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# LEARNING ENGLISH THROUGH ENGLISH

HOW DO TEACHERS' AND STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF ENGLISH AFFECT  
THE USE OF ENGLISH IN THE CLASSROOM, AND HOW CAN THESE  
SUPPORT OR DELAY LANGUAGE LEARNING?

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# Learning English through English

## Abstract

This undergraduate thesis poses the following research question: “How do teachers’ and students’ perceptions of English affect the use of English in the classroom, and how can these support or delay language learning?” This study compares the teachers’ use of English and how their students perceive and experience their teachers’ use of English. Data is collected through a questionnaire to teachers and a questionnaire to students. Results show that most teachers and students agree that there should be more English use in school. There are many reasons why teachers use or do not use English at school: most teachers say that their use of English depends on their students’ and their own knowledge of English. This study concludes that English is a language that many perceive as difficult but is also a language that should have increased focus. It is the teachers’ responsibility to ensure that the language is adjusted to the students’ language level and that all students understand. This thesis argues that English can be simplified and that it should be possible to expose pupils of all levels to the language in various settings and variations. Therefore, this thesis concludes that it is the teachers’ responsibility to ensure that the students’ get adequate exposure to the language.

Key words: language exposure; ESL; language learning; teachers’ intentions; students’ experiences.

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## 1.0 Introduction

English is a language that becomes increasingly more relevant every day as millions of people speak English to some degree. According to the subject curriculum, “The subject shall give the pupils the foundation for communicating with others, both locally and globally, regardless of cultural or linguistic background” (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020, p. 2). The English language can be considered a lingua franca and a global language which means that English is a language that is learned and spoken internationally by many people from various geographical backgrounds, and that English is a language that enables people from diverse backgrounds and ethnicities to communicate (Seargeant, 2012, p. 8).

The significance of English has also increased due to social media which has flourished over the past decade. We communicate with friends and family over social media, but we can also encounter and socialize with other nationalities. Whether we want to or not, children will be exposed to social media: either through friends who show them something from Instagram, Snapchat, Youtube, TikTok or any other social media platform; or through themselves browsing the different social media platforms. Social media allows for easier communication with other people, for better and for worse. Having a common language, i.e., English, will allow people from all over the world to communicate successfully with each other.

Having knowledge about a language is not enough to be able to use that language: in other words, we must also learn how to use the language. One must have strong role models who have reliable knowledge about the subject, in our case the language. In addition, one must learn how to use this language through trial and error. Then one will need to automatize this knowledge that one has acquired (Gass et al. 2020, p. 293). In this text I will look at why it is important to use the English at school and to expose students to the language. Then I will look at teachers’ intentions versus students experience of English in school. For my thesis, I have chosen the following research question:

How do teachers’ and students’ perceptions of English affect the use of English in the classroom, and how can these support or delay language learning?

To answer this question, I have collected data from students and teachers while in teaching practice regarding the teachers’ intentions and the students’ perceptions of English use in

school. I have used this information to discuss whether or not one should use English in school and benefits of using English in the language classroom.

## 2.0 Theory

Learning a foreign or second language takes time as learners build on and relate to the knowledge they have from their first language. As language learners, they identify similarities and differences based on the information they already have (Angelsen & Hauge, 2020, p. 326). Their language development evolves as the learner becomes more proficient in the target language. The process of learning a new language takes time, and there is no way to rush it. However, there are theories saying that children absorb more information than adults. For instance, learning takes place within synapses – or connections – between the brain cells. Children allegedly have more connections in their brains than adults, which means that they have the potential to acquire information quicker than adults (Graham, 2011). In addition, children are more likely to speak like a native speaker than adults: meaning that to be able to speak like a native speaker, children would be more likely to succeed if one start learning the language at a younger age (Gass et al., 2020, p. 505). There is no way to confirm or deny these theories, as there can be many reasons for why a child learn faster or slower than an adult. Children develop and learn at different rates, and therefore there can be no answer to when the ideal time to learn is (Brandtzæg et al., 2018, p. 15-16).

However, to learn a new language, we need to be exposed to it and we need to use it – we need to communicate with others in one way or another. Communication can be understood as using the language in informal and formal settings both orally and in writing and by using different types of media and sources (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020, p. 2). “*Communication* is a core element of the English subject, a subject which is to give pupils a basis to communicate with others locally and globally, regardless of cultural or linguistic background” (Tishakov, 2020, p. 105). As stated here, communication is a big part of the English curriculum, which is another reason for why it is important to include it in the language classroom.

Developing a language requires time, practice, and not to mention exposure. As Haugen states: “Development takes place by the child making these linguistic tools that the culture possesses their own, which is called internalization” (Haugen, 2018, p. 148. Own translation). By using our linguistic tools, we eventually learn how to use the language

fluently and automatically. “In the language classroom, students learn about language through using language, experiencing language input and speaking about their understanding of language structures and forms” (Tishakov, 2020, p. 110). As stated here, students learn languages through input and output; input alone is not enough to ensure acquisition of the language. In addition to being exposed to adequate input, one also need to produce comprehensible output (Gass et al. 2020, p. 447). This means that in order to learn a language, a student will need to hear their teacher speak the target language and be challenged to use the language themselves. Being forced to put words into order will help students acquire the language (Gass et al. 2020, p. 407). The next step, in other words, is to produce new sentences by combining words that have meaning.

According to scientists, language is acquired most easily during the earlier years of life because of the connections to brain cells (Graham, 2011). Children learn language through conversations, games, songs, rhymes, reading, etc., and all these activities utilize the connections to the brain cells. Using these connections will cause them to grow and become stronger, which will influence how children will learn and interact later in life (Graham, 2011). According to Tishakov, it is important for the language learner to be exposed to the language *and* practice speaking it themselves (Tishakov, 2020, p. 101). This practice can and should be included in the classroom. Considering that to learn a language one must be exposed to the language and practice using it, can a teacher expect a student to become proficient in a language if the learning situation is missing one or both factors?

“Within the behaviorist framework, speaking consists of mimicking and analogizing. We say or hear something and analogize from it” (Gass et al. 2020, p. 77). Children imitate people in their close proximity, which is a reason for why they learn their first language so easily. They copy their close family and eventually they learn how to pronounce words and the rules of the language. “Learning through imitation takes place by the child imitating adults. The child learns single words and later sentences by imitating mom and dad and with others whom it interacts” (Haugen, 2018, p. 148. Own translation). Because children have more connections in their brains than adults, it makes it easier for them to imitate and learn patterns. Language is generally a pattern that we learn and understand and over time use ourselves, and children are more likely to imitate new words and pick up on this pattern. Since a way to learn language consists of imitating other people, this can also be included in the classroom. Especially in the early stages of school and language learning, it can be beneficial to have the learners repeat and mimic new words, phrases, and sentences.

## 3.0 Methodology

### 3.1 What and why

I decided that I wanted to collect data from as many people as possible, which made me conclude that I needed to use a quantitative research method. In quantitative research methods we can gather data and work with it numerically (Matthews & Ross, 2014, p. 169). In this kind of research method, the researcher can decide on what questions to be asked and the type of answer that can be given (Matthews & Ross, 2014, p. 174). I decided that an anonymous questionnaire would best suit my study.

There are many advantages to choosing a quantitative research method like an anonymous questionnaire, but there are also many disadvantages. One advantage to this, especially with questionnaires executed on a computer, is the fact that you do not need to interpret anyone's handwriting. In addition, a questionnaire usually has multiple-choice questions: having options for the participant makes it much easier to use and compare the data collected. In addition, having multiple options will make the question much easier to answer (Matthews & Ross, 2014, p. 174). A disadvantage of using an anonymous questionnaire, especially with younger children, is that one can never ensure that the students answer truthfully (Patten, 2016, p. 9-13). In addition, the answers can be affected by the participants daily mood. A disadvantage of using an anonymous questionnaire online is that is available for *everyone*. Meaning that I would not know if someone who was not in my class found it and answered the questionnaire (Patten, 2016, p. 9-13). There is also no way for me to know if someone answered multiple times, as it was completely anonymous.

I wanted to ask as many people as possible and I did not have much time to do so. I decided that I wanted to do two questionnaires: one for the students of my class and one for the teachers. I wanted to compare their answers on how the students perceived their teachers use of English and the teachers' intentions. I chose to collect data while in teaching practice this semester in early elementary school. During practice, I was a teacher student to 66 students and worked alongside 8 other teachers. Since I wanted to collect as much data as possible, I chose to ask everyone to participate in my questionnaire. I wanted everyone to answer, also the students who are considered less advanced language learners so that I would get data that could be applicable to other schools and other students. In total 58 students answered my questionnaire and eight teachers. Some students did not want to participate,

which was expected, but all answers received are highly appreciated and have helped my study.

### 3.2 Procedure

I decided that I wanted to make the questionnaire using Google forms (<https://docs.google.com/forms/>). I decided to use Google forms mostly because Google forms presents the data in a very direct and easy way using premade graphs. Google forms is also a very easy tool for the creator, as it is very straight forward to use.

I had to decide what questions to include for both questionnaires, and I had to consider how many questions I realistically could include. I had some friends and family answer my questionnaire to get a general impression of what I could expect. I then adjusted the questions according to the responses I received. The next step was to plan on when to execute this questionnaire for the students. As I had three classes, I needed to plan three different English lessons with different durations. I wanted to ensure the students only answered once, so I made lists of the students' names and crossed them off when they had answered and then I made sure that they closed the website. I did not look at the answers until all my students had answered, this was mainly to not have an issue with privacy and keeping the questionnaire anonymous. Some students did not want to participate, which I had anticipated as this was completely voluntary. I then sent a questionnaire to the teachers I worked with in practice: it took longer to receive all the answers here, as I could not force them to do it at a specific time.

### 3.3 Fallbacks

Originally, I planned on asking multiple classes and grade levels, which is where I met my first problem. Due to Covid-19 I was not able to get in touch with other teachers at the school I had teaching practice in. Therefore, I decided to compare students and teachers' answers in one grade level: that way I could work around the Covid-19 restrictions and still collect the data that I wanted. I wanted to collect as much data as possible to get a more universal result: I did not want to choose who to interview or who to ask, as I wanted diversity in my answers. The next issue was making the questions for the questionnaire: I had difficulties making the questionnaire, as I have never made one before. It was very important to me that the answers I got were anonymous, and it was difficult finding a software that



provided this aspect. Making the questionnaires took much longer time than I had anticipated. I did not experience any issues regarding the actual procedure of collecting data.

## 4.0 Data

### 4.1 Questions

#### 4.1.1 The questions for students

When deciding what to ask the students I had to consider word choice and how many questions I wanted to ask. As many young students have difficulties sitting still for a long period of time, I wanted to make sure that I did not ask too many questions and that the questions I asked could be used to learn something about the students' experiences and wishes regarding English in school. I decided to ask six questions, all of which were multiple-choice questions.

The first questions in the questionnaire were "*How often do you experience that the teachers use English in school?*" and "*How often do you think the teachers should use English?*". These were multiple-choice questions asked to get a general idea of how they experience the use of English and their opinions on how much English should be used. I then asked the following question: "*How difficult do you think it is to understand when teachers use English?*". I asked this question, which was also a multiple-choice question, to see the general understanding of English. This question was not meant to measure their proficiency in English, but more as a question to compare to the teachers' way of using English.

The questions "*How much do you like English?*" and "*How often are you exposed to English at home?*" were asked to get a general understanding of students' feelings towards English. The answers to these questions will affect how much the students understand when the teacher speaks English, how much they want their teachers to speak English and how they experience their teachers use of English. Students who love English, is more likely to use English at home and also more likely to want their teachers to speak English.

To see the full questionnaire, please look at the appendix.

#### 4.1.2 The questions for teachers

While designing these questions, I had in mind that not all teachers had experience with English as a subject, some of them were not educated English teachers. These questions were designed to give me an idea of the teachers' intentions with using English at school and

how often they use English despite their backgrounds and education. I asked the questions “*How often do you think you use English at school?*”, “*What do you think about how much you use English?*” and “*What language do you prefer when teaching?*”. These questions were asked to have a direct link from their intentions to what the students experience. The teachers were challenged to think of how often they use English, and these results would be compared to what the students experience in regards of language. I then asked the following question: “*Which factors affect if you use English?*”. The alternatives here were “*The student’s knowledge*”, “*The subject I am teaching*”, “*My knowledge of English*”, “*How comfortable I am speaking English*”, and “*Other...*”. The teachers were able to select multiple answers, which will affect the results. This was generally to challenge them to think about why they use or not use English.

Next was “*How do the students react when you use English?*” which was asked to see the teachers general experience with using English and to see if their previous experiences affect whether or not they use English. The options here were “*Good*”, “*Medium*”, “*Bad*” and “*I do not use English*”. Then the teachers were asked to select one or multiple options regarding how they feel when speaking English. The options here were “*I feel comfortable using English*”, “*It is easy for me to speak English*”, “*I think it is difficult to speak English in front of others*”, “*I think it is difficult to express myself in English*”, “*I feel uncomfortable speaking English*” and “*I do not like speaking English and would like to avoid it*”. These questions were asked to see if how they feel can affect how often they use English as it is natural to avoid the things that make you uncomfortable.

At the end of the questionnaire, I asked the questions “*In which subject(s) do you think it is the most relevant to include English?*” and “*In which subject(s) do you think it is the least relevant to include English?*”. These questions were included to see where the teachers think it is appropriate to use English and where it is not. The options here were all subjects in school, and it was possible to choose multiple answers which will affect the results below. Considering there can be many reasons for why, I also asked the teachers to comment on why they answered what.

To see the full questionnaire, please look at the appendix.

## 4.2 Presenting data

Due to space constraints not all questions will be presented here, but I will focus on those that gave most interesting results for my research question.

### 4.2.1 Student questionnaire

The first question I want to present, is *“How often do you experience that the teachers use English in school?”*. In total, 58 students answered my questionnaire. Of these, 43% answered *“Sometimes”*, 21% answered either *“Rarely”* or *“Never”*, and the remaining 36% answered *“All the time”* or *“Often”* (see figure 1). To the connecting question *“How often do you think the teachers should use English?”*, the answers were divided. Thirty-four percent of the students answered *“Sometimes”*, 24% of the students answered *“A little bit”*, 24% of the students answered *“Often”*, and 9% answered *“All the time”*. The remaining 9% of the students answered *“Rarely”* or *“Never”*. In total, 59% of the students want the teachers to use English every so often but not all the time, and 33% of the students wanted the teachers to speak a lot of English. The remaining 8% of students want their teachers to rarely or never speak English at school (see figure 2).

The next question considered, is a question where the students got to choose between three sentences regarding how much the teacher should speak English (see figure 3). A majority of the students, 67% of all students answered that they like it when the teachers use a mixture of English and Norwegian in their lessons. Seventeen percent of students preferred English and the remaining and 16% preferred Norwegian. To the question *“How difficult do you think it is to understand when the teachers use English?”*, the participants were very divided. 29% of the students answered that *“It is a little difficult to understand”*, 21% answered *“Neither easy nor difficult”*, 21% answered *“It is a little easy to understand”* and 24% answered that *“It is very easy to understand”*. The remaining 5% answered that *“It is very difficult to understand”* (see figure 4).

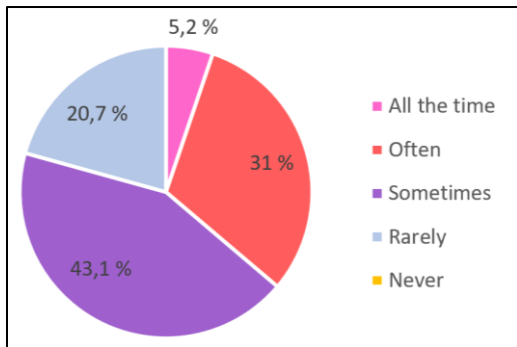


Figure 1 - How often do you experience that the teachers use English in school?

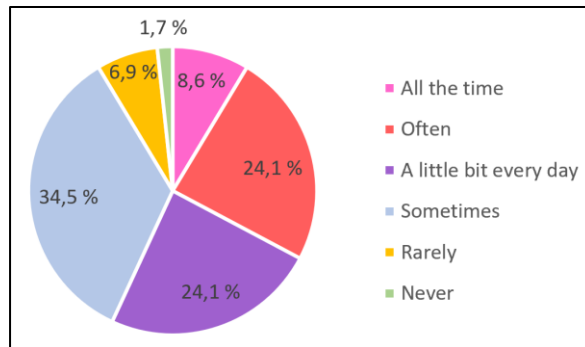


Figure 2 - How often do you think that the teachers should use English?

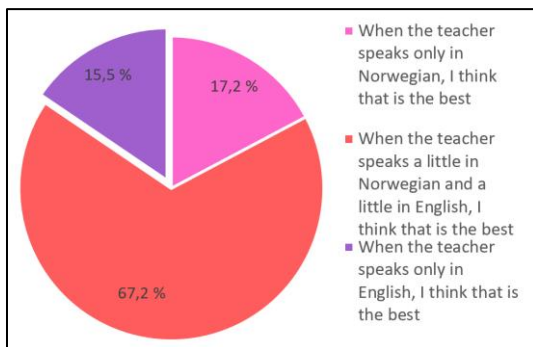


Figure 3 - Choose the sentence that fits best for you; what do you prefer?

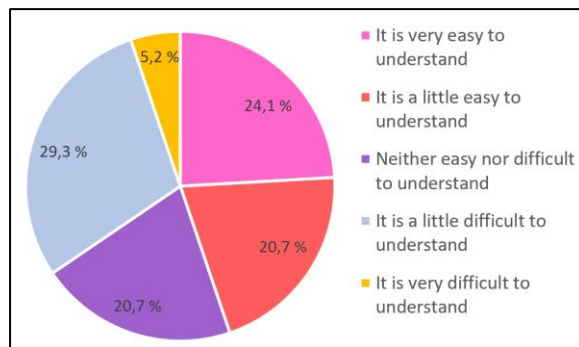


Figure 4 - How difficult do you think it is to understand when the teachers use English?

#### 4.2.2 Teacher questionnaire

As mentioned previously, 8 teachers answered my questionnaire. The first question was “How often do you think you use English at school?” (see figure 5). Here 75% of the teachers answered “2-3 lessons a week” and the remaining 25% answered “Rarely”. For the question “What do you think about how much you use English?”, 75% of teachers answered that they are content with how much English they use and the remaining 25% answered that they could use English more (see figure 6). The next question I want to look at, is “Which factors affect if you use English?” (see figure 7). 29% of all responses say that the teachers adjust their English use according to their students’ knowledge of English, 36% of the responses say that the teachers English use will depend on what subject they are teaching, and 36% of the responses say that the teachers’ proficiency level in English would decide whether they speak English.

The next question was the same as the students received in their questionnaire, where the teachers are asked to choose between three sentences regarding what language they prefer their teaching to be in (see figure 8). 50% of the teachers answered that they prefer to use

Norwegian and the remaining 50% were split equal between preferring English and preferring a mixture of both languages. The teachers were asked to describe how they feel when they speak English (see figure 9). In total, 54% of the responses say that the teachers describe feeling comfortable speaking English and 46% of responses say that the teachers feel that English is difficult. However, to the question “How do the students react when you use English?” 88% of teachers stated that most students have a positive reaction and only 12% said that the students have neither a positive nor negative reaction when speaking English (see figure 10).

The last questions I want to look at, is the questions “In which subject(s) do you think it is the most relevant to use English?” and “In which subject(s) do you think it is the least relevant to use English?” Here the teachers were able to choose multiple options which will affect the results: there were no maximum or no minimum limit to how many they could check off. The options here were all subjects taught in school: “Math”, “Norwegian”, “English”, “P.E”, “KRLE”, “Natural Science”, “Social Science”, “Music”, and “Arts and Crafts”. For which subjects it is most relevant to use English, 24% of responses chose English, 30% chose Science subjects, 24% chose Music, 12% chose KLE, and the remaining 12% chose math (see figure 11). For which subjects it is the least relevant to use English, 38% of responses chose Arts and Crafts, 25% chose Norwegian, and the remaining 37% were divided equally between Math, P.E. and Natural Science (See figure 12).

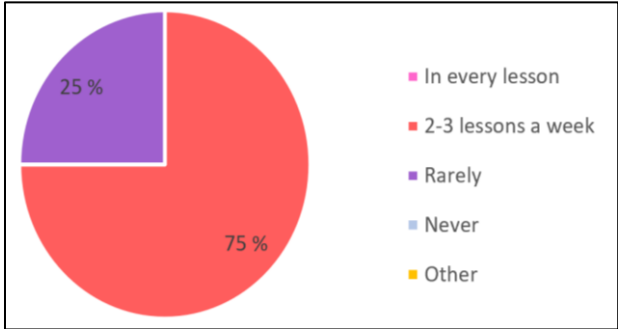


Figure 5 - How often do you think you use English at school?

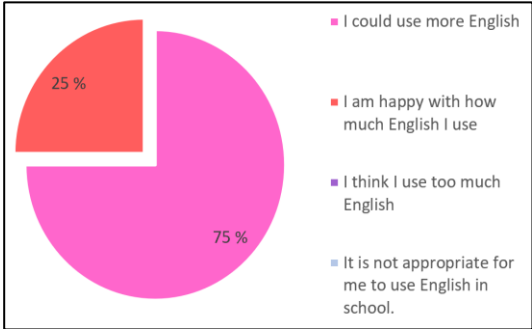


Figure 6 - What do you think about how much you use English?

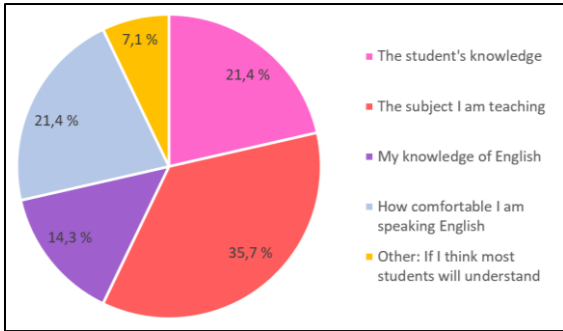


Figure 7 - Which factors affect if you use English?

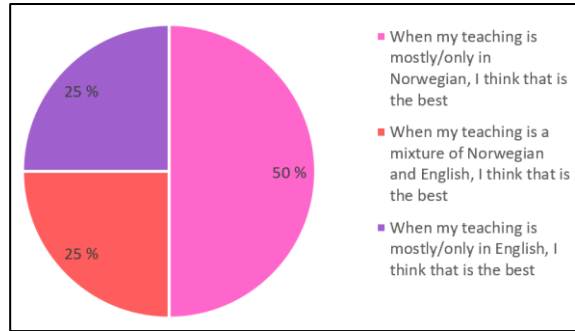


Figure 8 – What language do you prefer when teaching?

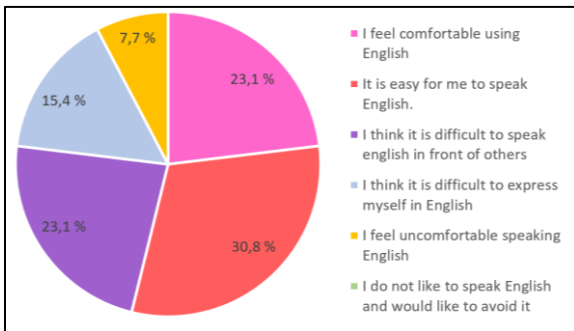


Figure 9 - "Choose the sentence(s) that fit you best". Describe how you feel when you speak English.

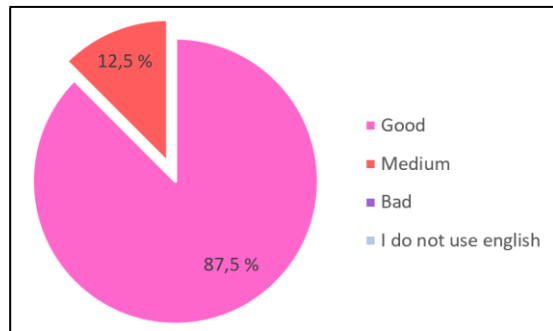


Figure 10 - How do the students react when you use English?

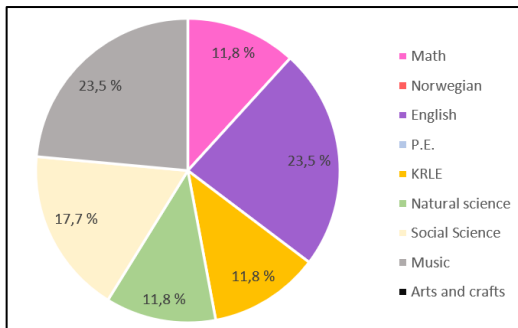


Figure 11 - In which subject(s) do you think it is the most relevant to include English?

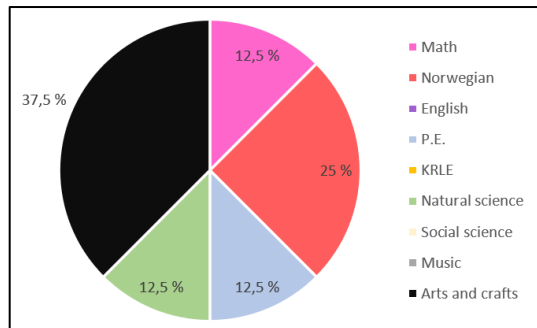


Figure 12 - In which subject(s) do you think it is the least relevant to include English?

## 5.0 Discussion

The data above reveals some interesting perspectives on use of English in class. As stated above in the data section, 64% of students experience that their teachers use little English. This corresponds to the teachers' responses where they stated that they use English in 2-3 lessons a week or more rarely, which is considerable given that there is on average 3 or more lessons of any subject every day, or 15 lessons or more of any subject every week. If the teachers use English in every English lesson, that would be approximately 1-2 times a week, which is relatively often. Then why do students experience that their teachers use little

English? The answer to this can be that the students' impression of "*not very often*" corresponds with 2-3 lessons a week; however, the answer can also be that the teachers use less English than they think or that their intentions regarding use of English is not what is being experienced by the students. From the responses from teachers, I can assume that the teachers try to use English in the subjects where they think it is appropriate as well as in classes that are dedicated to English, but not in every lesson or subject. It is obviously more relevant to use English in English lessons than for any other subjects. However, considering what the teachers answered in this question, their use of English will change depending on what subject they are teaching. Not all teachers answering the questionnaire are trained in English teaching either, which will affect the answers given.

In another question, the teachers were asked to select the subjects where it is most or least relevant to use English. This question will affect the results from the question about how often they use English, as the results there will depend on what subjects they see as appropriate to use English in. If we subtract all subjects where the teachers think it is least relevant to use English, we will not be left with very many subjects. Using all this data, we can state that what the children experience corresponds with how the teachers plan their lessons. But the question I am left with, is *why do students not experience English being used regularly in the English lessons?* If the teachers think they use English often, this should be reflected in the answers received: but it is not.

Most of the teachers who answered my questionnaire, answered that they prefer to use Norwegian in their teaching. Which can be easily explained with the fact that not all teachers are English teachers, and maybe it will not seem necessary or appropriate to use English in the subjects they are teaching. However, as visualized in figure 9, there can be many reasons for why one does not speak English, Forty-six percent of responses in figure 9 describe feeling uncomfortable while speaking English. This result does not, however, indicate 46% of all teachers because all teachers had the opportunity to choose multiple options in the questionnaire, and considering one might feel many things when speaking English, it is likely that the teachers chose multiple answers for this question. In addition, 28% of responses state that their use of English depends on their students' knowledge of English and whether or not they believe that all students will understand when speaking English. As visualized in figure 4, 45% of students find it easy to understand to some degree when the teachers use English, 34% of students stated that English is to some degree difficult to understand, and 21% of students find it neither easy nor difficult. This means that 66% of all students either think

English is easy to some degree or find it neither easy nor difficult. Is it then valid for the teachers to say that they do not use English because their students do not understand?

There is a difference between deciding not to use English due to English being difficult and due to doubting students' knowledge of English. On the one hand, English is as difficult as one makes it. You can make your sentences more comprehensible and easier for students any level. In addition, using body language can be very helpful and might help even the less advanced language learners understand what is going on. On the other hand, going into the language classroom, thinking that your students are not going to understand, can reduce their comprehension and proficiency of English. The aim is about using appropriate language that fit the students' proficiency level. If the teachers use English that is adjusted to the students' level, it is likely that the question regarding how difficult the students think English is, would show the students' thinking it is *easy* or *not incredibly difficult* to understand when the teachers speak English. Children learn and understand English at different rates, which is the same for all subjects, meaning that it will take time for everyone to understand everything (Brandtzæg et al., 2018, p. 15-16). It is therefore about making the language comprehensible for everyone and adjusting the language according to their students' proficiency level.

To say that your students will not understand if you use English is assessing the students on whether or not they will understand something without attempting it. It is like expecting a child to crawl when the child has walked for multiple years: a more appropriate expectation is challenging the student to run. I would rather say that the teacher should allow the students to make the attempt and then adjust accordingly. Students, even in the early years, understand more than one expects if the language is adjusted to the students' proficiency level, especially supported with proper use of body language to underline what is being said. In addition, less advanced language learners can be helped to understand through their classmates who can explain for them.

It is natural for us humans to avoid things that makes us uncomfortable. If we do not believe that our competence of English is good enough, it can be embarrassing and uncomfortable to speak English in front of others, especially those that see you as a role model. However, that is exactly why one should use English. The students look up to their teachers, and I believe that if the teachers use English, that the students will be influenced to use English as well. As mentioned, children will imitate the people closest to them (Haugen, 2018, p. 148). A teacher can in many cases be considered a role model and a person in the



children's inner circle. Using English consistently, can help the children get a better and broader understanding of English. In turn, *using* English can help students on their way to becoming proficient, confident and experienced English speakers who can use English in various situations. As Tishakov states, there are two factors that must be considered and included to become orally proficient in a language: exposure from others and practice speaking (Tishakov, 2020, p. 101). Therefore, it is important that the teacher speaks English in order for their students to be exposed to the language in various settings. As stated above, 88% of teachers get positive reactions from their students when speaking English. So, is there really a reason to not speak English? For some English is uncomfortable and difficult, but it is in these situations we learn the most. If everything is easy, then it would be boring even though we get the satisfaction of succeeding in something. I believe that it is important for the students to experience that their teachers are also doing things that they do not like or make them uncomfortable; because this is what some students experience and feel every day.

As visualized in figure 4, 45% of students think English is either very easy or a little easy to understand. That is a little less than half of all participants, however, only 5% of students think English is very difficult. In total, 34% of students think English is a little difficult or very difficult. That means that most of the students think English is understandable and not too difficult. This does obviously not mean that one should abandon the students that think English is difficult. However, there can be reasons to believe that the language that is being used is too difficult for those particular students. Again, I want to emphasise the importance of using a language that is adjusted to the students. One cannot expect the students to adjust to the difficult language, rather the language should be adjusted to the students.

There can be many reasons for why the results came out like this in this questionnaire. The students who answered can be biased in their feelings toward English; meaning that they might have let their feelings on how much they like English affect how they answered this question. The students who do not like English might say that they do not understand because of the lack of wanting to understand. In addition, there is a chance that the students were caught on a bad day; perhaps this is a type of question that will get different results depending on what day the students are asked? In conclusion, there can be many reasons for why the results were like this; whether it is the teachers use of English, feelings toward English as a language, or the particular day to blame.

There is some agreement between the teachers and students regarding what language they prefer at school. Well over half of the students prefer it when the teachers speak a little in

English and a little in Norwegian, and exactly half of the teachers prefer to speak in Norwegian. There can also be many reasons for why these results came out the way they did. I see that the question was maybe not as clear as it could have been. Therefore, there is a possibility that the students and teachers did not know what to answer or what was expected from them. However, from this, I can assume that the students in general want their teachers to speak more English. But there is also a possibility that what the students consider to be a mixture of English and Norwegian is different from the teachers' perception of how to balance the two languages. In addition, it can be difficult for the students to say anything about this, considering that they have never experienced their teachers speaking English a lot: they have nothing to compare it to. To back this up I have the next question "*How often do you think the teachers should use English at school?*" where over half of the students would like that their teachers speak English multiple times a day. From the teachers' perspective, 75% of teachers think they should use more English than they currently do on a daily basis. This is also a situation that can depend on day to day, as some days it might feel more natural and appropriate to speak English.

## 6.0 Conclusion

In this text we have looked at teachers' and students' perceptions of English and how this can affect the use of English in the classroom. Most students experience little English at school and most students would like their teachers to speak more English. In contrast, over half of the teachers think they should use more English than they currently do, and all teachers say that their students have a positive or very positive reaction when they use English. Based on this, I wonder why teachers use as little English as they currently do? If their students react positively when using English and the subject they are teaching allows for use of English, why do so many teachers still rely on the L1 when teaching, especially in the English language classroom? This is a topic that is worthy of further in-depth study.

This project has looked at how teachers use English and how this is perceived by the students: in addition to how teachers' opinions and feelings towards English affect how they use English in the classroom. In addition, this project has looked at suggestions for how English can and should be used to increase language learning. There can be many reasons for why a teacher decides to not speak English at school, as discussed previously: it might be due to doubting their own knowledge of English or doubting their students' knowledge. As a

teacher we make decisions all the time for our students and hopefully these decisions are based on the students' best interest. Generally, though, I believe that English should be used as often as possible and to do this it is important to adjust the language according to what the students will comprehend. It is all about *adjusting* the language: English is only as difficult as one makes it, and every sentence can, to some degree, be simplified or made more comprehensible for different proficiency levels. Even if that means repeating, talking slower, using synonyms, body language, or substituting difficult words with easier ones. The students might think it is difficult, but in turn, it is in difficult situations that one learns the most: if it is too easy, there will not be great learning outcome. It is a teachers' responsibility to ensure that the language is comprehensible for their students. Teachers do this while using the L1 too: for instance, teachers avoid difficult Norwegian words while teaching in Norwegian class and difficult words are supported with synonyms or repetition. Why is it considered difficult to do the same in English?

Is it then valid to say that one does not use English because they think their students do not understand? Yes and no. Yes, because the teacher should make decisions based on their students' proficiency level and what they think their students will comprehend. However, the answer to this question can also be no because I do not see a reason for why English should be totally abandoned. Yes, I understand that in certain situations it might be better or easier to speak the L1. However, I believe that in order to acquire a language it is important to put it to use, and school is an arena where it is acceptable to experience new things which makes it the perfect place to acquire the language. I am not saying that the best thing for every teacher and class is to speak English all the time. But I am also saying that English should not be abandoned. I believe that there can be a mixture of English and Norwegian in those classes where that fits the best, and in other classes it can be applicable to use more English. In an ideal classroom, I believe that one should use as much English as possible.

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## Appendix

### Student's questionnaire

1. *How often do you experience that the teachers use English in school?*  
a) All the time. b) Often. c) Sometimes. d) Rarely. e) Never.
2. *How difficult do you think it is to understand when teachers use English?*  
a) It is very easy to understand. b) It is a little easy to understand.  
c) Neither easy nor difficult to understand. d) It is a little difficult to understand.  
e) It is very difficult to understand.
3. *Chose the sentence that you think fits best for you.*  
a) When the teacher speaks only in Norwegian, I think that is the best.  
b) When the teacher speaks a little in Norwegian and a little in English, I think that is the best.  
c) When the teacher speaks only in English, I think that is the best.
4. *How much do you like English?*  
a) Very much / love it. b) I like it a little. c) Neither like or dislike.  
d) Dislike a little. e) Dislike a lot / hate it. f) I don't want to answer.
5. *How often do you think the teachers should use English at school?*  
a) All the time. b) Often. c) A little bit every day.  
d) Sometimes. e) Rarely. f) Never.
6. *How often are you exposed to English at home? This includes books, series, films, games and conversations with others.*  
a) Many times a day. b) 3-5 times a day. c) 1-2 times a day. d) 2-5 times a week.  
e) 1-2 times a week. f) Rarely. g) Never.

### Teacher's questionnaire

1. *What language do you prefer when teaching?*  
a) When my teaching is mostly/only in Norwegian, I think that is the best.  
b) When my teaching is a mixture of Norwegian and English, I think that is the best.  
c) When my teaching is mostly/only in English, I think that is the best.
2. *How often do you think you use English at school?*  
a) In every lesson. b) 2-3 lessons a week. c) Rarely. e) Never. f) Other...
3. *Which factors affect if you use English? You can choose multiple choices.*  
a) The student's knowledge. b) The subject I am teaching. c) My knowledge of English.  
d) How comfortable I am speaking English. e) Other...
4. *What do you think about how much you use English?*  
a) I could use more English. b) I am happy with how much English I use.  
c) I think I use too much English. d) It is not appropriate for me to use English in school.
5. *Choose the sentences that fit you best. How do you feel when you speak English? You can choose multiple choices.*  
a) I feel comfortable using English. b) It is easy for me to use English.  
c) I think it is difficult to speak English in front of others.  
d) I think it is difficult to express myself in English. e) I feel uncomfortable speaking English.  
f) I do not like to speak English and would like to avoid it. g) Other...
6. *In which subject(s) do you think it is the most relevant to include English? Choose all that applies.*  
a) Math. b) Norwegian. c) English. d) P.E. e) KRLE. f) Natural science.  
g) Social science. h) Music. i) Arts and crafts. j) Others...
7. *In which subject(s) do you think it is the least relevant to include English? Choose all that applies.*  
a) Math. b) Norwegian. c) English. d) P.E. e) KRLE. f) Natural science.  
g) Social science. h) Music. i) Arts and crafts. j) Others...