover, gender is also something that Emma considers when selecting texts for her English classrooms. She refers to a situation where her students were reading an excerpt of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925), and how it appealed to the girls much more than to the boys.

We only had time to read one excerpt, so maybe I should have chosen another one. One with fewer roses. (...) That always appeal to girls, but I would have chosen an excerpt that is more engaging to the boys.

Similarly, Elinor states:

In the VG3 literature course this year, the class mainly consist of boys. Naturally, I cannot do *Sense and Sensibility* with them, as that would be torture. Recently, I have worked on finding alternative literature and considered what texts that would be engaging and interesting for them. Now I have landed on *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury.

The teachers do not state why these texts are inappropriate or considered "torture", however, I interpret it as their way of saying that these texts have few features boys find interesting and to which they can relate. Nonetheless, these statements show that the teachers in this study

consider the interests and genders of their student groups when choosing literature, in order to promote engagement for reading in their English classrooms.

4.4.2. Pleasure Reading

Emma expresses that she believes the purpose of literature teaching is to promote pleasure reading and reading engagement, and she aims to provide her students with a reading experience that helps them to think of literature in a positive way. She often tries to choose literature that gives the students something to think about, something to “chew on” and to reflect upon. In her opinion, such literature is unusual and special, and often controversial, and provides opportunities for class discussions. She mentions two short stories that are excellent examples of texts that engage students, *Robert and the Dog* (Saro-Wiwa, 1986) and *One of My Best Friends* (Goldsworthy, 1994). With reference to the latter, Emma states,

I was planning on spending one 90-minute session on it the last time I used it, however, we ended up spending three 90-minute sessions. (...) There was so much to say about it, so much to understand and discuss... It was so unpleasant that we needed the time.

This indicates that Emma was successful in engaging her students in this short story, and implies that the influence of pleasure reading overruled the time restriction teachers experience in the classroom. Elinor also makes a similar statement about valuing engaging and controversial literature, and adds that she does “not believe that there is one universal text that inspires and engages everyone”. However, teachers must find texts that spark a sense of curiosity in the students and that they are interested in learning more about.

Moreover, student interest and pleasure reading is the category that the two novice teachers emphasise in their interviews, and it seems to define their overall ideas of literature selection. Lisa explicitly states that “pleasure reading always comes first”, and that students should be allowed to read whatever literature they would like in class. Lisa also believes that all literature is valuable for students, and she encourages students to read everything from comic books to football-biographies and classics, as long as they find it engaging. Jennifer supports this idea, and expresses how teaching a text the students do not find interesting can decrease the enjoyment of reading:

Sometimes literature teaching can be somewhat counterproductive. If what you are achieving with your literature instruction essentially is destroying the enjoyment of reading, you should rather teach something that nurtures pleasure reading.

In addition, she also emphasises that teachers must be careful not to generalise when selecting literature, as “it is easy to generalise and believe that *everyone* loves *The Hunger Games*, but that is not the case”. She believes that literature instruction should engage all students, even

the ones who do not particularly enjoy reading. Accordingly, it is essential for teachers to choose texts that interest the students. This is something Lisa agrees with, “If you are a bad reader, you can practice your reading skills. However, if you do not enjoy reading, that skill is much harder to practice. In order to do that, the text must spark something in them”. In line with Emma and Elinor’s previous statements, Lisa believes that engaging literature must contain topics to which the students react. She also states a trust in the fact that literature can help students to engage in and immerse themselves into someone else’s reality, and thus that it will make students more emphatic. In conclusion, Lisa believes in choosing literature that is engaging and interesting to the students right now, and that “once they are hooked” they can “advance to more difficult, more complex, more *classical* literature”.

However, the teachers express that it is often very difficult to find texts that interest students, because many of them do not like to read at all. This is reflected in the fact that of all the upper secondary schools the teachers have worked at, only two schools even offered the VG3 English Literature and Culture subject. Ultimately, it is up to the students to decide if the subject is to be offered, as they have to choose it as one of their optional programme subjects. If the student group is not large enough, the schools will not offer it at all. In relation to this, Sandra states:

If you want to take that literature class, you *really* have to like literature. (...) So if you don’t like to read, and are reading that type of texts... that is a different muscle that needs to be exercised, and if it is not ... it is not like social studies, it is a different way of looking at stuff, right. (...) and that just takes training to enjoy it, which I think many of the students don’t have.

She concludes by stating how most of her students do not like to read, which is a shame because it affects the students that do love it. Rebecca remembers a time when she had a VG2 class of students that were very interested in literature and how she “*almost* managed to convince them to influence the school administration to offer the literature-course” but there was not enough student interest.

4.4.3. Student-Selected Literature

Elinor expresses that she finds it challenging to choose literature that appeals to all her students, which is why she tends to let them choose their own texts. She voices, “It is terribly difficult to finish a book you have no interest in” which is why she tells her students, “I want you to read a novel, but it is up to you to find a book that interests you”. In fact, if a book does not engage the students after about 20-50 pages, Elinor encourages them to drop it, and find a new book that does interest them. This all boils down to pleasure reading, and how that is her aim with all literature in the classroom.

In addition to promoting pleasure reading, Jennifer argues that allowing students to select their own literature also leaves students with a sense of ownership of the text. She utters, “The chances of them actually finishing the book are a lot higher if they have a sense of ownership of the text”. If the students are allowed the freedom of choice in their literature selection, they will essentially become more motivated to read. She also implies that it could give the students a sense of being included, and that their opinions are acknowledged and respected by the teacher.

The teachers mostly provide the same justifications for the use of student-selected literature as they do for teacher-selected literature; the students are more engaged in the text when they find the topic interesting, and that pleasure reading is the ultimate goal of literature instruction. However, it differs in the way that the teachers admit that it is an impossible task to find texts that appeal to *all* students. All the teachers in this study expressed a positive attitude towards letting students choose their own texts, and they all stated that they had done this in their English classrooms, with the exception of Lisa who had not had a chance to do it in teaching practice.

Nevertheless, several of the teachers express that they often make suggestions of literature to students, in which two of the teachers explicitly state that they believe in the importance of guiding the students in choosing texts. Jennifer voices that if she were to let her students choose their own texts, she would have talked to each individual student about their chosen book, in order to be more involved in the selection process.

If they had chosen a book that was not appropriate for the age group, I could have advised them to choose something else. (...) If the students were in doubt about what book to choose, I could have guided them towards something adapted to their interests or made recommendations.

Similarly, when referring to a project related to the death penalty in the US, Daniel states,

They could not choose from everything in the world, but I found suggestions that I found relevant, and that could give us an ‘in’ to talk about something in social studies English. But I also wanted them to feel like they had some choice in the matter, so that they might be a bit more motivated to read.

4.5. Personal Interest

The category personal interest involves how the teachers’ own interest and literary preferences influence their selection of texts. All of the teachers mention that this is an influence on their decision-making and that they choose texts that they personally believe to be entertaining, valuable, or interesting for the language classroom. For instance, Daniel explains how he used *The Green Mile* in his English classroom because he is a self-declared

Stephen King fan and loves this book. Sandra expresses, “I love my poetry”, which is why she continuously tries to implement various types of poetry into her teaching. Even more, Elinor states that she particularly likes to read fantasy-, science fiction- and dystopian literature for her own enjoyment, something that is also reflected in the texts she mentions using in the classroom (*Frankenstein*, *Fahrenheit 451* and the short story *They’re Made out of Meat* by Terry Bisson). Furthermore, she states, “Of course, my preferences influence my selection. I opt out texts that I do not find interesting. Besides, I believe you are able to teach better if you have an enthusiastic relationship with the text”. Rebecca also makes a similar statement,

There is no point for me to teach a book that I do not like, and that I do not find valuable for students. (...) I believe teachers must have some form of intrinsic motivation in order to be able to convey literature well in class.

The teachers choose texts according to their own preferences and interests because it will make them able to teach better if they are enthusiastic about the literature. On the other hand, the fact that teachers choose texts they are passionate and enthusiastic about can also prove to be a disadvantage. In relation to this, Jennifer states, “If you teach a text you are very enthusiastic about, you can easily become blind as to if the students actually like the text. (...) There can be a clash of interests”. This is something Elinor agrees with, which is why she expresses the following:

One thing I know many English teachers struggle with is when you teach a text you are so passionate about, but the students are not engaged by it. (...) So sometimes one must use ‘light coercion’ because otherwise, they will choose not to do it.

4.6. Access

When asked about their freedom to choose literature in the English classroom, the teachers expressed that they are more or less free to include any text. However, the one framework condition that often restrains their choices is the availability of or access to texts. Elinor states that this is related to economics and that schools do not give unlimited funding to buy class sets of all the different texts teachers want to use. Consequently, “sometimes you just have to use class sets that are available in the school- or at the public library”. Daniel supports this statement, by expressing how teachers at the last school he worked at frequently used *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* and how “(...) that was the novel that were typically used there, just because they had a big box of them, and that’s what, you know... they had enough of. That was the only thing they had class-sets of”.

This implies that practical issues such as availability and access often get in the way of the literature selection in class, and can prevent teachers from making choices at all. Lisa supports

these statements, as limited access to books is something she too has experienced in teaching practice. This is the reason behind her next statement:

I buy a lot of young adult fiction (...) which I keep on my shelf. I have a dream of building a little library of YA fiction so that when I become an English teacher, I can bring my students some books. Not all school libraries are 'top notch' when it comes to literature for adolescents, so I want to be able to offer something else.

On the other hand, even though access is sometimes a restriction, Sandra expresses that the school library (which is also a section of the public library) "is fantastic! They will help all they can, and they are wonderful getting class-sets". Both Sandra and Emma express that they often make use of the public library to find and access texts and that they have borrowed class sets from there.

Despite a somewhat limited availability and access to books, the teachers still find ways of accessing texts. Four of the seven teachers explicitly state that they use the internet to find and access the literature they use in their classrooms. Lisa, Elinor, and Sandra express that they find out about new texts on various forums, Facebook groups, or websites online. They use these pages to stay updated on newly published literature, which they potentially can bring into their respective classrooms. These online platforms provide the teachers with reviews, ratings, and recommendations of texts, which guide them in their decision-making.

Furthermore, the teachers also state that they access a lot of the literature they use through the internet. Novels and short stories are available to use in pdf files through just a short google search. When referring to the two novels *Frankenstein* (Shelley, 1823) and *Fahrenheit 451* (Bradbury, 1953), Elinor states,

Both of these texts are accessible online, so I do not care if the school does not allow me to purchase them. We read them anyway. The students can read them online. (...) It is not ideal, but at least I can use the texts I want to use.

Lastly, it is not only literature in the form of novels and short stories that teachers access through the internet; they also use song lyrics and music videos from YouTube as poetry. Rebecca voices that she uses song lyrics as poetry to illustrate textual imagery, whereas Emma similarly states, "I use a lot of songs and song lyrics, as they are great examples of authentic texts and literary devices". Furthermore, Elinor has used the movie adaptation of *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* to illustrate and discuss adaptations of literature in the classroom. She also mentions using cinematic versions of Shakespeare's plays, in order to bridge the gap between the complex and "old-fashioned" language and the students' perceptions and understandings.

4.7. Collegial Influence

Another influence on the teachers' selection of literature is the category collegial influence, which involves recommendations and shared experiences from colleagues, fellow teachers, courses and seminars, or University classes. Five of the seven teachers explicitly mention having experienced collegial influence in their selection of texts. Firstly, Daniel points to the time he used *Holes* when he states, "It was pretty much, they told me 'this is the one that we have used a lot' and 'use this book, most of the examiners know it and have read it' (...)". Secondly, Rebecca also mentions getting inspiration and recommendations about books from colleagues. They often share their teaching experiences concerning novels and texts, to which Rebecca comments, "I trust that the person's selection is good". This is also something that influences Sandra's text selection, as she states, "We have got such a lovely group of English teachers at our school, where we share what we think, what we have read and what we have used in the classroom".

Further, Sandra also voices that the student teachers who have had teaching practice at her school also influence her decision-making concerning literature.

Even student teachers have come in and said that this is what they have been learning in their English didactics class or whatever. And I say. 'oh, that's interesting, I can use that'. So, we teachers are always keeping our mind open for texts we can use in the classroom.

Though it is not the case, Jennifer and Lisa could potentially have been one of the student teachers Sandra is talking about, which is why I believe it is relevant to mention how collegial influence also affects their literature selection. The most important influence on their text choices is the reading lists in their didactics course and recommendations from professors and teachers at the University. This course mainly included young adult fiction novels, such as for instance *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian*, *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, *Dustbin Baby* (Wilson, 2001) and *The House on Mango Street* (Cisneros, 1984).

In addition, some of the teachers also state that they tend to use literature they have a relationship with from their upbringing and education in their EFL instruction. Rebecca expresses that she does not tend to include such literature often, but that she has used "classic texts" such as C.S. Lewis' *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe* (1950) and various short stories from Roald Dahl (for instance *Lamb to the Slaughter*, 1953), which she read when she was young. Moreover, Emma has used literature from her education, specifically texts she encountered when working on her Master's thesis in the US. I will present and explain this more in the next category. Furthermore, Elinor voices that she frequently uses the two poems

Dulce et Decorum Est (Owen, 1920) and *The Soldier* (Brooke, 1914), which she encountered when she herself was in upper secondary school. She states,

I wish to convey these poems to my students because they made a great impact on me. They are two contrasting perspectives on war; where the one depicts the cruelty of warfare, whereas the other presents the glory of being allowed to die for your country.

The two novice teachers, Lisa and Jennifer, have not yet had the opportunity to use many texts in their teaching, as they are newly qualified teachers. However, they are of ‘The Harry Potter Generation’, and both expressed positive attitudes towards using the series in the classroom. They both had pleasurable experiences with these books in their upbringing, and they wish to distribute this pleasure to their students.

4.8. Development

Overall, it seems to be of great importance to the teachers to use literature for something *more* than simply reading it, and all of the teachers in this study state that they use literature in the English classroom to achieve something. The data shows that they often choose literature they believe will lead to the development of students. The term ‘Development’ is central in educational philosophy and research, and is often used to refer to the education and maturity of persons. In short, development concerns the formation of the personality, behaviour and moral attitude of a human being, through a persons’ upbringing, environment and education (SNL, 2015). When teachers choose literature they believe will develop students, they often consider how the text for instance will provide insight into different cultures, knowledge about an issue or historical event or a general understanding of individuals across the world. Consequently, the texts they choose could essentially form the students’ personality, behaviour towards others and their moral attitudes. In the following, I will shed light on how this became evident through the teachers’ interviews.

Firstly, Rebecca states that literature should “present us with a perspective on our worldviews (...) and open up for new insight”. She believes that literature can broaden the students’ perspectives, and consequently provide them with an alternative understanding of the world and of other cultures. Similarly, Jennifer expresses, “Considering the fact that schools should develop students into educated citizens, I believe that the literature used in classrooms should contribute to educating students too”. That literature should educate students and broaden their perspectives is also something Emma believes in, as she often uses texts that illustrate how other people in the world live and interact. Through working on her Master’s thesis,

Emma encountered a Native American author, who writes authentic texts about tribe life that she has often used in the classroom:

The text is about how to live with the cycle of the seasons (...), and it describes how to capture fish with a spear, which only Native Americans are allowed to do. (...) it illustrates how he makes baskets of birch bark, and how he uses that basket to separate the rice grains from the peels. There is a lot of cultural knowledge in his texts.

She expresses that the students responded well to the text and that they found it interesting once they understood the context. In addition, other teachers have also used texts about Native Americans to promote insight into the lives, culture and social issues of this indigenous group. Sandra voices that she has used *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian* to “tie that in” to this topic, to which Lisa adds:

I believe that book illustrates both the benefits and disadvantages of being a Native American in an excellent way. It also illustrates the issue of having a split identity. The students do not have to be part of an indigenous group in order to identify with being different.

Moreover, Daniel is without a doubt the teacher in this study who emphasises development the most as an influence and consideration for his literary choices. A recurring argument in his explanations is the use of literature as “an ‘in’ for history and culture”, which could enable a class discussion about the culture, social issues or historical events in the text. He has previously used *The Green Mile* for this purpose, to talk about the death penalty in class, and to engage students in a discussion about this sensitive issue. Daniel believes that such an approach to literature can help students understand a culture or society, and to comprehend “why things were done in a certain way at one point or another”. For instance, he has used Liam O’Flaherty’s short story *The Sniper* (1923) to introduce the topic of the Irish Civil War, which worked as an introduction to a more in-depth discussion to Ireland’s culture, society and historical context. He also mentions using the song *Uncle Sam, Goddamn* by Brother Ali (2007) for the same purpose, which presents perspectives on racism, inequality, and social issues in the US.

Furthermore, Rebecca also voices that great literature provides opportunities for the students to become familiar with historical events and the contemporary context of the text and that this helps students understand and comprehend the themes in the texts more deeply. She exemplifies this by pointing to her use of Nadine Gordimer’s short story *The Moment Before the Gun Went Off*, which illustrates South Africa during the Apartheid, and states that they worked with understanding the issue from different perspectives.

Even more, Rebecca expresses that the reading of literature should educate students in a way that they will benefit from later in life:

If you have read *Animal Farm*, it is a text you will encounter references to several times throughout your life. You could come across some kind of reference to ‘some animals are more equal than others’, and will be able to recognise it. That will give students a sense of achievement, which I believe is very important.

Besides, Rebecca also states that recognising literary references will give students “cred”. She explains how it is a somewhat easy task to talk about the topic of for instance multimedia and multiculturalism without discussing the point or essence of it, whereas when discussing literature, you must be on point and explicit. Rebecca wishes that her students someday will be able to recognise such references and achieve such credibility, which is why she often chooses literature that is defined as classical or canonical.

As discussed previously, Sandra has noticed that students today generally read less than they did when she started her teaching career. She expresses how she sometimes finds it hard to choose texts because of this, as,

Without the reading, they don’t have that cultural capital. (...) When I taught the VG3 literature class last year, there were so many holes in their knowledge. They didn’t have anything to draw from, so that was really tough.

This shows that it is important to consider development both when educating students and when choosing texts. If students are not sufficiently educated, their knowledge and understanding will have such ‘holes’, and their cultural capital will be deprived. Therefore, it is important that teachers choose texts with development in mind, as texts that promote such understanding will counteract this deprivation.

4.9. English Subject Curriculum and The Knowledge Promotion

Out of the seven teachers in this study, four teachers mentioned the English Subject Curriculum and The Knowledge Promotion in some form during their interviews. The teachers all agree that the curriculum is very open in terms of which literature they can use and that it lets them choose freely. For instance, Elinor voices that the curricula in English are not particularly limiting, and that it is up to the teacher to choose texts independently. “The curricula do not state which textbooks you should use, or which literature you should use (...) they simply state that you should use literary works, not which literary works”.

Although the Knowledge Promotion is not limiting, some teachers still state that they are influenced by it when selecting texts. Elinor states that in her VG3 English Literature and

Culture class, she considers the competence aims in the curriculum when selecting novels.

This is evident from this statement,

There are some frameworks to consider, you should preferably teach ‘one classic’, and something that can be classified as contemporary. (...) I plan for my students to read two novels during the school year, preferably more, but two are obligatory.

This shows that two competence aims from the curriculum determine her choice of novels.

The first objective state that students should be able to “analyse at least two lengthy works of fiction”, and the other one that students should “interpret a representative selection of texts from literary-historical periods in English literature, from the Renaissance up to the present time” (Norwegian Directorate of Education and Training, 2006h). These objectives do not state which specific texts Elinor should choose, however, they influence her in terms of time-period and length.

However, Rebecca makes one statement pointing to a limitation of the curriculum, which concerns the VG2 International English course: “I often aim to encourage my students to read classical texts, but the curriculum does not always allow that. It states that students should read literature published after 1950, which excludes many classics”. Rebecca points to the competence aim which states that students should be able to “elaborate on and discuss a selection of literature and factual prose from the period 1950 up to the present” (Norwegian Directorate of Education and Training, 2006f).

Nonetheless, the curricula are not an influence and consideration behind all of the teachers’ choices. Daniel, Lisa, and Jennifer do not even mention the curricula in their interviews, which suggests that The Knowledge Promotion is not limiting when it comes to which literature that could be used in classrooms. Similarly, Sandra makes a statement concerning her selection process that supports this claim:

So, I consider, What is the class like? How are the students academically? Then I look at how much time we have, the time-schedule. Are the books available? And then, the last thing, where does this book fit in with the curriculum?

The fact that Sandra mentions the curriculum as the last consideration she makes when choosing texts, suggests that even though the teachers use The Knowledge Promotion as a guideline when choosing texts, it is not a determining influence for many of them. On the other hand, Emma states that she selects literature in the opposite way from Sandra; “I look for texts that fulfil competence aims” and that “I choose texts I want to use, but that are relevant for the subject curriculum”. In conclusion, the teachers are influenced by the curricula in various ways when selecting literature for the English classroom – some use it as

a justification for their literary choices, some to fulfil competence aims, and some are simply not influenced by it at all.

4.10. A Literary Canon

As previously mentioned, I had many preconceived ideas about this category when I first started developing this study, as I believed this to be the main influence on teachers' text selection. However, when asked if they are influenced by a literary canon, they almost unanimously state that they are not influenced by the literary canon of the western world. To illustrate, when asked directly if a literary canon influences her choices, Emma strongly denies,

No that does influence me at all. I choose the texts that *I like* (...) However, it does not mean I will not choose a text that is very well known. It just means that I choose it because I believe it is a text with which they should be familiar.

Furthermore, Daniel states that he is unsure whether there actually is a canon to be influenced by in a Norwegian school context, however, he expresses that he is "negative in general to it". He also voices how a canon would be very limiting for teachers, "As a teacher, you would not be able to pick texts based on your students' choices, and you would not be able to use contemporary literature, because new texts would not be part of the canon". Since there is no literary canon in Norway or specific reading lists in The Knowledge Promotion, Daniels' worries about its limitations on teachers are strictly theoretical.

In contrast, Sandra implies a generally positive view on a literary canon in the English subject, through her statement,

We do not really ask our kids to read the canon now or anything, and that is a shame. Because it is part of having that capital, so that you can understand the texts that are being written now, which draw from ... many of them draw from what has been written before.

Sandra believes that if students are familiar with canonical texts, they will be more able to recognise intertextuality and literary references in contemporary literature and media. It will also make them more able to interpret new texts. Furthermore, she elaborates on her positive views on a literary canon by questioning what is going to happen 20 years into the future.

So then, our teachers in the future... if the teachers that we have now are those teachers that do not like to read – what is going to happen in 20 years? Are the students not going to read at all? So, personally, I think there should be some guidelines.

Similarly, Rebecca states that she has "a passion for the students to get to 'taste' some classics". She believes that canonical literature provides students with cultural references they

will encounter later in life, and that recognising such references can give the students a valuable sense of achievement that can enhance self-esteem in the subject. This can also be linked to her previous statement about literature providing students with a credibility and cultural capital. These beliefs are reflected in the different choices of texts she includes in her teaching, as Orwell, Shakespeare, Dahl, Gordimer, and Lewis are all considered authors of canonical texts. However, she emphasises that it is important to choose canonical texts wisely, as many are very long, complex and perceived as ‘difficult’. On the other hand, she also expresses a desire for all teachers to open up for more contemporary and alternative literature, and states that teachers should be more open for change and variety in their literature classrooms.

Further, despite doubting the existence of a literary canon in the English subject, four of the seven teachers mention Shakespeare as a central author for the English classroom. For instance, Elinor states how “there is no point in avoiding Shakespeare in the English classroom, he belongs there”, whereas Lisa voices, “I enjoy Shakespeare’s plays, so I think students should read them too”. Rebecca also mentions using different sonnets in her teaching, as she believes “that Shakespeare has some value” for the English classroom. Lastly, Sandra expresses that she values Shakespeare because his texts are “all about the stories of being human. (...) They’re timeless, and they resonate with us today”.

Finally, I conclude this category with a quotation from Jennifer’s interview, which I believe summarises these teachers’ relationship to a possible literary canon and to literary text selection in general.

Of course, there are texts that students must be familiar with, that are somewhat older- and canonical texts. (...) However, if these texts do not promote pleasure reading, which many students already struggle with, teachers should rather choose texts that are engaging and interesting for students.

5. Discussion

What does my study reveal about the influences and considerations involved in teachers' text selection? After presenting these influences and considerations in chapter 4, it is hardly a surprise that the teachers select literature according to them. However, the answer to the thesis question and the conclusion of this thesis lies in the discussion and the explanation of what these influences and considerations entail. It is important to emphasise that this thesis cannot conclude about the teaching practices of these teachers, it can only point to what the teachers' statements imply about their literature instruction. In the following chapter, I will discuss the implications of the teachers' statements in light of relevant theoretical aspects and previous research in this field. The discussion will focus on teacher-selected literature, as that is the focus of this thesis. However, student-selected literature will be discussed in chapter 5.7. Overall, many of the categories overlap and blend into each other in the discussion of how they influence teachers' literature selection, which is why some of the categories are structured and discussed in relation to each other.

5.1. Language Level as a Basis for Literature-Selection

Four of the seven teachers explicitly mentioned that they consider the language proficiencies of their students when selecting literature for the language classroom, and that they aim to choose literature suited for every student. Rosenkjar supports these statements, and suggests that teachers must consider the linguistic complexity of the texts they choose to include in their instruction (2006, p. 128). If the texts are too difficult, students are not able to comprehend the contents of the stories. This can be seen in line with reader-response theories, as readers cannot create meaning- and respond to a text if they do not understand it.

Nonetheless, the teachers did not specify *how* they determine the language level of texts, which could imply that they select texts based on what they personally believe are linguistically appropriate texts for their students. Due to such a lack of criteria of what makes up an appropriate and comprehensible text, the teachers might not be successful in selecting literature adapted to the students' language level. If teachers fail to choose comprehensible texts adapted to the students' language proficiencies, students will not be able to comprehend the text, and language learning will be lost. This results in "frustrational reading" (Schultz, 1981, p. 44), as it will simply be "too much for them", as Daniel stated in his interview. In this way, the students will not acquire language and develop their literacy skills, and their motivation for reading might decrease.

In order to determine what input is comprehensible for the students, teachers must get to know them and their language abilities. As shown in the interviews, this is something Lisa did when asking her students to create a digital story about their experiences with reading. In this way, she learned the students' relationship and experiences with reading literature, as well as their English language proficiencies. This is in line with the reader-response theories discussed in chapter 2 (Iser, 1978; Jauss & Benzing, 1970; and Rosenblatt, 1994), as teachers must know their students' backgrounds and previous experiences in order to choose appropriate and comprehensible texts. Even more, this is especially important for teachers at the upper secondary level, as they might have different classes of students each year, which provide little time for getting to know each individual student. It is thus important that teachers facilitate for classroom activities that will acquaint them with their students' language level, so they can select appropriate texts and differentiate their teaching.

Furthermore, the data from this study shows that when working with students with a low proficiency in the foreign language, the teachers tend to focus on extensive reading as the main reading strategy in their instruction. Extensive reading coincides with a quadrant 4 approach in Paran's model on the intersection of literature and language teaching, as there is no explicit focus on literary quality nor on language learning in such activities. Nonetheless, extensive reading can still be a beneficial vehicle to promote reading skills and language learning, as it provides students with large quantities of comprehensible and authentic language input. In addition, as texts used for this purpose generally demand less from students in terms of reading comprehension, analytical skills and language abilities, they are also likely to generate pleasure and reading motivation. Moreover, Krashen argues that extensive reading of texts with no literary- or language learning focus will serve as a conduit to more "serious reading" (1993, p. 65). Consequently, I argue that the teachers' use of extensive reading of linguistically appropriate texts will enhance the reading skills, language learning and reading motivation for the weaker proficiency students, and could potentially also lead to reading of advanced materials in the future.

Nonetheless, when selecting and appointing appropriate literature for the stronger proficiency students, the teachers expressed that they tend to use more or less the same texts as they do for the weaker proficiency students. However, the reading tasks they appoint to the stronger students differ from those of the weaker. The teachers ask the weaker students to read simply for "extensive exposure to language", as Rebecca put it, whereas the stronger students are presented with more challenging tasks in terms of intensive reading, analysis of literary

devices and interpretation of content and meaning. In such activities, the stronger proficiency students are typically required to produce some form of written or oral language output, which also leads to language learning as students process language more deeply, and with more effort than they do through language input (Swain, 2000, p. 99). These texts are not necessarily too easy for the stronger students, as the intensive reading and analysis activities challenge them and develop their language competencies. Consequently, the solution to selecting linguistically comprehensible texts for all language levels could arguably be to select literature the students can read “at different levels”, a consideration the teachers in this study already make in their decision-making. Such texts will challenge both the weaker students through extensive reading and exposure to the target language, and the stronger students through language output and analytical skills.

At this point, I would like to address the concept of the authenticity of a text, as it is an important element to consider when selecting appropriate literature according to students’ language level. All of the teachers in this study mentioned using authentic literature in their EFL instruction, either in the form of novels, short stories, poetry, song lyrics or drama. However, as Daniel explained, some of his students at upper secondary level had difficulties tackling authentic literature, as it was too difficult for them. One possible solution to this issue is the use of simplified texts, or *graded readers*, in the EFL classroom. Graded readers are complete books that have been prepared so that they stay within a strictly limited range of vocabulary (Nation, 2013, p. 247). Such texts can lead to vocabulary expansion, the establishment of previously met vocabulary, development of reading skills, and promotion of reading motivation.

However, there are also some disadvantages to using graded readers in the EFL classroom. As Honeyfield suggests, simplification of texts tends to produce homogenized products in which the information content becomes diluted (1977, p. 434). This involves the reader covering more words to get the given information. Furthermore, he states that the simplification of syntax may reduce cohesion and readability, as the deletion of localized information or cohesive devices will contribute to little development of the students’ reading skills (1977, p. 435). None of the teachers in my study mentioned using graded readers in their teaching, nor was it something they seemed to consider. However, although it has its drawbacks, the use of graded readers for the weakest proficiency students, who struggle with reading even shorter texts in the FL, could be a potential solution.

Overall, the fact that the four teachers consider the students' language level when selecting literature for the EFL classroom, suggests that they have a combination of a task-based- and a stylistic approach to literature teaching. The task-based approach is evident in their statements through the view of literature as a resource for language learning and the belief that literature will lead to better language skills and vocabulary acquisition. The teachers assess the students' proficiency level, and select literature that would help them become more competent in the foreign language. This includes a pragmatic view of literature in the language classroom, where the focus is on its applicability for all language learners, suggesting that there is a text 'out there' for everyone. Nonetheless, selecting literature according to language level also complies with the stylistic approach to literature instruction, as literature is used to gain insight into language use and literary discourse. This is especially true for Emma, Daniel, and Rebecca, as they expressed that they use literature that illustrates language features and literary terms/devices, in order to promote analytical skills. Such a view of literature is also reflected in the competence aims for the English subjects at VG2 and VG3, as students are required to "analyse", "elaborate on", "discuss", "interpret" literary works and to "use" literary terminology in language output.

5.2. Appeal to Student-Interest through Recognition and Pleasure-Reading

All of the teachers in this study voiced that they consider the students' interests when selecting literature, which complies with a reader-response approach to literature teaching. Because students have various experiences and outlooks on life, they will understand texts differently. Furthermore, the teachers provided various reflections on how they selected according to interests, however, two main considerations occurred from the data. The first consideration involves the teachers selecting texts with an element of recognition, to which the students can relate and identify. The second consideration explains how teachers select literature adapted to the students' interests to promote pleasure reading, with the ultimate goal of instilling a lifelong relationship with literature.

5.2.1. Element of Recognition in Literature

The teachers emphasised the importance of selecting literature to which the students could relate, as this would allow the students to identify characters, issues, and conflicts as relevant to their own lives. A prominent view in the interviews was the importance of an element of recognition in the text, so students could more easily relate to the experiences of the narrator. This suggests an experiential approach to literature, as the students can recognise human

emotions and experiences of the characters as relevant to their own lives, and find the reading engaging through an interaction with the text. This is also in line with the reader-response theories presented in chapter 2.1., as the students can apply their previous life experiences and understandings of the world to understand the text. A carefully selected text according to the students' current worldviews and perspectives can enhance reading motivation, guide the reading process and increase overall reading engagement. Furthermore, even weaker students who have little experience with reading literature can benefit from reading texts concerning topics to which they can relate. Although they might not have much experience with tackling and processing literary texts, they do have previous horizons of expectations on the various topics, issues, and themes in a text that can help them understand and enjoy literary works. The teachers did not provide any explanations as to *why* they choose literature to which students can relate, however, findings imply that reader-response theory may be the basis of their choices.

Furthermore, as Jennifer pointed out, it is important not to generalise when selecting literature for students. The reading preferences of students are as diverse as their personalities, and one can simply not conclude with "everyone loves *The Hunger Games*". Furthermore, in contrast to Kjelen (2013), the teachers stated that they considered gender, interculturalism, and contemporary YA literature in their text selection to appeal to the students' interests and to provide them with texts with an element of recognition. In relation to gender, their idea was that the students would be more able to identify with the characters if they were of the same gender as the students. Whereas I see the benefits of this choice, I do question Elinor's description of the use of *Sense and Sensibility* in a class of mostly boys as "torture". This is a generalisation where she essentially claims that boys in general will not enjoy reading this book. She does not trust in her abilities to make this book applicable and interesting for all students, nor does she trust her students' abilities to respond aesthetically to literary works. Furthermore, she also generalises the idea that *Sense and Sensibility* is a book for girls, when in fact, one should not assume that all girls enjoy reading about love and romance. Consequently, I argue that although this way of selecting texts have many benefits, teachers must be careful not to generalise which texts they believe their students will find enjoyable and engaging.

Moreover, when selecting literature to which students can relate, the teachers also show an intercultural approach to literature teaching and reading. This involves students both finding elements they recognise from their own lives in the text, as well as seeing the world from

someone else's perspective. In the intercultural and diverse classroom, teachers are often unaware of their individual students' cultural backgrounds. Hence, it is imperative that teachers make all types of books and reading materials available to their students, so the students can find texts to which they can relate both personally and internally (Weih, 2014, p. 1). As shown in chapter 4.4, this is something the teachers in this study attempt to do.

Meanwhile, McKay (1982) argues that literature written for young adults is specifically suited for the EFL classroom, as YA novels often contain topics and issues to which students can identify and relate, which is important in order to interest and engage them. In fact, one of the most striking features of young adult fiction is the preponderance of the first-person narrative, which allows the reader the privileged position of identifying with the protagonist as well as knowing and understanding more than the other characters in the text (Williams, 2013, p. 169). This will enable readers to easily recognise the issues in the text as relevant to their own lives, which could be both motivational and engaging. It will also provide young readers with the opportunity to view the world through the eyes of others, which helps to generate insight and sympathy. In addition, young adult fiction is often issue-based, as plots frequently concern issues related to coming of age and the learning of life lessons. The protagonists in such texts are *almost always* teenagers themselves, and the experiences the protagonist encounter are easily relatable to the experiences of young readers. Therefore, the use of such texts is in line with reader-response theories, as students can apply their previous life experiences in order to understand and identify with the text.

In terms of structure and layout, young adult literature often includes experimental ideas and aspects and even post-modern elements. This involves an unconventional, mismatched and unorganized structure of chapters, which does not fit the expectations of the reader. Visually, such texts are multi-layered as they include both images, different fonts, and intertextuality; which makes young adult literature both challenge and generate pleasure in the reader. This is also something the teachers in this study consider when selecting literature, something that is shown through their use of the young adult texts *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian*, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* and *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar children*. The use of such texts also complies with Jauss' theory about the quality of texts, where texts that do not fit the expectations of the reader is ranked highly. There is a mismatch between the readers' horizon of expectations for literature reading, and the text offers an element of surprise that could be engaging and motivating. Consequently, I argue

that teachers should consider selecting YA literature for the EFL classroom, as students can easily relate to it, develop empathy for others and generally enjoy such texts.

With this in mind, I argue that the teachers' consideration of selecting texts with an element of recognition and identification will benefit the students' reading situation, as they will achieve a closer relationship with the text through applying their previous knowledge in the reading of the text. This will enable students to interact with texts, achieve insight into other people's perspectives, and develop sympathy for others. Furthermore, young adult literature is very beneficial for this purpose, and I argue for the importance of selecting such texts for the EFL classroom.

5.2.2. Pleasure Reading as an Aesthetic Approach to Literature Reading

Moreover, all the teachers considered pleasure reading as a fundament for their text selection, because it would promote reading engagement and an overall positive view of literature. Selecting literature that is pleasurable and engaging for the students suggests an aesthetic approach to reading, because the focus is on the lived experiences and enjoyment the students derive from the text (Rosenblatt, 1994). Because the students are reading literature they find enjoyable, they can immerse themselves in the text and participate in its world. This also encourages an aesthetic response to the text, as suggested by Iser (1978), where the readers will use their previous experiences in order to understand the text, and derive meaning from it. Consequently, each student will find different texts meaningful and pleasurable, which suggests that the task of selecting *one* text the whole class find enjoyable, is a problematic one.

Although the teachers expressed that pleasure reading was their main consideration when selecting literature, which suggests an aesthetic approach to reading, the data shows that the teachers are selecting the literature for efferent purposes (Rosenblatt, 1994). This is illustrated in the interviews through Rebecca's selection of Orwell's *Animal Farm*. She stated that she uses this text to appeal to the students' interests in the Russian Revolution and political regimes, when in fact this can be understood as an attempt to fulfil the competence aims regarding culture and history in Social Studies English. This suggests that even though she chooses texts according to the students' interests in order to promote aesthetic pleasure reading, she still emphasise efferent reading by using literature as illustrations of cultural and historical contexts.

This is not something only Rebecca does; overall, the teachers all stated that they select texts that illustrate or promote historic events, culture, content, literary devices or language features; which each suggest reading for the public meaning of, or specific information in a text. Despite voicing that they select literature that will promote pleasure reading, they also expressed that they use the literature to illustrate or teach *something else* than merely the joy and experience of reading. Due to this, I argue that if the teachers are sincere about wanting to promote enjoyable reading experiences and positive encounters with literature, they should frequently select and use literature for aesthetic reading purposes, where pleasure is the ultimate goal and outcome of the reading. Despite Scholes' (1998) arguments for the weakening of the aesthetic approach to literature, I insist on aesthetic reading as a way of enabling students to truly interact with the text, find enjoyment in the stories, and to get lost in the literary work.

Regardless of the benefits, an aesthetic approach to reading does not necessarily comply with the English Subject Curricula in The Knowledge Promotion. The curricula emphasise that the instruction in language classrooms should result in specific and testable learning outcomes and skills, expressed through competence aims the students must fulfil. The experience and pleasure of reading literature is not a skill that can be fulfilled by 'can-do' statements, which suggests that the LK06 promotes an efferent approach to literature reading. Thus, the curricula presents literature as a means to *achieve* something or as a *basis* for interpretation, discussion, analysis, assessment or communication, which are all skills that can be measured and assessed.

In fact, an aesthetic view of literature reading is hardly evident in the curricula, other than the brief mention that it "can instil a lifelong joy of reading and a deeper understanding of others and oneself" (Norwegian Directorate of Education and Training, 2006a). Regardless of teacher autonomy and freedom of choice, the LK06 is the steering document of all teaching practices in Norway, which means that it will undoubtedly influence EFL text selection. Even though teachers personally value pleasure reading and aesthetic encounters with literature, their job is to guide their students to succeed on National tests and in fulfilling competence aims. Due to this, the promotion of aesthetic reading in EFL classrooms will then seem like a counteracting of the curricula, which could explain the lack of aesthetic reading as a consideration behind the teachers' literature selections. Nonetheless, if the teachers are serious in their wishes to promote true pleasure reading, I argue that they should find ways of

implementing aesthetic reading of literature, where students can read just for the sake of reading, and not for achieving information and skills, or for fulfilling competence aims.

Obviously, this does not mean that I argue against efferent reading in the EFL classroom, as it unquestionably has many benefits for both language learning, cultural insight, and reading skills. Literature provides excellent ways into foreign cultures, historical events, and other people's way of living, and efferent reading of literary works could provide students with the abilities to understand, discuss, and elaborate on literary interpretations, contents, and contexts. However, I argue that teachers must be aware of what the purpose of the reading is and how it affects the students' experiences of the reading situation, and consider this when selecting literature. If the purpose is to acquire understandings of history and culture, in line with the competence aims, an efferent approach is the way to go. However, when stating that the purpose is to promote pleasure reading and a positive relationship with literature, an efferent reading of the political structures presented in *Animal Farm* might not be the most enjoyable reading situation for the students.

5.3. Canonical Influence, Personal Canons, and Personal Interests

As shown in chapter 4.10., the teachers in this study denied being influenced by a literary canon when selecting literature for the EFL classroom, and express a negative view of such a fixed selection of texts. Although explicitly denying an influence from a literary canon, the teachers' statements still suggested deliberate considerations concerning canonical literature. For instance, Elinor explained how she could not use *Sense and Sensibility* in her male-dominated class, because "that would be torture". Although Elinor chose not to use this book, because her focus was on promoting pleasure reading, it still implies that she feels as if she should be able to assign it, due to the overall quality and cultural position of this book. The fact that she even mentions the book, suggests that she possibly feels that she *should* assign it, but were unable to because her priority was on pleasure reading. Similarly, despite denying a canonical influence on their EFL text selection, four of the seven teachers mention Shakespeare as central for their literature instruction. They explain this choice by stating that he 'belongs there', that he 'has some value' and that they 'think students should read' his plays. This view of Shakespeare is in line with Bloom's *The Western Canon*, which indicates that the teachers are influenced by such a canon. However, this influence is not strong enough to override the other concerns in the EFL classroom, such as for instance student interest and pleasure reading.

In contrast, Rebecca and Sandra expressed a positive view of canonical texts and a literary canon, as it would provide students with valuable references and cultural capital. Sandra also stated that such capital would enable students to understand contemporary texts, as “many of them draw from what has been written before”. In line with Bourdieu’s ideas (1986), this suggests that a reading of canonical texts will develop students’ cultural capital, and thus enhance their educational achievements. Therefore, one can conclude that Rebecca and Sandra have a canonical approach to literature teaching in order to educate students and provide them with insight they will benefit from in other areas of their lives.

On the other hand, Sandra also stated that she sometimes avoid using canonical texts, because the gap between the text and the students’ cultural capital is too wide. Because students lack insight into aspects needed to understand the text, she chooses literature that is more adapted to their level of cultural understanding. Although she values canonical texts as a basis for developing cultural capital, she chooses contemporary texts in order to avoid issues with comprehension and understanding. This conflicting view is also reflected in research on this field, as Coles (2013) argues that students from culturally deprived backgrounds are not likely to understand canonical texts, whereas Pike (2002) suggests how a literary canon of pre-20th-century texts in the classroom can provide readers with valuable experiences that could not have been gained from contemporary texts. However, Rybakova & Roccanti (2016) argues that canonical and contemporary texts should be connected, rather than pitted against one another as two opposites, and that contemporary YA texts should serve as scaffolds for canonical literature. This implies that literature teachers should not avoid teaching canonical texts altogether due to a fear of lacking cultural capital in their students; they should rather use contemporary YA literature as reading ladders to bridge the gap between the students’ understanding and the unknown aspects in canonical literature.

However, when discussing canonical influence, one must also mention the influence of a hidden school canon (Weinreich, 2004). Though the teachers denied an influence from a literary canon, they did state that they use the same texts year after year, due to a lack of *time*. This could indicate a reproduction and reinforcement of a hidden school canon for each generation of teachers, and that texts are not replaced until a new generation of teachers enters the profession. When teachers have little time to plan for new literature instruction, combined with little new literary impulses, the result is inevitably a presentation of the same literary works every year. If this is the case, the existence of a hidden school canon is indisputable, and the same literature would be introduced to students year after year.

A hidden school canon can also be reinforced by another influence on teachers' text selection; collegial influence. The teachers stated that they often use literature that other teachers have recommended and that they trust that persons' selection without much consideration. In this way, teachers at the same school will end up teaching the same texts year after year, which will essentially result in a hidden literary canon specifically for that school. There will be a shared opinion amongst the teachers at that school regarding which texts that should- and are being used, where new teachers simply 'accept' this school canon, much like Daniel did when teaching *Holes*.

Despite stating that she is not influenced by a literary canon, Elinor's use of the two contradicting poems on war suggests the opposite. In fact, the two poems *Dolce et Decorum Est* and *The Soldier* were both required readings in the Veierød Reform (Ibsen, 2000b, p. 59). I do not want to assume a woman's age; however, according to her education and the number of years she has been teaching, I believe Elinor was a student in upper secondary school herself during the time of the Veierød Reform. The fact that she is influenced by her previous experiences with literature when selecting texts is hardly a surprise; however, it is interesting that she denies the influence of a canon. Although the Veierød Reform was not a 'canon' per se, Elinor's use of these texts implies tendencies to reinforce a hidden canon, where the same texts are being used repeatedly.

In addition, the fact that teachers choose literature according to their *personal interests* also suggests a reinforcement of personal canons in EFL classrooms. For instance, Emma stated that she chooses literature that she likes, and to which *she* believes the students should be familiar. This suggests that Emma has a form of an internal guideline for which texts she finds valuable, to which she assess the quality of the text. In this way, this suggests that the teachers in this study are selecting texts according to their personal canons, where their knowledge and opinions of literature have a central role in determining which texts they use in the EFL classroom.

On the other hand, the influence of personal interest is not only related to personal canons but also involves teachers selecting literature they find interesting for their own enjoyment. To illustrate, Rebecca stated that she does not see a point in teaching a text she does not like herself. If the text does not appeal to her, she will not be inspired and engaged in teaching it to her students. Some would probably argue that teachers should not consider their own interests when selecting texts, as the focus should be on how students perceive and experience the text. However, much like my subjectivity behind the decisions I made when working with this

thesis, the teachers' choices can never be fully objective, and their interests and reading preferences will inevitably influence their literary choices. Therefore, I argue that as long as the teachers' personal interests do not override the student-focused elements in the decision-making, this influence on teachers is irrelevant. If teachers primarily focus their text selection on the students' interests and needs, which these teachers do, it does not matter if they also consider their personal interest as a secondary influence.

5.4. Development

Another consideration the teachers made when selecting literature, was to look for texts they believed would result in the development of students' personalities, behaviour towards others, and moral attitudes. Their statements mainly concerned how literature open up for new insight and present students with new perspectives of the world. This is in line with Rosenblatt's (1995) ideas of how literature allows students to participate in and experience situations and worlds different from their own. When students are engaged in the fictional world, they are also more likely to identify and sympathise with its characters. Furthermore, in line with reader-response theory, this suggests that the teachers considered an aesthetic approach to reading, as the students were able to make connections between their own life experiences and the experiences of the characters in the text. This is shown in the interviews through Lisa's statement, as "the students do not have to be a part of an indigenous group in order to identify with being different". Even though the students are not a Spokane Native living on a reservation, they can still identify and sympathise with the issues of not belonging and having a conflicting identity.

In relation to this, Per Thomas Andersen (2011) argues for the addition of a sixth Basic Skill to The Knowledge Promotion, a skill that determines how well students can engage in communities, personal relationships, and societal relations. This Basic Skill is the ability to empathise with the feelings of others. If you cannot immerse yourself in other people's experiences and perceptions, you can be neither a good partner, functioning parent nor an expedient citizen (Andersen, 2011, p. 19). Literature plays an outstanding role in developing students into emphatic individuals, as fictional stories provide practice in understanding other people's lives, emotions, experiences, and needs. This parallels with Nussbaum's ideas about the purpose of literature, and emphasise the aesthetic approach to literature teaching.

Nonetheless, when the teachers consider development as a basis for their text selection, they also mention using the literature for efferent purposes. They stated that they use literature to

teach aspects of foreign cultures or historical events, or as Daniel put it, literature as “an ‘in’ for history and culture”. This would involve the students to engage in efferent reading, in order to acquire information on the cultural and historical context of the text, as well as to prepare themselves for efferent analysis tasks of characters, settings or plots. This is evident from the interviews as four of the seven teachers stated that they have used *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian* to illustrate and promote insight into the culture, lives and social issues of the Native Americans. The teachers explicitly stated what aspects they wished to illustrate through the literature, but failed to mention how they intended their students to interact with the text.

Moreover, all the teachers in this study mentioned selecting literature to illustrate cultural aspects. In relation to this, and in line with the intercultural approach to literature teaching, Byram and Kramsch (2008) argue that culture is best taught through a direct experience with the target culture. This includes that the students get to meet people from the country/culture being studied (either in “real life” or via e-mail etc.) or through watching films or reading books from that culture. The idea is that personal testimonies and input from ‘real’ people bring the target culture to life in a way that literary or cultural analysis does not. I highly agree with this argument, and argue that the teachers’ consideration to use authentic literature to promote cultural aspects and insight into other people’s lives will provide their students with a sufficient direct experience and understanding of the target culture, without the stress of a real-life situation.

When the teachers stated that they consider development as a basis for their text selection, they showed an intercultural approach to literature teaching. This involves viewing the literature as a cultural product that expresses intercultural relations and conflicts, and that promotes intercultural competence in students. Literary works provide students with authentic representations of foreign cultures, and insight into other people’s worldviews. This view is also reflected in the purpose section for the English subjects at VG2 and VG3, where literature teaching should provide students with “a wellspring of experience, satisfaction and personal growth” (Norwegian Directorate of Education and Training, 2006b). By achieving insight into new and foreign cultures, students expand their horizon of expectations with literature reading, as well as their overall cultural capital. This is illustrated in the interviews through Rebecca’s statement about how recognising literary references could give students “cred” and “a sense of achievement”. Developing these aspects will be crucial for students, both in their academic achievements, relations with others, and in other areas of their lives.

5.5. Teacher Autonomy as Reflected in the Use of Textbooks and The Knowledge Promotion

Research shows that the textbook has a central role in Norwegian EFL classrooms (Drew et al., 2007). The publishers determine the contents of the textbooks where the basis is the curriculum, however, the publishers can emphasise the competence aims differently when designing the books. Through using the literature in textbooks, the teachers leave the responsibility of text selection in their classrooms on the publishers. One could argue that the more competent teachers are the less power over the decision-making will they leave on others. This can be seen in relation to teacher-autonomy, as competent and secure teachers are more able to select other resources than the textbook, based on their professional, moral and ethical principles required through their education.

Six of seven teachers in this study explicitly mentioned the textbooks as an influence on their text selection, and that they used literature from these books. However, they generally conveyed a negative view of textbooks, as they expressed a belief that some textbooks are inauthentic, of 'bad' quality and outdated. They stated that they do not follow the structure of the book chronologically, but that they use texts they find of good quality. This suggests that the teachers in this study are autonomous, as they feel confident in their abilities to find and select appropriate literature outside of the textbook. This confidence in their autonomy is reflected in Lisa's statement about how textbook texts often underestimate the students' language abilities. Lisa feels confident that she can find texts that are more appropriate for her students than the publishers can, as she knows the students and their language abilities.

Moreover, I have previously discussed how the curricula influence the teachers' approach to literature reading, as the curricula promote an efferent stance. However, the teachers generally expressed that that The Knowledge Promotion allows for teacher autonomy, as it lets them choose literature freely. Still, as shown in chapter 4.9., some of the teachers choose texts that will fulfil competence aims, which suggests that the curriculum is an influence and possibly even a restriction on their decision-making. On the other hand, Sandra expressed that she chooses literature according to other considerations first, and then search for competence aims her chosen text can fulfil. These differing views of the influence of the curricula suggest that LK06's purpose, to allow interpretation of its aims and freedom of methods, has been successfully assimilated by EFL teachers. The Knowledge Promotion provides directions for the contents of classroom instruction, but it is part of a teachers' professional responsibility to design the methodology of the teaching.

In a sense, my study is a contrast to Jensen's Master's thesis (2017), as all of the teachers I interviewed seemed to primarily consider literature teaching as a means to achieve other aims than learning *about* literature. The teachers in my study did not express an emphasis on teaching their students *about* for instance literary periods or stylistics, but rather focused their literature selection to promote language learning, pleasure reading, cognitive- and cultural development, and reading skills. This suggests that the teachers in my study are assimilated to LK06 and its competence aims, and essentially proves the influence of the curriculum on their literary choices.

5.6. Time and Access as Influences on Both Types- and Length of Texts

As five of the seven teachers explicitly mentioned, they are constantly pressured for time both when planning and executing literature instruction. Sandra stated that they do not have time to read longer texts in the EFL classroom, as "there is so much social studies". This could explain why the teachers seem to have an efferent approach to literature reading, as they attempt to implement literature into the classroom, based on an already social studies-heavy curriculum. When the teachers even struggle with finding time to include literature for efferent reasons, one can understand the absence of aesthetic literature reading, as it is simply not a priority. Again, this boils down to the fact that the wording in the curricula does not comply with literature reading for aesthetic purposes. However, the teachers' statements concerning the lack of time to teach literature, evokes the sense of literature being a "luxury" for dreamers, rather than a resource for language learning. Implementing aesthetic literature reading does require effort, but although time is a rare commodity in our educational institutions, the importance of training learners to approach the text aesthetically cannot be overestimated.

Because the teachers in this study find little time to read full novels in the EFL classroom, they tend to teach shorter texts and works of fiction instead. Even though the reading of literature is a central part of one of the main subject areas in the English subject, the teachers stated that they generally use little literature in their teaching. However, the introduction of 'in-depth learning' through the report *NOU2015:8 Fremtidens Skole* (The School of the Future), suggests that teachers should use more full novels in their literature instruction, and fewer excerpts with less or no given context.

The reading of text excerpts in EFL instruction might seem like a good solution to the issue of time restraints for some teachers, however, it could result in an unsatisfactory reading situation for the students. It also demands a thorough instruction from the teacher on the

context, characters and overall entirety of the text, in order for the students to comprehend the text and enjoy the reading. Without understanding this entirety, students will not be able to respond to the text aesthetically, and the reading process will essentially result in an exclusive efferent reading approach. In fact, this sort of reading is not in the least reader-response oriented, and one can thus question the purpose of reading such texts at all. If the purpose of reading literature is not for the experience and enjoyment of engaging in texts (or language learning), but for extracting information to apply in tasks and activities, the status of literature in contemporary schools has fallen greatly since ‘the golden era’ of the Veierød Reform.

In addition, by not being able to follow the development of the plot and characters in a story, students are not likely to experience pleasure in the reading process. Students will not enjoy reading if they never get to learn what happens in the story. In addition, to read numerous excerpts of different texts is unlikely to be a motivating experience, as the 500-1000-word excerpt will not interest and fascinate students as complete works of fiction can. In addition, the reading of excerpts will also prevent the students from noticing stylistic features presented throughout a full text. For instance, a literary text with a tragic ending has immediate traces and foreshadowing of the outcome of the text, clues the students will not notice unless they read the full text. Therefore, I argue that teachers should allocate more time for reading full novels or short stories in class, so the students fully understand the context and plot of the text, as well as get lost in the captivating world of fiction presented by complete novels and stories.

However, excerpts are not the only form of text that the teachers include, as the data clearly shows how they frequently include full literary works in the form of short stories in their teaching. Daniel stated that he prefers short stories because they do not demand too much from the students, as they can be read in a 90-minute session. The fact that students are able to finish a short story during one school period can also enhance reading motivation. Since short stories usually have a beginning, middle and an end, they encourage students of all language proficiencies to continue reading them until the end to learn the resolution of the conflict (Rocha, 2005, p. 5). Furthermore, if selected carefully, short stories can also enhance reading skills and promote vocabulary acquisition and language learning. In all, short stories are preferable to novel excerpts in terms of both motivation, reading experience, and enjoyment.

The use of excerpts in literature instruction will not promote pleasure reading, motivation, or a lifelong relationship with literature. When discussing text excerpts in this sense, it is important to clarify that such texts could be teacher-selected extracts from novels or other

longer works of fiction, however, most often excerpts used in EFL teaching is published in- and selected from textbooks. As textbooks typically consist of shorter texts (excerpts, dialogues, poems etc.), grammar points and exercises related to vocabulary, content, and grammar; textbooks are not suited to develop extensive reading skills and reading pleasure amongst students (Birketveit & Williams, 2013, p. 10). Although the amount of literature in textbooks may have increased over time, the creation of textbooks is still a matter of compromise and their content represents a limited point of view (Frieze et al., 2008, p. 78). Students can also perceive textbook literature as frustrating, as extracts deny them access to a closure of the stories, and failing to fulfil narrative desires. For these reasons, I argue, that textbooks are no longer sufficient as the sole teaching material in the EFL classroom. A too heavy reliance on excerpts from textbooks in EFL teaching can result in an English classroom that is repetitive, inauthentic and predictable.

As previously discussed, the teachers' main consideration when selecting literature is to promote pleasure reading of texts that are linguistically and cognitively appropriate for the students. When promoting pleasure reading among students, especially among reluctant readers, the most obvious step towards getting them to read, is to provide access to books. In relation to this, Krashen states, "It is certainly true that 'you can lead a horse to water but you cannot make him drink'. But first, we must ensure that the water is there" (1993, p. 33). Without access to interesting and level-appropriate texts, teachers cannot expect students to engage in literature.

Furthermore, in line with Frieze et al. (2008), the findings show that access to texts is an influence on the teachers' literature selection. Because they do not always have access to class sets of the texts they wish to include in their teaching, the teachers are often restricted to use the books their school own class sets of, which sometimes result in them not having to make a choice at all. This could lead to unfortunate reading situations, as the books available might not be appropriate for the students' language level or interests. Nonetheless, the teachers do seem to find solutions to this limited availability, as they frequently use the internet, as well as school- and public libraries to access texts for their students. In this way, the teachers avoid having to be granted funding to buy new books, and they can teach a varied selection of literature without worrying about the costs.

In addition, another way the teachers deal with a limited access to texts is by allowing the students to select their own books, which does not demand full class sets. In this way, the students can choose any book they would like, and they do not have to access it at school. The

students can bring books from home, borrow from friends or family, purchase new books privately, or find books at the school- or public library.

5.7. Student-Selected Literature

Although reading the same texts provide possibilities for a common reference point for class discussions, the teachers in this study expressed that they sometimes let the students select their own literature. Choosing what to read and making successful choices is part of becoming a lifelong reader, as real-world readers do not read literature appointed to them by a teacher. They select texts that interest them, that is appropriate for their language abilities, and texts that are suited for their reading purposes. Allowing students to choose their own literature in the EFL classroom will enable students to develop abilities in assessing the quality and appropriateness of a text, as well as enable them to pursue their own interests in the reading of literature. In line with Wijnia et al. (2014) and Sutphin (1992), this will increase student authority, responsibility, and autonomy, as well as benefit the students in terms of reading motivation and perceived competence.

The teachers' reasons for letting students select their own literature are more or less the same as for the teacher-selected literature. Again, the teachers emphasise pleasure reading as the ultimate goal of literature instruction, supported by the belief that freedom of choice and an ownership of the text will motivate and engage students in the reading. This is in line with what Paran defines as a quadrant 4 approach to literature teaching, where extensive reading of literature is used to enhance motivation. Such reading has hardly any focus on literary quality and language learning, and reading is done simply for the sake of enjoyment. However, extensive reading of relatively easy texts is often very enjoyable and motivating for the students, and provide pleasurable reading situations.

Student-selected literature instruction could suggest an aesthetic approach to literature reading, as the teachers expressed that the students read primarily for pleasure. As discussed previously, pleasure reading will facilitate reading situations that are enjoyable and motivational for the students, as well as allowing them to get lost in the fictional work. However, this is impossible to say for certain, as the teachers did not specify what and if the students were going to process the text in any way after they had finished reading. The exception here is Daniel, who stated that the texts would provide an 'in' for discussions and tasks in Social Studies English, which clearly suggests an efferent stance to literature reading.

However, allowing students to choose their own literature can offer some issues related to the influences discussed concerning the teacher-selected literature. Firstly, if students choose a novel solely based on what they believe they will find interesting, the language in the text might be too advanced for the students. This could result in comprehension issues and lack of motivation, as previously discussed. Secondly, some students might choose short novels in order to avoid reading many pages, failing to understand that shorter novels are often more complex and difficult. Again, this might lead to difficult reading situations for the students. Lastly, students might not be able to assess the appropriateness of a book according to its cover and plot-synopsis, which could result in students choosing texts that are not appropriate to their age, interests and cognitive level.

Accordingly, several of the teachers stated that they often monitor the students' selection process of literature, and often make suggestions of appropriate texts. More specifically, Jennifer stated that she would have made recommendations of texts for her students, in order to find literature that is adapted to their interests and competencies. This seems like an excellent way of guiding this selection process, but it could also be a time-consuming task for most teachers. Therefore, the most efficient solution to the issue of guiding students to select appropriate text could arguably be Daniel's idea about offering the class some suggestions of texts that are appropriate to their language level, relevant for the topics discussed in the classroom and adapted to the students' interests.

Although it is important to allow students to select their own literature in order to promote pleasure reading of texts that interest and engage them, I also argue for the importance of students meeting a different type of literature in the classroom. This is so they can expand their horizon of expectations regarding literary texts. If students are allowed to repeatedly choose their own literature in the classroom, they will choose what they know and enjoy, as that is a comfortable reading situation for them. Regardless, this will not challenge their language-, cognitive- and critical thinking skills, and their horizons of expectations will remain the same. This shows the importance of the monitoring some the teachers in this study do when allowing students to select their own texts, as they are able to guide the students to choose literature that will challenge them.

5.8. Students Do Not Read – the Silent Crisis

As Sandra explained in the interviews, she has seen a change in the reading habits of students since she started teaching in 2001. She described how her students read less and get quickly tired of reading, which has resulted in weaker language abilities and less imagination. While this statement reflects one teachers' perception, and not necessarily the reality of students' beliefs and abilities, statistics do show that fewer students are choosing the English Literature and Culture subject in the third year of upper secondary. Nationwide, the number of students who enrolled in the course dropped from 1900 students in 2009/2010 to 1600 students in 2012/2013, which has led to many schools to stop offering the subject altogether (Skogstrøm, 2013). This is also something I experienced when selecting participants for this study as it was very difficult to find teachers who had experience teaching the subject. Meanwhile, International- and Social Studies English remain popular, with approximately 4500 students enrolled nationwide in 2012/2013. This could be related to the fact that English literature is seen as 'old-fashioned', whereas International- and Social Studies English deal with current events and media, and are thus perceived as more relevant to the students' lives.

The issue Sandra described is in line with Nussbaum's (2012) description of 'The Silent Crisis', which explains the decreasing position of literature in education and society as a democratic problem. This decrease is also reflected in the reforms and curricula for the English subjects, where the once so valued literary text of the Veierød Reform has been restricted to a means to fulfil 'can-do' competence aims in LK06. In this way, the fear of literature losing its position as expressions of cultural- and canonical heritage in the classroom, as expressed by teachers of the Veierød Reform, has become our current reality. Nussbaum argues that this trend needs to be changed, and though they cannot do it on their own, a great responsibility still lies on teachers. Therefore, I argue that in order to take a step towards enhancing the position of literature in schools, teachers must promote aesthetic reading in their classrooms. Students must perceive literature as an enjoyable activity that they actually want to do, something that can be achieved through aesthetic reading. As shown in Tutas (2006), aesthetic reading will develop students both as readers and as individuals, as they learn that there are many perspectives to life. By independently exploring the work and getting lost in the written words, students will experience reading pleasure, enjoyment, and motivation.

Furthermore, the issue of students not reading influence the teachers' text selection, as they choose shorter and less complex texts to meet the students' abilities and needs. As Sandra

explained, the language- and reading skills of her students, but most of all their imaginative skills, have become so much weaker over the years, so she can no longer teach *The Lord of the Flies* at VG1. In the same way that it takes practice to empathise with other people's experiences and emotions, it takes practice to imagine other worlds and understand the perspectives of others. It can be a challenging task for students to immerse themselves in a world so different from their own as the one presented in *Lord of the Flies*. In combination with a somewhat complex and advanced authentic language, the novel can feel overwhelming to some students. This is why Sandra now tends to use the multi-modal *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian* instead. The language of this novel is more suited for a young FL audience, and the topics and themes involved are more related to their previous experiences and current horizons of expectations.

However, I argue that such a knowledge gap is not a sufficient reason to exclude such books from literature teaching altogether. Although I understand Sandra's justification for replacing *The Lord of the Flies*, I still argue that there are ways of making this novel appropriate and comprehensible for today's students. One way of bridging the gap between the 'complex' literary text and students' current language-, cognitive and affective level is by the use of multimedia, such as movies, music, and graphic novels/comics. As stories told and appreciated by young people today are typically mediated through other channels than books, students are much more proficient in reading, or interpreting, moving pictures and pictorial images. Therefore, in line with Butler (2006), I argue that the literature teacher must expand his or her view of what *literature* is, as it does not necessarily have to be printed text on a page. There are several movie adaptations, graphic novels and even graded readers available to teachers who wish to implement this novel in their teaching, which some of the teachers in this study express making use of when teaching other texts.

The teachers in this study based many of their reflections on literary text selection on the students' interests, and stated that they select according to those. However, if the students do not like to read at all, it can be difficult to select literature that interests them. If they do not enjoy the reading situation, pleasure reading will not occur regardless if the teacher has selected literature according to their other interests. Therefore, I argue that teachers should focus on getting the students interested and engaged in the act of reading, something they for instance could do by extensive reading of comic books. Comics and graphic novels provide authentic and comprehensible language input, but are more importantly very beneficial for

promoting aesthetic reading- and responses in the language classroom, as they are motivating, pleasurable, and exciting to students.

On the other hand, some would argue that an exclusive reading of comics and graphic novels would probably not develop advanced levels of language, analytical, and literacy competencies. However, if the alternative is students not reading *at all*, comics and graphic novels are much better options. Not to mention, such light reading can serve as conduits to heavier book reading as students' reading skills and interests develop (Krashen, 1993). In addition, the students' horizon of expectation will also develop as they encounter new texts over time, and they will learn to appreciate and tackle texts that are more complex. Therefore, I argue that teachers should implement comic books and graphic novels into their EFL classrooms, even at upper secondary level, to promote pleasure reading, aesthetic responses to texts, and a lifelong relationship with reading and literature.

6. Conclusion

As the findings in this study suggest, both practical considerations (time, access, curricula, and textbooks) and more cognitive influences (interest, collegial influence, development, language level and canons) are involved in the teachers' literature selection. In all, this suggests that the teachers in this study choose texts in line with reader-response theories, as they emphasise that students should be able to relate to-, interact with- and engage in the literature. This is supported by the fact that they choose appropriate texts according to the students' language proficiencies, interests and for the purpose of development. However, although they consider a reader-response approach to texts, practical issues such as access, textbooks, time, and the curricula often prevent this reader-response relationship between the students and the text from being fulfilled.

Furthermore, I have also discussed how literature reading for aesthetic reasons is exceptional and somewhat neglected in EFL classrooms, as other considerations are prioritised. This could suggest that literature in Norwegian FL classrooms has become a vehicle to serve the other goals of the education, for instance to fulfil competence aims, practice Basic Skills or for efferent purposes. Although the teachers in this study often select literature according to this, they do consider and emphasise that students should not learn *about* literature through a canonical approach with a focus on literary periods. However, they select literature that allows students to learn *through* or *from* literature, for instance where texts are used as a basis for writing, as elaborations on content-based teaching or illustrations of cultures. This is seen through the fact that they consistently select literature for efferent purposes, as they choose texts to illustrate language points or cultures, to promote literary analysis concerning specific literary devices, and to provide students with cultural capital and knowledge of texts. In this way, their literature selection reflects the idea that literature should promote language learning and development of morals, attitudes, and behaviours.

It is important to emphasise that I do *not* argue that teachers should choose between aesthetic and efferent reading, and use it as their exclusive reading strategy in the classroom. This is rather an attempt to promote awareness about the importance of determining a clear purpose for the reading, as it will make reading situations more manageable and motivating for students. If the students know the purpose of the reading, they will be more motivated as they know what to expect from the reading situation. Therefore, I argue that teachers must clarify and emphasise the reading purpose to students, so they know what to expect from the reading. In this way, during an aesthetic reading situation, students will not end up reading for

information simply because they are expecting a quiz or content-based tasks from the teacher. Rather, they will know that the purpose of the reading is to experience the text and interact with the literature, which makes it more likely that the students will enjoy and want to return to the reading.

More specifically, it must be stressed that I do encourage efferent reading, as it is a beneficial way of acquiring information of cultures, historical events and social contexts through authentic literature. It is also advantageous in order to fulfil competence aims. My main concern is, however, that it is used as the sole reading strategy in FL classrooms, as such reading situations will not generate pleasure and engagement in students. Therefore, I argue that teachers should promote aesthetic and efferent reading interchangeably in the language classroom, so students can learn about foreign cultures and history, while at other times experience the wonderful joys of interacting with a piece of literature aesthetically.

Regardless, the teachers in this study do promote aesthetic reading when encouraging students to select their own literature. The findings imply that the students are allowed to choose freely, and that there are few restrictions to their choices. In this way, students can select whatever they find interesting and engaging, and they are thus likely to experience pleasure reading. Therefore, if the purpose of the reading is to promote aesthetic responses to texts and pleasure reading, I conclude that an extensive reading programme of student-selected literature will be the most beneficial. Teachers may of course guide and assist students in finding appropriate texts; however, the literary choice should be up to the students, as this will also increase student authority, self-esteem and motivation.

In conclusion, when teachers are faced with the challenging task of selecting appropriate literature for their EFL classrooms, various influences and considerations go into their choices. However, they do not affect the teachers equally as some of the influences and considerations override others, depending on the purpose of the reading. For instance, if the purpose is pleasure reading, the teachers choose texts the students find interesting, whereas when the purpose is to illustrate literary devices and language points, they choose texts that highlight these aspects. This is also discussed in relation to personal interest, as the teachers stated that their personal interest influence their text selection, but it does not override their consideration for the students' needs and enjoyment for reading.

Lastly, because I entered this research field with preconceived ideas about the outcome of the study, I wish to conclude this thesis with a final remark about this hypothesis.

Although the study showed how two of the teachers expressed a canonical approach to literature teaching and text selection, as they valued canonical texts as a means to promote cultural capital, the other teachers more or less denied a canonical influence. Meanwhile, I do find it interesting that four of the teachers explicitly mentioned Shakespeare as central for the EFL classroom. The teachers' statements comply with Bloom's *The Western Canon* (1994) and his view of the world's most famous Renaissance playwright, which is why the line of thought in this thesis ends where it once began. Deliberate or not, the canonical influence on these teachers' literary selections is undeniable. However, the influence is not as prominent as I initially assumed, as other influences and considerations weigh heavier on their decision-making.

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8. List of Appendices

Appendix 1 Research Approval from the Norwegian Centre for Research Data

Appendix 2 List of Literature Discussed in the Thesis

Appendix 3 Interview Guide in English

Appendix 4 Interview Guide in Norwegian

Appendix 1: Research Approval from the Norwegian Centre for Research Data



Dellilah Bermudez Brataas

7491 TRONDHEIM

Vår dato: 30.01.2018

Vår ref: 58516 / 3 / STM

Deres dato:

Deres ref:

Forenklet vurdering fra NSD Personvernombudet for forskning

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 19.01.2018.

Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

<i>58516</i>	<i>Læreres valg av litteratur i engelskfaget i den videregående skole</i>
<i>Behandlingsansvarlig</i>	<i>NTNU, ved Institusjonens øverste leder</i>
<i>Daglig ansvarlig</i>	<i>Dellilah Bermudez Brataas</i>
<i>Student</i>	<i>Elise Olaussen</i>

Vurdering

Etter gjennomgang av opplysningene i meldeskjemaet med vedlegg, vurderer vi at prosjektet er omfattet av personopplysningsloven § 31. Personopplysningene som blir samlet inn er ikke sensitive, prosjektet er samtykkebasert og har lav personvernulempe. Prosjektet har derfor fått en forenklet vurdering. Du kan gå i gang med prosjektet. Du har selvstendig ansvar for å følge vilkårene under og sette deg inn i veiledningen i dette brevet.

Vilkår for vår vurdering

Vår anbefaling forutsetter at du gjennomfører prosjektet i tråd med:

- opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet
- krav til Informert samtykke
- at du ikke innhenter [sensitive opplysninger](#)
- veiledning i dette brevet
- NTNU sine retningslinjer for datasikkerhet

Veiledning

Krav til Informert samtykke

Utvalget skal få skriftlig og/eller muntlig informasjon om prosjektet og samtykke til deltakelse.

Informasjon må minst omfatte:

- at NTNU er behandlingsansvarlig institusjon for prosjektet
- daglig ansvarlig (eventuelt student og veileder) sine kontaktopplysninger
- prosjektets formål og hva opplysningene skal brukes til
- hvilke opplysninger som skal innhentes og hvordan opplysningene innhentes

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

Appendix 2: List of Literature Discussed in the Thesis

Novels :

- Alexie, Sherman – *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian* (2007)
- Austen, Jane – *Sense and Sensibility* (1811)
- Bradbury, Ray – *Fahrenheit 451* (1953)
- Chbosky, Stephen – *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* (1999)
- Cisneros, Sandra – *The House on Mango Street* (1984)
- Fitzgerald, F. Scott – *The Great Gatsby* (1925)
- Golding, William – *The Lord of the Flies* (1954)
- Haddon, Mark – *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* (2003)
- King, Stephen – *The Green Mile* (1996)
- Lewis, C.S. – *The Chronicles of Narnia* (1950-1956)
- Meyer, Stephanie – *The Twilight Saga* (2005-2008)
- Orwell, George – *Animal Farm* (1945)
- Riggs, Ransom – *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children* (2011)
- Rowling, J.K. – *The Harry Potter Series* (1997-2007)
- Sachar, Louis – *Holes* (1998)
- Shakespeare, William – *Othello* (presumed written in 1603)
- Shelley, Mary – *Frankenstein* (1823)
- Steinbeck, John – *Of Mice and Men* (1937)
- Tolkien, J.R.R. – *The Lord of the Rings* (1937-1949)
- Williams, Tennessee – *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947)
- Wilson, Jacqueline – *Dustbin Baby* (2001)

Short Stories:

- Bisson, Terry – *They're Made Out of Meat* (1991)
- Dahl, Roald – *Lamb to the Slaughter* (1953)
- Goldsworthy, Peter – *One of My Best Friends* (1994)
- Gordimer, Nadime – *The Moment Before the Gun Went Off* (1988)
- O'Flaherty, Liam – *The Sniper* (1923)

Saro-Wiwa, Ken – *Robert and the Dog* (1986)

Poetry

Brooke, Rupert – *The Soldier* (1914)

Brother Ali – *Uncle Sam, Goddamn* (2007)

Owen, Wilfred – *Dolce et Decorum Est* (1920)

Appendix 3: Interview Guide in English

Interview Guide

Greet the participant and present myself.

- Tell the teacher about my background as a student, my reading history and my interests in terms of subjects.
- Explain briefly about my Master's project and what it entails.

In my BA, I focused on *how* literature teaching was conducted in terms of raising reading motivation in a school in eastern Canada, whereas I now want to investigate why teachers choose the specific texts that they do in their teaching. I do not wish to tell you any of my preconceived ideas or hypothesis before the interview, but will present it after the interview.

Could you please introduce your education, teaching background and interests?

- To achieve an insight as well as a context as to why (s)he makes the choices (s)he makes. - What did (s)he study in upper secondary school?

Based on her answers in the last question, ask - Do you remember reading any texts or novels when you were in school? Which texts?

- Were there any novels/texts that were especially popular when you were young?

What do you consider 'the purpose' of teaching literature to students?

- Is there anything you think your students should 'be left with' after taking part in your literature classroom? If (s)he asks what I mean → Knowledge? Morals? Values? Reading skills? Motivation? *Why?*
- What do you consider as 'quality literature' for the EFL classroom? Criteria? Definition?

How do you choose texts to include in your teaching/classroom?

- Where do you find the texts?
- What do you base your choice of text on? → Quality? Entertainment? Topic in text? Time period? Popularity? Degree of difficulty?
- What influences your choice of text?

What type of text/literature dominates your classroom?

- Are there any types of texts you teach more than others? Why?
- What makes this type of literature more valuable/interesting and relevant than other?

How do you experience teacher's freedom to choose texts in the classroom?

- How often do you change/replace the texts you are teaching?
- Are there any similarities between the texts you choose?

What thoughts do you have about a potential canon in the English subject in Norwegian upper secondary schools?

- *Reveal Hypothesis*
- Now that I have told you my hypothesis/ideas - do you have any last comments?

Appendix 4: Interview Guide in Norwegian

Intervjuguide

Hilser på intervjuobjektet og presenterer meg selv.

- Fortell litt om min egen bakgrunn som student, fagvalg og faginteresser.
- Fortell litt om valg av masteroppgave, og kort hva den handler om. Jeg ønsker ikke å fortelle deg mine hypoteser på forhånd av intervjuet, men kan fortelle deg kort om tema og vinkling. I min Bachelor fokuserte jeg på hvordan litteraturundervisning ble gjort i videregående skole i Canada, noe som for seg var interessant - men nå ønsker jeg å fokusere mer på *hvorfor* lærere underviser de tekstene og bøkene som de faktisk gjør.

Kan du gi meg en kort introduksjon til din lærerbakgrunn?

- Fagvalg, utdanning, interesser.
- For å gi meg en forståelse for hvem du er som lærer, og en kontekst for å forstå dine perspektiver og refleksjoner. Spør også hva hun studerte på videregående - tok hun lignende fag som dette selv?

Basert på hva hun svarer i forrige spørsmål, spør **“hvilke tekster og bøker hun husker å ha lest fra pensumlistene i egen skolegang?”**.

- Både i Norsk- og Engelskfaget. - Var det bøker som var spesielt populære da du var ung? Eller var det tekster som også da ble ansett som ‘kvalitet’?
- **Ser du noen sammenheng mellom de bøkene/tekstene du leste i utdanningen/skolegangen din og de tekstene du bruker i klasserommet?**

Hva mener du er hensikten med å undervise litteratur til elever?

- Hva mener du elever skal ‘sitte igjen med’ etter din litteraturundervisning? Feks → (hvis hun spør hva jeg mener) Kunnskap? Verdier? Moral? Lesferdigheter? Motivasjon?
- **Hva anser du som ‘god litteratur’ i klasserommet? Kriterier?**

Hvordan går du frem for å velge tekster å undervise i klasserommet?

- Hvor finner du tekstene?
- Hva baserer du valget av tekst på?
- Hva påvirker valget ditt?

Hvilken type litteratur regjerer/dominerer i klasserommet ditt?

- Har du en type tekst du underviser mer enn andre? Hvorfor?
- Hva gjør denne typen litteratur mer verdifull/mer interessant/mer relevant enn andre?

Hvordan opplever du som lærer din frihet til å velge tekster i klasserommet?

- Hvor ofte bytter/ruller du på tekstene du underviser?
- Er det noen likhetstrekk mellom de tekstene du velger? Evt mellom de tekstene du velger å erstatte andre med?

Hvilke tanker gjør du deg rundt en eventuell kanon i engelskfaget i den norske videregående skole?

- *Avslører hypotese*
- Når jeg nå har fortalt deg min hypotese, har du noen kommentarer/innvendinger?