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Attitudes and Perspectives of Using LGBTQ+ Texts and Topics in Primary and Lower Education

Master's thesis in Primary and Lower Secondary Teacher Education
for Years 1-7

Supervisor: Jade Dillon

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Abstract

This qualitative study aims to explore the use of LGBTQ+ themes and literature in the EFL classroom at a primary school level in a Norwegian context. The core curriculum of Identity and Cultural diversity states that the school is responsible for giving each pupil the opportunity to preserve and develop their identity in an inclusive and diverse environment (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017, p. 4). In order to promote the inclusiveness, tolerance and acknowledgement of all pupils, teachers need to include education that incorporates LGBTQ+ themes. One of the most useful ways of implementing LGBTQ+ themes in the classroom is by using queer literature. This has motivated me to conduct a research study entitled "Perspectives and Attitudes Towards Using LGBTQ+ Themes and Literature in the EFL classroom. The theoretical background I use to support my research questions draws from queer theory in education, LGBTQ inclusive teaching as well as using visual literature for teaching about LGBTQ+ topics. My methodology consists of a semi-structured interview with two teachers about their experiences in using LGBTQ+ themes. In addition, I have analyzed two contemporary queer picturebooks that can be implemented for future pedagogic use of LGBTQ+ inclusive teaching. The main purpose of this study is to develop an understanding of:

1. Investigating the use of LGBTQ+ literature and themes in primary classrooms.
2. Exploring the challenges faced when implementing LGBTQ+ texts and topics.
3. Contributing to the discourse of LGBTQ+ inclusive teaching.

Sammendrag

Denne kvalitative studien har som mål å utforske bruken av LHBTQ+ temaer og litteratur I engelsk på barneskolenivå i Norge. I den overordnet delen av LK-20 om Identitet og kulturelt mangfold står det at skolen har ansvar for å gi hver enkelt elev muligheten til å bevare og utvikle sin identitet i et inkluderende og mangfoldig miljø (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017, s. 4). For å fremme inkludering, toleranse og anerkjennelse av alle elever, må lærere inkludere utdanning som inkluderer LHBTQ+ temaer. LHBTQ+ litteratur er en av de mest effektive og nyttige måtene å inkludere LHBTQ+ temaer på. Med disse standpunktene som et utgangspunkt har jeg blitt motivert til å gjennomføre en forskningsstudie med tittelen «Perspektiver og Holdninger til Bruken av LHBTQ+ Temaer og Litteratur i Engelsk Klasserommet». Den teoretiske bakgrunnen jeg bruker for å støtte forskningsspørsmålene mine, inkluderer queer-teori i utdanning, LHBTQ- inkluderende undervisning samt bruken av bildebøker til undervisning om LHBTQ+ temaer. Metoden min består av et semistrukturert intervju med to lærere sine erfaringer og holdninger til bruken av LHBTQ+ temaer. I tillegg har jeg analysert to bildebøker som kan implanteres for fremtidig pedagogisk bruk av LHBTQ+ inkluderende undervisning. Hovedmålet med denne studien er å utvikle en forståelse av:

1. Undersøke bruken av LHBTQ+ litteratur og temaer i klasserommet.
2. Utforske utfordringene lærere kan møte ved bruken av LHBTQ+ tekster og temaer.
3. Bidra til diskursen om LHBTQ+ inkluderende undervisning.

Preface

This thesis has truly been a journey. Like the water running in a river. Sometimes the water flows peacefully, without making a sound. At other times the water meets obstacles, and struggles to flow further, resulting in finding new creeks and cracks. Sometimes the river is full with life and the pressure of the water increases. The river flows with twists and turns until it meets a waterfall. The water drops and falls, with powerful sensations. Soon, the river ends. The river continues to flow- quiet and swift, flowing to it's final destination, the big wide ocean. This thesis has been the final steppingstone to completing a five year long teaching education. My emotions are mixed as I feel proud, grateful and sad at the same time. I am proud of myself as this has been a rollercoaster of emotions and that I have been able to submit a whole thesis on a much needed topic. I am grateful for the opportunity to work with this thesis as it has and will continue to enrich my teaching practice and knowledge regarding LGBTQ+ themes. I am sad that my time as a student has come to an end and I will now need to start a new chapter of my life.

This thesis would not be finished, if it was not for the people who have supported me emotionally and academically. Firstly, I would like to thank my two participants who chose to partake in this study. It wouldn't have been possible to complete this thesis without you. Thank you! My family and especially my dad has been my biggest support. Always guiding me with strong words of wisdom and helped when I have been at my lowest.

Secondly, I would like to thank the network I am surrounded-every day. Having classmates that are going through the same emotions and challenges you are, has truly been a help. We have discussed, cried, laughed and shared experiences through the whole process. It has been a huge support to have had students "in the same boat". I admire how we have listened and supported each other. I know that everyone will do a great job when they start their next chapter in life and will look back and be proud of what we have accomplished as students.

Lastly, I would like to thank the Department of Teacher Education at NTNU for believing in me as a student. I have gained meaningful knowledge from all of my professors though their lectures and critical feedback that has prepared and helped me to become the teacher that I aspired to be. Finally, I would especially like to send my deepest thanks to my amazing supervisor, professor Jade Dillon, on her incredible supervising skills, academic and emotional support. You have a special ability to see and understand my struggles and strengths not only as a student, but also as an individual. I could not have done this without you and I truly appreciate everything you have done for me. I feel lucky and blessed that I was given the opportunity to work with you. Thank you so much!

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List of Abbreviations

LGBTQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Questioning
EFL	English as a foreign language
LK20	National Curriculum 2020

1 Introduction

The LGBTQ+ community have had a long history of fighting for their rights and visibility in Norway. Only less than 50 years ago, was it illegal for homosexuals to marry. Luckily, there has been a strong sense of progression in terms of representation and acceptance. LGBTQ+ individuals are now protected by law and have the right to marry. Sexual identity, gay, straight, bisexual, transgender or queer have equally rights regarding their sexual preference. "Norwegians are girls who love girls, boys who love boys, and girls and boys who love each other" These are the words of a speech that the Norwegian King Harald included in his welcome speech at Slottsparken (Det Norske Kongehus, 2016). This speech has such an impact and says something about where Norway stands regarding being part of and celebrating diversity. It is about inclusion, tolerance and acknowledging differences. However, the majority of LGBTQ+ individuals still experience negative and stereotypical views, prejudices in the form of homophobic behavior, primarily by those who identify as heterosexual and cisgender (Neto, 2018). One of the most essential factors that has contributed to raising awareness and inclusion of the LGBTQ+ community is knowledge and representation outside the heterosexual norm. The heterosexual norm is something that has and is a part of us because that is how our society functioned for such a long time. By including LGBTQ+ representations in education teachers can help in breaking up and challenging these norms, which is a huge element in this thesis.

Gender and sexual diversity, often in relation to sexual and gender identity, are key terms that are present throughout this thesis and my focus sheds light on breaking their social constructs and our perception of them. Sexual identity can be divided into five categories: attraction, infatuation, identity, practice and imagination. These categories are not necessarily related but they are often linked to identity and how we and others see ourselves. For some, this can be very hard to acknowledge because that is not what we have been taught. It is up to each individual, who they are, and no one can decide your identity based on these categories. You might find yourself connected with one or several of the categories, and these factors might also change as you develop your identity, and should be accepted. Being able to discuss and shed light on how we perceive these social norms is an important factor to queer theory and influences the choice of my theoretical framework. Murray (2015) states that LGBTQ+ themes and topics need to be present in the education system and that it is the teachers' responsibility to emphasize and include this in their own practice. Studies by Smestad (2018) and Røthing & Svendsen (2010) showcase that there is still a lack of LGBTQ+ themes and topics in teaching materials in Norway. This results in invisibility and negating a specific group and can have dangerous and even critical consequences for those groups. The English subject curriculum (LK20) offers opportunities to explore and represent diverse identities, like LGBTQ+ representations. It states that students after year 4 should be able to read and discuss the content of various types of texts, including picturebooks (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p. 6) and after year 7 they should be able to investigate ways of living and traditions in different societies in the English-speaking world and in Norway and reflect on *identity* and cultural belonging (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p. 8). In addition to this the core curriculum

of Health and Life Skills state that relevant areas within this topic are physical and mental health, lifestyle habits, *sexuality and gender*, drug abuse, media use and consumption and personal economy. Therefore, giving teachers the opportunity and holding them accountable for including LGBTQ+ topics and themes. I place myself in an extremely important field that will influence my own future teaching and contribute to gaining better knowledge about the importance of having LGBTQ+ themes and topics in the EFL classroom and how LGBTQ+ picturebooks can attribute to creating tolerance, acceptance and inclusiveness of these identities.

This chapter includes several subcategories: 1.1 Terms and Definitions, 1.2 Background of the Study, 1.3 Purpose of the Study and Research Questions, 1.4 Background of the Researcher, and finally, 1.5 Overview.

1.1 Terms and Definitions

The terminology used in this paper are brief definitions from Philip Nel, Lissa Paul and Nina Christensen's book *Keywords for Children's Literature* (2021), and Bufidir LHBTIQ dictionary (2020). *LGBTQ+* is an acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer and/or questioning. The plus represents other sexual identities. In this paper I use the term *LGBTQ+* referring to the diverse sexual identities and *LGBTQ+* inclusive teaching. *Queer* is also a term that is used as a more collective term for all people who have a different gender identity, expression, and/or sexual orientation than those in the dominant group. The term *identity* according to Karen Coats entry to *Keywords for Children's Literature* (2021) has two critical perspectives- the celebration of the horizontal, self-chosen, hybrid identities in contrast to the affirmation of vertical culturally determined largely monolithic identities (p. 101) A person's perception of who they are and what or who he associates with in society shapes their identity. Identity is often influenced by how other people perceive you. One's identity is rarely the same throughout life and can change through experiences and encounters with other people. It is also diverse and can contain many components, which constitute a unique combination within the individual. This is often referred to as *intersectionality*. The interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage (Oxford Dictionary, 2022), I bring intersectionality to this thesis because oppression cannot be reduced to only one part of an identity; each oppression is dependent on and shapes each other. In the classroom it is important to show and include representations of intersecting identities as there for example also is diversity within the *LGBTQ+* community. This can contribute to avoiding stereotypical views on given groups and reflects that there is diversity within marginalized ones. One that has sex with people of the same sex may not necessarily identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual. Many do not want to operate with clear "labels" or categories conforming to the mainstream cultural values and norms of society. These are called *nonbinary*, *genderqueer* or *gender nonconforming* and perceive gender and sexual identity as more fluid. On the contrast *cisgender* people identify themselves with the sex they were assigned with at birth, while *transgender* peoples gender identity does not match their assigned birth. I primarily use the term *LGBTQ+*, as it involves a variety of sexual orientations and gender identities.

Heteronormativity refers to the dominant groups within society (heterosexuals and cisgendered people), and that these are more valued. Heteronormativity includes the cultural and social institutions, norms, practices and languages that reflect the society and culture presupposing that all people are heterosexual. The heteronormative sexuality

focuses on reproduction, and that heterosexuals families are considered the most natural and expected. This makes LGBTQ+ people socially invisible and become othered. The norms we are surrounded by today have constructed and defined to what is typically female or male. What is considered masculine and feminine has varied throughout history and in between cultures. *Gender* can be understood by three aspects: biological gender – the body you were born with, psychological gender – the gender you feel like, and the social gender – the gender others perceive you as. Gender is part of a binary category- that there are only two sexes, male or female. However, there are people who do not fall into these two categories. Gender diversity is a term that contrasts the binary category of gender and emphasizes that there are many and diverse ways to be a female/male, boy/girl, both for gays, heterosexuals, lesbians and transgender people. This perspective opens the possibility to diverse and more gender identities than just male and female (Bufidir, 2020). This term can help to create a space for different gender expressions, preferences and identities without categorizing which is something I want to bring into my own teaching practice.

This overview of key terms will help readers understand how the terms are defined gaining in deeper knowledge and understanding when navigating the different chapters in this thesis.

1.2 Background and Context

In order to promote inclusiveness, tolerance, respect and acknowledgement of all pupils, teachers need to include teaching about LGBTQ+ themes. Along with the growth of LGBTQ+ children's literature, implementation of such themes and literature should be more present in the EFL classroom. Working with LGBTQ+ themes and literature throughout my English course programme has made me realize that there is a need and lack of research on LGBTQ+ literature and themes in Norwegian EFL classrooms. These artifacts have motivated me for conducting research on *Perspectives and Attitudes Towards Using LGBTQ+ themes and literature in the EFL classroom*. I will briefly present my positionality and background, since this is crucial in the research field of gender equality and LGBTQ+. I am not part of the LGBTQ+ community myself, but have been interested in LGBTQ+ activism throughout my time as a student and it is clear that there is a lack of these topics in primary education. Experiences and reflections have shaped my perceptions and values of the teaching profession and who I want to become as a teacher. During my teaching education through the English courses I started to reflect back on my previous job as a substitute teacher and my own experiences as a pupil. I reflected on the lack of LGBTQ+ representations and this shocked me. I have lived and attended schools in Egypt, Australia and Norway, and through these experiences I gained some knowledge of cultural and racial diversity, but not so much on gender and sexual diversity. The only family dynamics I learned about were heterosexual ones, which studies by Smestad (2018) on textbooks including LGBTQ+ themes showcase. This has motivated me to become a teacher that values inclusiveness and promotes diversity to create a safe space for pupils to learn and explore their identity. I want to help build a good foundation in their life, where each pupil is equipped with the tools to become the best version of themselves. The Core Curriculum of Identity and Cultural diversity states that the school is responsible for giving each pupil the opportunity to preserve and develop their identity in an inclusive and diverse environment (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p. 4). Branislav Anicic's thesis on *The Use of LGBTQ+ Literary Texts and Topics in the English Subject* (2020) has influenced me heavily to look more into LGBTQ+ themes and topics in education. His contribution to the field showcases that

even in 2020 there is still a lack of knowledge and awareness regarding LGBTQ+ topics. Therefore, I wanted to contribute to how one can implement LGBTQ+ topics and themes in the EFL classroom by including literature. This resulted in adding an analysis of two contemporary LGBTQ+ picturebooks and further discussions of how they can contribute to future inclusive LGBTQ+ teaching.

Purpose and Research Question

Taking the previous chapter as a starting point, I will present here the purpose of my study, as well as the research questions. The study's central aim is to explore the use of LGBTQ+ themes and topics in the EFL classroom in secondary school level in a Norwegian context. This focus reflects gaining an understanding of teacher's perspectives, attitudes and approaches to LGBTQ+ themes and topics in the EFL classroom. In addition to gaining knowledge of future inclusive LGBTQ+ pedagogic implementation. Unfortunately, there is limited research done in Norway connected to LGBTQ+ themes and topics and their implementation in the English Subject, except Bransislav Anicic's Thesis (2020), to my knowledge. With these key factors, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- 1) Investigate the use of LGBTQ+ literature and themes in primary classrooms
- 2) Exploring the challenges faces when implementing LGBTQ+ texts and topics
- 3) Contributing to the discourse of LGBTQ+ literature for future pedagogic implementation

Finally, one of the main aims of this study is to shed light and knowledge of implementing LGBTQ+ topics into the EFL classroom and inspire teachers to reflect on their own beliefs and practises when they or if they teach LGBTQ+ themes. Reflecting on why using LGBTQ+ literature can contribute to making the classroom a more inclusive and diverse space. By doing so, I will attempt to shift teachers' perspective on their previous knowledge of using LGBTQ+ themes (Ryan & Hermann- Willmarth, 2018).

1.3 Overview

This research paper is organized into five chapters. In chapter 2, I present my theoretical framework drawing on literature dealing with LGBTQ+ rights and the importance of including LGBTQ+ topics through literature and picturebooks. In chapter 3, I elaborate on the research methodology I used, while chapter 4 deals with the analysis of the data: the interview and picturebooks. In chapter 5 I discuss my findings in relation to the analysis and in light of existing theoretical and research literature. In chapter 6, I write about conclusions. References and a list of all appendixes can be found at the end.

2 Theoretical Background

In order to understand the importance of including LGBTQ+ themes and topics in the education, this section will present research on queer theory, queer pedagogy in Norway, and consider how literature can be used as a tool to include LGBTQ+ themes. In addition, to providing theoretical background on LGBTQ+ inclusive teaching and picturebooks.

2.1 Queer Theory

Queer theory challenges the way gender- and sex-based binaries are and have been portrayed by exploring the oppressive power of dominant norms, and how this affects those who cannot, or do not wish to live according to those norms. Defining queer theory can be challenging as there has been a long history in the change of meaning of the word. Theorists and scholars have explored and challenged how we perceive gender and sexuality, which are terms present in queer theory. Gender and sexuality are complex and consist of a lot of layers resulting in disagreement and confusion to how it can be defined, because of them being connected to binary categories, and how the dominant society has constructed and perceived them. Murray (2015) discusses how this is connected to the continuing changes of the word *queer* and how it has been defined throughout the decades. Queer has been an umbrella term for people who have various sexual practices and values, relationship styles and multiple identities that might not have affiliation to the heteronormative society. The New York City's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center (2020) defines *queer* as an adjective used by some people, particularly younger people, whose sexual orientation is not exclusively heterosexual. Typically, for those who identify as queer, the terms lesbian, gay, and bisexual are thought to be too limiting and/or fraught with cultural connotations they do not feel comfortable with. Some people may use queer, or more commonly genderqueer, to describe their gender identity and/or gender expression. Once considered a pejorative term, queer has now been reclaimed by some LGBTQ+ people to describe themselves; however, it is not a universally accepted term within the LGBTQ+ community (The Center, 2020). Meanwhile, Green's (2010) *Dictionary of Slang* mentions that the term queer did not acquire negative connotations until 1925 and was reappropriated as a positive self-designation by gay or queer militants in the early 1990s. In the United States, the militant Queer Nation organization was founded in 1990. According to the gay newspaper *The Advocate* proclaimed that 1992 as the "Year of the Queer". The change in terminology reflects both a growing unease with the gay "Identity Politics" of the previous decades and the impact of the new and angry militancy provoked by the media panic over the spread of AIDS and media attempts to blame the gays for it. Looking at the word from a more contemporary perspective, Kerry Mallan's (2021) entry in *Keywords for Children's Literature* claims that the academic and common use of the word "queer" has led to making it convey conflicting meanings (p.161). Mallan states that it can be defined as an umbrella term for nonnormative sexualities but also how the term queer resists identity categorizations based on sexual orientation. Queer consists of historical and social constructions trying to unwrap and question how we understand identity based on normative notions of gender and sexuality. Using it as a negative term towards a male homosexual appeared in the mid-nineteenth century and it further became a term for homophobic abuse (Mallan, 2021). Mallan also claims that queer

theory is an ongoing evolution, in constant change and in different settings, but continuously covering additional political ground. In a Norwegian context, queer behavior has been frowned upon and was illegal until 1972, according to the criminal code (Straffeloven 1902, §213). It was in the 1990s that queer activist groups have been inspired by what is referred to as the field of queer studies and queer theory. Luhmann & Pinar (1998) define queer as a fluid term used to break, question, and challenge assumptions about identity and sexuality. They note that queerness evokes the subversion of binary categories by liberating individuals of expectations and limitations connected to race, class, gender identity, sexual orientation or other markers which make people different (p. 13). Luhman & Pinar elaborate that including this part of queer theory to your own practice as a teacher will teach students awareness and tolerance as they start to question and deconstruct the heterosexual matrix that defines many of the students in our classrooms. Shlasko (2005) and Rummel (2013) argue that the term queer is connected to how individuals identify with queer experiences. Feelings like pressure, anxiety, and tension result in otherness that have been created by the dominant social standards. Regarding their sexuality and gender identity. Judith Butler has contributed to the larger field of Queer Theory and a lot of other theorists have used her work to further explore her research on gender and sexuality. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (2006) got recognition regarding how social norms construct our perception of what is acceptable and not. According to Butler, it is societies desire to split gender into two distinct heteronormative categories of male and female. Her argument is that sex, gender and sexual orientation are closely linked. She argues the effects of growing up in a heterosexism society and how this interferes with the development of one's identity;

That the power regimes of heterosexism and phallogocentrism seek to augment themselves through a constant repetition of their logic, their metaphysic, and their naturalizes ontologies does not imply that repetition itself ought to be stopped as if it could be. If repetition is bound to persist as the mechanism of the cultural reproduction of identities, then the crucial question emerges: What kind of subversive repetition might call into question the regulatory practice of identity itself? (p.44)

Butler refers to *heterosexism* as a systemic discrimination against homosexuality, as well as the repetition and privileging of heterosexuality. This statement questions heterosexism and how crucial this can become for developing our own identity. Another example from the book that showcase the cultural society norms was explained through a picture of President Roosevelt depicted wearing a dress as a child. In 1884 this was acceptable due to the society norm, but a few years later it changed and resolved in great controversy. This showcases how problematic our identities have and are still being shaped after what is okay and what is not with society and the social norm. While it is difficult to clearly define queer theory, there are central key concepts that allow for a definitive framework for the purpose of this thesis. It is about how we normalize the heterosexual matrix and pointing out how homosexuality is a category of knowledge rather than a tangible reality. This can also be referred to as *heteronormativity* (Jeppesen, 2010), a central term in queer research, which is important for this thesis. Queer perspectives question the heteronormative relationship of sex, gender and heterosexuality and its effect, like gender-role expectations and identity constructions, and the assumptions of oppositional dualistic sex-gender sexuality relations that implicitly create mechanisms of exclusions (Bendl, Fleischmann & Hofmann,

2009). Queer theory in a school context can be seen as a microcosm of a larger society that needs to question and reexamine heteronormative practices. Here, Kumashiro (2002) encourages teachers to take themselves and their students to enter discomforting places and to think of learning as taking place through crisis. By letting go of what teachers know and are familiar with, and instead engage with the students to be curious and question notions of heteronormativity. According to Kumashiro (2002) the need for an antioppressive education is needed and describes four approaches to this. He uses queer theory to help offer ways of thinking and talking about education, oppression, identity, and change to the traditional ways of thinking and acting, teaching, and learning (p. 9). The fourth approach is relevant to this thesis as it deals with education that changes students and society. It presents how the problem lies in the continuing of privileging one group supposedly hetero- and cisnormative, whilst marginalizing the Other through the curricula. In Norway, part of the new core curriculum about Identity and Cultural Diversity mentions that each pupil shall be given the opportunity to preserve and develop her or his identity in an inclusive and diverse environment. This means that teachers are being held accountable for providing historical and cultural insight and give them a good foundation for this to be possible (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p.5). How queerness and LGBTQ+ themes and topics are related in a Norwegian context will be elaborated more on in the next chapter. Kumashiro (2002) further elaborates that teachers' need to change our teaching practices by letting students question and raise awareness for how some individuals are privileged and others marginalized within a society. If the children in our schools are always faced with aspects of heteronormativity, the result is that these children will know nothing and those who do not fit into the heteronormative window will feel extremely excluded. Thus, these queer theories are trying to challenge the *heterosexual matrix* and its heteronormative basic assumptions; these challenges are important as they help to dissolve social perceptions of normalcy.

2.2 Queer Pedagogy in Norway

Steck and Perry (2018) note the potential heteronormative foundations of the Norwegian school system. They state that "Students who identified as LGBTQ reported more often than their heterosexual peers experiencing lack of institutional support after reporting bullying or harassment to a teacher or school a staff member" (p.228). In my experience as a pupil and through my teaching practicums, phrases like "that's so gay" and "jævla homo" were often heard in and outside of school. A report presented by Slåtten, Andersen & Fosse (2007) claims that the use of homophobic slurs are being thrown around in Norwegian high schools (p.4). Everyone has either read or experienced stories of harassment and violence, these are often based on a result of heteronormative structures. These are quite serious and even though we can discuss how important it is to talk about not using homophobic slurs such as "homo" and "gay" and telling students that (verbal) harassment is not acceptable, it can be more difficult to talk about the less visible aspects of heteronormativity (Slåtten, Andersen & Fosse, 2007). An approach can be to include children's literature and textbooks that are used by teachers to educate on what representations of gender are used. These representations can be crucial to how children perceive what a boy and girl is, especially those who might not feel that any of these binaries apply to them, making them non-binary. When teachers are not able to represent and educate all kinds of gender representations, can lead to making students follow the heteronormative thinking pattern, making it extremely difficult for those who do not fit or see themselves under those representations. Heterosexuality has often been

represented as the normal and desirable way of sexuality. However, in recent years, the importance of making the classroom an inclusive space has been more valued. Queering EFL teaching can be considered an important step, by "creating spaces where all sexualities and their ecosocial and cultural relevance can be engaged with in a manner that is both respectful of individuals and critical relevance of all identity positions and subjectivities" (Paiz, 2017, p. 7). Queering the classroom is considered essential for the visibility and inclusion of LGBTQ+ identities, since the heteronormative classroom does not make room and has negative consequences for LGBTQ+ students. An approach can be to include children's literature and textbooks that are used by teachers to educate on what representations of gender are used. These representations can be crucial to how children perceive what a boy and girl is, especially those who might not feel that any of these binaries apply to them, making them non-binary. When teachers are not able to represent and educate all kinds of gender representations, can lead to making students follow the heteronormative thinking pattern, making it extremely difficult for those who do not fit or see themselves under those representations.

The level of problematic issues relating to queerness in schools depends on the individual and what happens in that specific school and classroom (Smestad, 2018). Previous research by Smestad (2018) suggests that Norwegian students (grades 1-10) learn very little about LGBTQ+ issues and teachers have emotions that suggest it can be problematic (p.4). WHO states that a clear guideline for sexual education for different groups on LGBTQ issues should be implemented for children aged 4-6. They should be educated that it is possible to fall in love with a person of the same gender and get help to develop positive gender identity (WHO, 2011). At age 9-12, children should be educated about the difference between gender identity and biological gender, and be helped to develop an understanding of diversity in sexuality and sexual orientation. It is important to reach out to the lower grades because teachers can create a safe space for them. Giving them the opportunity to explore their identity and to empathies with those who are "different" from them. By introducing this at an early stage, teachers are helping to prevent issues that could have occurred. Teaching meaningful themes such as queer topics through literary texts, for example can help learning a language naturally. This way teachers and pupils open up the language classroom by bringing real life issues to the classroom. Learning about themselves and who they are as a person will help them develop their language and critical thinking skills while reflecting on questions about identity and diversity.

Queer pedagogy emphasizes the ideas of queer theory, by wanting to challenge the heteronormative thinking pattern. Neto (2018) addresses how queer pedagogy can be used to more inclusive pedagogical practices that prevent exclusion, indifference, or intolerance in academic settings. It is important for teachers to acknowledge the existence of sexual identity in the classroom. Britzmann (1998) argues that:

Queer pedagogy could refer to education as carried out by lesbian and gay educators, to curricula and environments designed for gay and lesbian students, to education for everyone about queers, or to something altogether different. Queer pedagogy could refer to the deliberate production of subjective as deviant performance (...) implemented deliberately to intervene in the production of so called normalcy in schooled subjects. (as cited in Neto, 2018, p.591)

It is not about being queer, it is about including diversity. Neto (2018) explains that we need to be careful with the material especially textbooks we are using in the EFL classroom. He explains this because most languages are not gender neutral; they are either masculine or feminine. In Norway, we use *-en* or *-ei* for masculine and feminine nouns, but we can also use *-et* for neutral nouns. Some of his ideas are to introduce a guide with a list of words and definitions regarding one's gender expression, assigned birth sex, and a wide array of emotions and physical sensations. This will result in a more nuanced understanding of gender and sexual identity, allowing individuals to place themselves on the chart "between and beyond both heteronormative and homonormative ideals" (Neto, 2018, p. 593). The other idea is to show students different representations of families. Several textbooks, when learning a new language, the first chapters are often related to who you are and include family depictions. These representations are often very limited, not showing different types of families. Including different representations of family structures will help to break the heteronormative stereotypical family representation. Thus, the concept of queer pedagogy is not focused on using a right method, but it is about creating a safe space for students and teachers. By including queer children's literature can help young learners feel validated, knowing that there is someone out there just like you. In addition to providing windows and mirrors, diverse children's literature can be a map for children, showing them that the world is filled with opportunities anyone can accomplish (Crawley, 2020, p. 129).

2.3 LGBTQ+ Inclusive Teaching

Including LGBTQ+ themes in the classroom will create a safe space not only for LGBTQ students and their families but also for all students to explore the different identities our community consists of. *Reading the Rainbow* by Caitlin Ryan and Jill M. Hermann-Willmarth represents and portrays different methods to how teachers can use LGBTQ+ themes and literature in their own classrooms. They state the need to shift the perspective of understanding LGBTQ+ people away from sex and toward who people are, including how they live, whom they love, and whom they build family and communities (Ryan & Hermann-Willmarth, 2018). It is about letting students think about their own identities and taking part of breaking and becoming aware of the heteronormative stereotypes our society has been built up on for so long. Ryan & Hermann-Willmarth further explain the importance of categories and how they give us information about the world and ourselves. Stating that when we are unable to recognize ourselves or others into a category it can make us/they feel weird or different. This can become extremely dangerous and damaging if you do not have the knowledge that categories are intersectional. Having an intersectional lens gives room for students to understand that social identities can overlap, increasing the risk of students experiencing disadvantage or discrimination because of intersecting identities. Intersectionality is important for understanding categories because gender and sexual orientation have been part of what is called a *binary*. The definition of binary is that it consists of two parts or two things; in relation to gender, this means that gender consists of female and male. This concept implies that there are only two categories of gender biologically assigned at birth. In this belief part of the definition means that a woman is "not a man", and that a man "is not a woman" are assigned at birth. These types of categories are problematic because in most binaries, one of the terms have had more social power than the other. Historically men have had more social power than woman and straight people have had more social power than gay people. These terms have and are still part of how we categories and organize the world. They are problematic and create attitudes like "this-over-that" and

“this-but-not-that” which is extremely damaging to especially those who do not fit into binary terms, but also to how we perceive and think of the world. If students are brought up following these binary categories, they will come a part of the heterosexual matrix which is an idea that biological sex, gender, and sexuality are all interrelated sets of binaries (Ryan & Hermann-Willmarth, 2018, p. 59). These binaries are often a lot more fluid and transparent, overlapping and gliding into each other making binary categories much more complex than it suggests. If this is overlooked the diversity within these terms are being oppressed and challenged making our understanding of the world extremely narrow and lacking knowledge of variation and diversity. The idea of inclusive LGBTQ+ teaching is to change this perspective by noticing and expanding the categories of the heterosexual matrix in ways that disrupt their binary opposition. This thesis will explore how teachers can utilize this by including LGBTQ+ picturebooks.

2.4 Providing Windows and Mirrors for Students

Throughout my teaching education I have learnt how important it is for students to be able to recognize themselves and relate to the protagonists they come across in the stories they encounter. Jasmine Z. Lester (2014) argues that queer children’s literature should authentically depict and interpret children’s lives and their history. Queer-themed children’s literature that accomplishes this criteria affirms different queer identities and narratives to realistically reflect range among queer individuals. Lechner (1995) argues that “it is especially vital in picturebooks to have all segments of society nicely represented through authentic stories...these are the tales that show children their international and help them understand their world” (p. 77). As queer people are underrepresented in children’s literature, it is crucial that the literature that does include queer individuals does so in ways that do not perpetuate heteronormativity and its negative effect on children and society (Lester, 2013). This is important for all children, no matter their own sexual orientation or gender identity or that of their guardians. Since one of the tasks of children’s literature is to represent young human beings to a wider audience, it needs to reveal them interacting with and representing the full scope of gender identities.

Rudine Sims Bishop (1990) refers to this as providing *mirrors* and *windows* through the books we read. A window book can help create a window for opening how you see the world, but it can also provide a reflection of yourself and that is what mirror books do. “Mirror books” are books where readers can see something about their identities, cultures, or experiences in a text. It reassures the reader that they are not alone, that they are not different or weird and that they share a similar identity and belong to a community. This gives them a sense of recognition and acknowledgement that they matter and are worth writing about and worth being read. “Window books” give readers awareness of another person’s experience. These are just as important as mirror books as it gives readers insight that not everybody is like them and prepares them for the complexity and diversity of the larger world (Ryan & Hermann-Willmarth, 2018, p. 1). The key here is to provide a balance and mixture of both providing mirrors and windows for the students. This balance ensures us to feel acknowledged while also moving beyond our own limited experiences. Helping students to not let them feel alone while at the same time reminding them that they live in a world with other people who are different than themselves. Finding a way to include these types of literature can be difficult and different for teachers: people use different approaches that work best for them and their context. Ryan & Hermann-Willmarth recommend finding entry points to help you get

started. Teachers can use real life situations and classroom situations to their teaching for starting to include LGBTQ teaching. Using this as a technique will help your students see and use connection with what already is familiar to them and expanding their knowledge. You need to be careful because this can also feel forced and uncomfortable if the focus is wrong. Ryan & Hermann-Willmarth suggest these three entry points:

1. Connecting to the diverse families in your classroom and school
2. Responding to instances of bullying around LGBTQ identities in your own school
3. Discussing LGBTQ-related current events (p. 23)

These different entry points may apply differently depending on you as a teacher and the context, but the aim is that these can provide opportunities to include representations of LGBTQ+ people as part of the curriculum. Even though your classroom does not consist of any LGBTQ+ families it is still important for them to see representations of these as it creates windows and will help students learn about the experiences and contributions of LGBTQ people. The examples that Ryan & Hermann-Willmarth provide are all including literature with LGBTQ-protagonists but have different lessons and discussions with the children depending on the starting point and aim the teachers wanted to focus on. What these all have in common is how the teachers use what already is familiar to the students and use this as a starting point to expand students understanding of LGBTQ people while also developing their abilities in the interconnected areas of reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing and visual representing. These different approaches can be used to start you to aim towards more inclusive LGBTQ+ teaching, but it is important to have in mind that when you have completed a lesson including LGBTQ+ themes you are not done. The key is to let the students see that LGBTQ people are not a separate part of the curriculum but that they are connected to their own connections and experiences. Including stories and reading about these situations will bring new awareness and understanding to real people in their own lives and larger communities. Students will have the opportunity to ask, think and share their reflections in a safe space where there is no right or wrong answer. Being unaware and staying silent is often contributing to the problem of misconceptions and misrepresentation of LGBTQ+ like other minority identities which is why it is important to expand students mirrors and windows. Using LGBTQ+ protagonists in books is an explicit way of inclusive LGBTQ teaching. Ryan & Willmarth further portray a different approach to inclusive LGBTQ+ teaching when faced more challenges and that is by using straight books and reading them through a queer lens. Here teachers and students are taught to question and complicate the categories- particularly those related to bodies, gender, sexual orientation, and love- as they read, write, and talk in their classrooms they are making categories more inclusive (p. 57). This means helping students to understand and question the heteronormative systems that excuse LGBTQ people without having to use the words, gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender. It was earlier discussed the power that these types of categories hold and once we can notice these, we are able to practice thinking about how we can make these categories more inclusive.

2.5 Picturebooks and Using Multimodal Texts in the EFL Classroom

Picturebooks can be used as a tool to teach LGBTQ+ themes and topics in the EFL classroom. Picturebooks combine both the visual and verbal making the way we read and communicate act on two separate signs, the iconic and the conventional (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006). Picturebooks have the capability to actively challenge the reader and to

require them to engage with both picture and word to get the whole story. Picturebooks are often a reflection of childhood and are therefore often written for children, by adults. However, picturebooks include pictures that can have complex iconic signs, and words are complex conventional signs. There are often several different paths through the individual picturebook, resulting in telling more than one story by offering several layers of meaning, open conclusions and invites the reader to engage actively. The pictures are used to describe and present while the words are used to narrate. Depending on where you start to look in a picturebook, whether it is the pictures or the texts, you will start to create expectations for the other. The reader switches from visual to verbal creating new expectations, resulting in an ever-expanding concatenation of understanding. The pictures and words complement each other creating a better interoperation as a whole. While adults have often lost this skill as they look at the pictures in a more decorative manner, children go deeper and deeper into the meaning of the book whilst switching between the iconic and conventional. Another method of understanding picturebook dynamics is by looking at reader-response theory by Wolfgang Iser (1975) who presents how the text and visual create gaps which the reader needs to fill often building of from their own experiences and previous knowledge. The narrative and meaning of the text is connected to how the reader perceives these gaps and fills them in. When a reader has interoperated the text, they are excluding other interpretations and every reader will bring their own interoperation of the text. In a picturebooks the verbal text has its own gaps and the visual has its own gaps. The relationship between them can fill each other's gaps, wholly or partially. However, the books can also leave gaps for the reader to fill (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p. 2). These gaps are often open-ended creating room for multiple different ways to understand the story. The story often leads a multitude of blanks for us to fill in and inferences to induce and the pictures are often simplistic and abstract allowing us to imprint our own details and ideas into the image. It's the lack of confining detail that allows for us to really search for our own conclusions. It does not just force the authors perspective into our minds but also encourages us to find our own answers and being that picturebooks tend to be the first time we are invited to explore topics that can be complex, such as LGBTQ themes, Picturebooks open-ended medium can be vital and help us navigate through the world when we find ourselves to be hopelessly lost. Picturebook writers and illustrators have a respect for the readers curiosity and trust their ability to explore. They are not just a tool used to help teach children's literacy skills and to build a stronger vocabulary but is rather a story that requires the reader to search for answers themselves and to come up with their own conclusions and to ultimately nurture the need to constantly explore and redefine our experiences. They offer a method to safely explore the vast and complex world around us and often have a strong impact on our lives because they tend to be the first time, we are given the opportunity to discover things for ourselves. However, a picturebook does include codes that contribute to the interoperation of them. Moebius (2009) explain how these codes create meaning. Codes that include the positioning, perspective, the code of frame and the right and round as well as the code of colour interferes with the readers judgement of the book. Analyzing these types of codes will attend to elements of design and expression that compromise for our overall perception. This type of analysis will be used when focusing on the LGBTQ inclusive picturebooks I have chosen to supplement this thesis with. The best picturebooks can portray intangible and invisible, ideas and concepts such as love, responsibility, a truth beyond the individual, ideas, that escape easy definition in pictures or words and help us see things in a new way. Picturebooks are often used as a tool in the classroom to improve early reading skills. Using

picturebooks in the EFL classroom will not only be beneficial because of their meanings but also improve language learning skills.

3 Methodology

In this section, I will present the different methodologies that I have chosen to conduct this study. Firstly, I will start by explaining why a qualitative research approach was more suitable than a quantitative one. Secondly, I will describe why I consider my data material as case studies, explaining the impact this has to the larger field of LGBTQ+ studies in Norway. I will examine teachers' attitudes on- and approaches to LGBTQ+ themes and literature by explaining how this fits under ethnographic fieldwork. I further discuss the instruments used for collecting data and how I conducted the interview and anonymous survey as well as the selection of chosen picturebooks. I will elaborate on the use of critical visual methodology to analyse the picturebooks. At the end of this chapter, I will discuss my own positionality as a researcher and the ethical considerations of this project.

3.1 Qualitative Research Method

Qualitative methodology is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning of information and data about reality by using words or language. Qualitative researchers tend to collect data out in the field where the participants experience the issue or problem under study (Creswell, 2018, p. 181). To apply this approach within my project, I will collect data at the participants' school to describe the use of LGBTQ themes in the classroom. For this paper I will be relying on multiple sources of data rather than one. This includes an interview of two primary teachers and a review of two LGBTQ+ contemporary picturebooks by Daniel Haack. Merriam (2002) states that the information collected in qualitative research is influenced by individuals who interpret and construct information based on their own experiences, beliefs, and personal situations. This can lead to subjective conclusions, as the underlying data may be compromised. "Part of qualitative research is examining possible researchers bias on the data collection and analysis, this is defined as reflexivity (Galletta & Cross, 2013, p. 12)." Reflexivity will be used in this study as a tool to achieve critical self-awareness. The goal of this study is to collect and analyse LGBTQ+ themes in primary education by using participants own experiences and perspectives. This is a case study as it generates an in-depth, multi-faceted understanding of a complex issue in a real- life context (Crowe et al., 2011, p. 1). There are challenges connected to doing a case study such as generalisation, the quality of data base and ethical considerations. These will be further examined in the chapter Ethical Considerations: Reliability and Validity.

3.2 Ethnographic Framework

An important realisation in research is that people are not cultural or linguistic catalogues; their cultural and social behaviour is often biased. This means that they may not have a valid opinion, nor a viewpoint that can be easily recorded (Blommaert & Jie, 2010, p.3). Ethnographic fieldwork aims to highlight details related to the wider structure of people's lives. Ethnographic fieldwork observes peoples' behaviours and patterns over a longer period of time. By obtaining a deeper understanding of in-class attitudes and experiences teachers have connected to LGBTQ+ themes as described in literature. Using these teachers' learnings has therefore given this research aspects of an ethnographic study. Charles Briggs (1986) treats fieldwork interviewing from a linguistic-

anthropological perspective, as a sociocultural loaded communicative activity (Blommaert & Jie, 2010, p. 43). He further explains how interviewees have a metalevel and that it is not just the formulation, but also the presentation that requires recording (p. 43). These are different ways of communicating and can affect the content of the communication. They can signal different emotions by being hesitant or confident in their answers, One can look at their body language whether the participant can comfortably discuss the topic at hand. Briggs concludes that these are aspects one has to take into consideration to understand the full content of the communication. If these are overlooked, it can lead the researcher to draw the wrong or incomplete conclusions. Briggs has concluded some basic insights that should be considered when having an ethnographic interview:

1. Interviews are conversations.
2. You are part of the interview.
3. The importance of anecdotes.
4. No such thing as a bad interview.

The following subsections will outline the basic guidelines for data planning and the ethical considerations necessary for an ethnographic methodology using Briggs' insights.

3.3 Interviews

The goal of my interview is to let the participant discuss and develop their thoughts; a semi-structured interview gives you the opportunity to do so. It can be defined as an ordered conversation, one that is structured by questions or topics I want to see discussed, and where I as an interviewer make sure that a particular order or particular topics are being followed (Blommaert & Jie, 2010, p. 44). When the interview is conducted, the recorded version will be the data material I use to further analyse and solve the research questions. Like any conversation between two people, it is dialogical, meaning that both parties need to contribute in order for it work and there are different aspects I need to take under consideration. Things Issues such as whether the interviewee likes me, or whether they find me too sympathetic can play a role in making it a successful interview. Cooperation is a factor that plays a role on whether there is a desire to talk to communicate and will have an impact on the success of the interview. Issues such as formality and politeness also play a role. There are certain rules I need to consider when talking with the participant: rules of distance, privacy and prior information. Like in any human interaction misunderstandings can happen. Misunderstandings like not being correctly understood, humour being wrongly received as a serious statement or cognitive misunderstandings like simply not understanding a statement (Blommaert & Jie, 2010, p.45). Interviews, like everyday conversations can be messy and complex, often containing contradictions and statements, with people shifting topics and getting lost in details. When transcribing my interview, I will take these aspects of conversation under consideration for it to be authentic and see the interview as a communicative action.

3.3.1 Interview Process and Guidelines

My questions in the interview guide were made before the interview process took place. This gives the researcher the opportunity to focus on the central theme of the study and design research questions before the actual research begins (Galetta & Cross, 2013, p.11). Diving into the existing literature connected to LGBTQ+ topics and themes in the EFL classroom has been my main inspiration in developing a research design, selecting

my methods of data collection and formulating an analytical framework. Prior to the creation of these interview questions, I have reviewed my current knowledge about LGBTQ+ themes and topics through my time as a student together with my own experiences and my own understanding of the topic. There is little research on LGBTQ+ themes and topics in the Norwegian schooling context and my goal with this thesis is to participate and acknowledge the need for LGBTQ+ inclusive teaching and how this impacts the students. The aim of the interview was to find out which approaches they use and what possible challenges they face when teaching the topics. The focus is therefore on their experiences, attitudes, and interpretations during these lessons. My sample size consists of two primary school teachers which results in making this study partly subjective, not achieving any broad generalisation of the topic. Although the results did show similar findings to other studies (Anicic, 2020), my participants viewpoints and experiences with LGBTQ+ themes and topics are individual. Thus, making it difficult to draw any general conclusions, however this study aids to gaining a deeper understanding of the use of LGBTQ+ themes and topics in the EFL classroom in Norway. It showcases the lack of knowledge teachers have around these themes. The participants were recruited through my practicum at their school where I asked if they would be interested in being involved. Choice of qualitative method can have a result to how available participants are to being involved. For some studies, a personal relation to the researcher may be crucial for their willingness to participate in research projects (Thagaard, 2018, p. 12). The teachers who were interested were then contacted later via email with general information about the study and insight in how the data will be kept as well as a consent form approved by NSD. A semi-structured interview allows the interviewer to ask more open-ended questions allowing room for discussion with the participant rather than a straightforward answer. Michele J. McIntosh and Janice M. Morse (2015) state that "the purpose of semi-structured interviews is to ascertain participants perspectives regarding an experience pertaining to the research topic. Questions to the interview guide were created beforehand." They contain both open-ended and more theoretically driven questions, drawing from the experiences of the participants. The questions were revised several times, constantly changing them to organise them into appropriate sections that would be connected to my research questions. Follow-up questions like "elaborate why/why not" made room for the participants to further explain their thoughts and discuss, producing existing knowledge but also discovering new knowledge (McIntosh & Morse, 2015, p.1) Inspiration to these questions were based on Branislav's Anicic's (2020) study and other LGBTQ+ studies in education, as my study aims to gaining and adding knowledge to the field. The final interview design should cover an in-depth exploration of the of my research questions (Galetta & Cross, 2013, p. 45). The process of creating my questions was done by following Galetta & Cross (2013) guidelines to making a semi-structured interview. I was interested in their experiences, attitudes and instructional practices connected to LGBTQ+ themes in the EFL classroom as well as the challenges they might face. The interview guide contains 18 questions with some follow up questions that are grouped into three categories: Teacher's Background, Perspectives and Beliefs and Instructional Practice. Examples of questions include the following:

- Have you had any professional guidance (example course) in teaching on LGBTQ+ themes? Please describe your experience.
- Why do you (not) feel it is important to use LGBTQ+ themes in your practice? Elaborate why/why not.

- How do/would you implement LGBTQ+ themes into your everyday teaching of English?

The full interview guide can be found in Appendix A of this thesis.

The teachers were given the opportunity to engage with the interview guidelines beforehand but did decline. This can have an impact on the depth of the participants answers as they did not have any reflected answers. As a result, my collected data became limited as it became very clear that the teachers struggled to grasp the concept of the topic presented to them. It can be discussed whether there was a need for further explanation of the theme. However, my initial goal was to gain knowledge from their experiences. The interview lasted for 32 minutes and as I had a personal relation to the interviewees it resulted more in a conversation where we discussed and questioned the topic in a comfortable space. The interview was sound-recorded with two recording protocols. A dictaphone app called Nettskjema-diktafon was used as the audio recording is immediately encrypted. This allows the audio to be stored safely following the privacy terms and conditions in relation to NSD. It is suggested to use two protocols during an interview in case technical problems occur. This is why I supplemented the interview with a physical dictaphone. The interview was transcribed, and the teachers were given pseudonyms to protect and anonymise their identities.

3.3.2 Selection of Picturebooks

This study reflects looking into perspectives and attitudes towards using LGBTQ+ themes and literature in the EFL classroom. These findings can be used to demonstrate how teachers can implement LGBTQ+ topics in their own classrooms. Picturebooks have high didactic value due because of pupils having to engage with both the visual and textual. Picturebooks can be defined by the use of sequential imagery, usually in tandem with a small number of words, to convey meaning (Salisbury & Styles, 2012, p. 7). Using the text and the visual to make connections and create meaning, together with having systematic and linguistic signifiers opens up for meaningful language acquisition. Picturebooks often portray the child and all picturebooks contribute in some way to the depiction of childhood. By including LGBTQ+ situations in picturebooks, one can let students see that teachers value(s) inclusion of diversity and respects different identities. I have chosen two books *Prince & Knight: Tale of the Shadow King* (2021) by Daniel Haack and *Maiden & Princess* (2019) by Daniel Haack and Isabel Galupo. These books are contemporary LGBTQ+ picturebooks and include non-heteronormative protagonists. I have chosen these because they give a modern and inclusive variation on classic fairytales, which will be relatable for students and provide an explicit alternative to the heteronormative. The books also have a diversity of ethnicity, which adds to their acceptance in the classroom. The next chapter illustrates how I will analyse these texts and later there will be a discussion of how these can be used for pedagogical implementation.

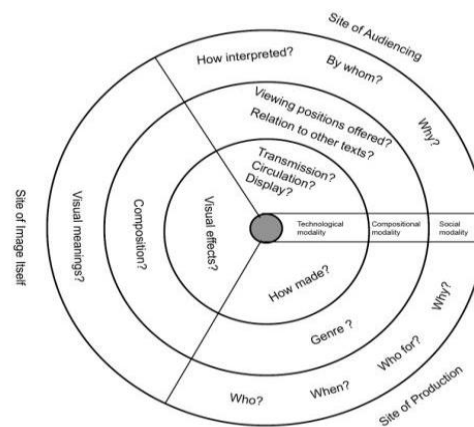
3.4 Using Critical Visual Methodology to Analyse Multimodal Texts

Part of my purpose for conducting this study is to contribute to the discourse of LGBTQ+ literature in education. As the chosen literature for my close readings are picturebooks there is a need for using a critical visual methodology. This thesis calls upon the work of Gillian Rose to contextualise the visual reading of my selected picturebooks. *Visual Methodologies* (2012), originally published in 2001. By following Gillian Rose's (2012)

criteria to what she thinks is necessary for a critical approach to interpreting visual images, my criteria relates to the social condition and effects of visuals (p.17). As using picturebooks for LGBTQ+ pedagogic implementation the visual representations of LGBTQ+ protagonists being included or even excluded has an impact on how the students interpret and make sense of the books' LGBTQ+ themes. Therefore, a critical approach is needed to expand our understanding of the texts and narratives these picturebooks make. The aim for using a critical visual methodology for these picturebooks is that these books hopefully can be used as a supplement for future pedagogic implementation of LGBTQ+ themes and literature.

The social practices and effects of the picturebooks viewing are therefore included to understand the importance images can have on the audience interacting with the books. Rose (2012) has developed a framework that can be used for exploring the diverse ranges of methods working with materials can use. The framework is based on thinking about visual materials in terms of three sites: the site of *production*, which is where an image is made; the site of the *image* itself, which is its visual content; and the site where the image encounters its *audience* (p. 20). Each of these sites include three modalities that contribute to a critical understanding of visuals; technological mode, compositional mode, and social mode. The modes I will focus on for analysing *Prince & Knight: Tale of the Shadow King* and *Maiden & Princess* by Daniel Haack and Isabel Galupo are the compositional and social mode. The compositional mode refers to when an image is made and looks at the content, colour and spatial organisation of the visual. The social mode explores an image through which it is seen and used (Rose, 2012, p. 20).

Figure 1 displays the sites and modalities for interpreting visual materials, which I will be using to analyse the compositional and social mode mainly through the site of audiencing.



Figur 1 - Gillan Rose Visual Methodology

As I will analysing how these books can be used for pedagogic implementation the meanings and effects visuals can hold are dependent on the audience. Students and I as a teacher will bring our own ways of seeing and interpretation. John Fiske (1992) suggests that the site of audiencing is the most important site where visual meanings are made and uses the term *audiences* to refer to the process by which a visual image has its meanings renegotiated, or even rejected, by particular audiences watching specific circumstances (Rose, 2012, p. 30). Implementing these books for classroom purposes will provide different meanings and interoperations for students and teachers. Different approaches to implementing the books will contribute to the interpretation and meaning of the books. These are aspects I will focus on in my analysis. Therefore, the social site is perhaps the most important modality for understanding the audiencing of visuals. It is a question of the different social practices that structure the viewing of particular visuals in particular places (Rose, p. 31).

3.5 Ethical Considerations: Research Validity and Reliability

For this study to have a certain quality, there are a few points one needs to take under consideration as a researcher. A researcher needs to be aware of their role as a researcher and be able to see limitations in their own study (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2011, s. 125). I will use the terms reliability and validity for this study. Reliability refers to whether your data collection techniques and analytic procedures would reproduce consistent findings if they were repeated on another occasion or if they were replicated by another researcher (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2011, s. 125) This means to have a reliable research, meaning that if someone else decided to use similar data collection techniques and analytical techniques to evaluate the data at a different time would still produce the same findings as you. Postholm claims that the findings obtained in a qualitative study will be hardly replicable because of the relationship between a researcher, the research field, and the participant will change through time. Different researcher bring different subjective understandings of the world, and both researchers and research participant evolve through time. As I have looked deeper into LGBTQ+ studies in a Norwegian context there are hardly any studies except for Branislav Anicic's study on *The Use of LGBTQ+ Literary Texts and Topics in the English Subject* (2020). My data collection of the interview did in fact showcase that there barely any knowledge of LGBTQ+ inclusive teaching in Norway. A large part of my interview was to get the teaches to understand that it does not just about sex and puberty. The teachers often connected LGBTQ+ to puberty and social science and is why I needed to guide them onto a different path. Looking at this critically it can interfere with the ethical considerations of this study. However, as this interview is based on a semi-structured ethnographic interview I believe that it was necessary for me to guide them, because they simply did not understand the whole concept of LGBTQ+ inclusive teaching. The goal of an ethnographic interview is to get the participants perspective and create an informal setting where they are allowed to elaborate on their own experiences and thoughts on a topic. To achieve this it was necessary for me to guide them onto a path otherwise they could were not able to understand the LGBTQ+ topic. Postholm and Jacobsen (2011) claim that researchers bring their own individual and subjectivity to the research field that is under constant change. Due to this it makes my study unique, and it is important to remember that what I found does not replicate with any other study. This qualitative study aims to bring awareness and shed light on LGBTQ+ themes and topics in a Norwegian school context, as well my own subjectivity. Therefore, the replication of this study has no say whether it is to be reliable or not. By being reflective and using a critical eye to my subjectivity, I believe this will help me with my study in terms of making it reliable. As I am not part of the LGBTQ+ community myself I have to be aware of using the right terms and definitions when writing. "Just as White people should be invested in ending racism and men must stand up for women's rights, non LGBTQ people have an important role for in making the world a safer and more inclusive of LGBTQ folks." (Ryan, Hermann-Willmarth, 2018p. 8). Resulting in the importance of non-LGBTQ+ individuals to shed light on these themes as well, to acknowledge acceptance and tolerance towards diverse marginalized identities. Engaging non-LGBTQ+ students is just as important for making them inclusive, respectful and promote diversity as it is for LGBTQ+ students to see representations of themselves. A reason to why it is important for me as a non-LGBTQ individual to shed light on this. Regarding my threats to my research reliability can evolve around participant errors, meaning any factor which adversely alters the way in which a participant performs. As I have a relation to my participants, because I have spent my practicum there it can correlate in how they behave and answer to the

questions. Due to this I have tried to be as objective as possible and not influence when I am conducting the survey and interview. I brought my own personal positionality when I analysed the data. My gender, age, ethnicity and cultural background are always with me, and will make a lens for my data collection and understanding (Heigman & Croker, 2009). This is something I need to take under consideration when I am analysing the picturebooks as this will contribute to my understanding of the books, even though I am following a framework. When we explain validity there are usually included two types, internal and external validity. Internal validity is established when your research demonstrates a causal relationship between two variables. External validity is concerned whether a study's research findings can be generalised to other relevant settings or groups. As my interviews and surveys are in a school context, it means whether these findings can be transferred to other schools. While the knowledge from qualitative studies is usually contextualised, it is connected to a particular place and time and can not have the same findings although the research can be transferred to other settings (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2011. p. 175). My study included two teachers from the seventh grade, this is a small sample of participant and it will make it difficult to make any generalization about every teacher and students in Norway, this was though not the aim of the study. I believe that by focusing on an in-depth interview and survey has strengths. I give the opportunity for them to speak and use their voice on the topic. Another goal is to be able to contribute to pedagogical implementation and learn how I can use LGBTQ+ texts in my future teaching years. I am excited to where this study takes me and be able to be a voice for LGBTQ+ pedagogic implementation.

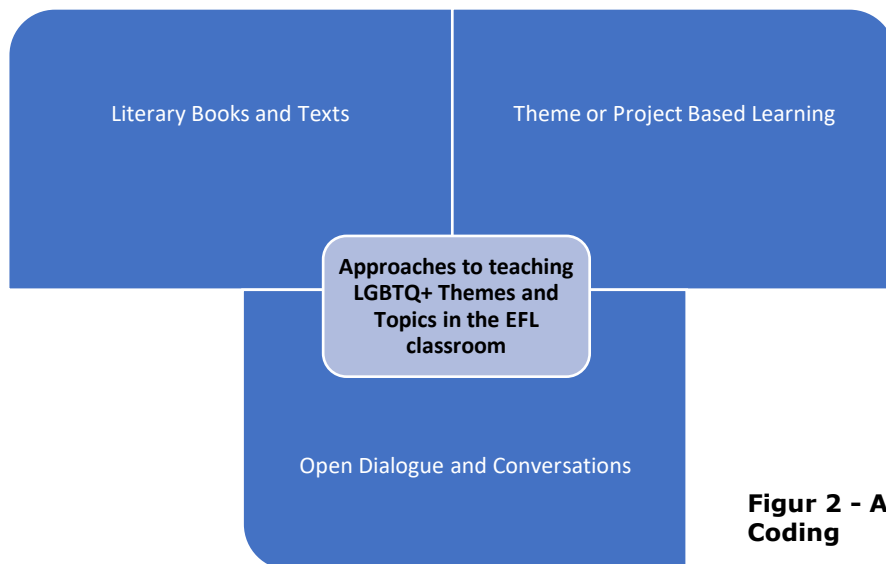
4 Analysis

The aim of conducting a qualitative data analysis is to collect material in a cohesive and understandable way so that it can be used for further discussion and findings (Merriam, 2009). As the primary data source for this thesis consists of a semi-structured interview, a coding method is needed to present the material in a proper and observant manner (Postholm, 2011). *Constant Comparative Analysis Method* by Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss (1967) includes three stages of coding: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. Open coding refers to the collection, comparison and categorization of data through intense research. Meanwhile, axial coding consists of finding connections between the categories and its subcategories to distinguish the material more precisely and completely. Finally, selective coding compiles these subcategories into one main category (Postholm, 2011). This analytical methodology is often linked to qualitative studies, which reaffirms the selection made for this thesis.

For accurate and informed comparative analysis, I transcribed and translated the data collected from the interviews. To align with the data protection guidelines outlined by the NSD, the interviewees were given pseudonyms. While the interview lasted approximately thirty minutes, the participants were given the opportunity to engage with the interview guidelines and questions but they both declined. This impacted the depth of the interviewees' answers as they did not have a predetermined answer for each question, but they did not seem to grasp the concept of the topic presented to them. The interview was coded through conceptual and linguistic signifiers (i.e. the amount of times "puberty" is used). This method of coding allowed for topical categories to emerge. These were then analysed in relation to the thesis questions outlined in the introduction.

The open coding process focused on the positionality of this thesis' imbedded research questions: (1) investigating the use of LGBTQ+ texts, literature and themes in classrooms, (2) exploring the challenges faced when implementing LGBTQ+ texts and topics, (3) contributing to the discourse of LGBTQ + literature for future pedagogic implementation. To begin the coding process, I marked words, sentences and paragraphs that had an obvious connection to the aforementioned research questions. To create a cohesive and clear coding system, I divided the sentences and paragraphs into colour-coded categories which helped to distinguish the different themes that become apparent during the interview. Code words such as Smiso, puberty, Skolestudio, matureness and verbal abuse emerged from the interviews. Another theme that was of note for this thesis was the awareness of the students. From the teachers' own admission during the interview, it is clear that the students have more knowledge on LGBTQ+ themes and topics than the teachers themselves. After reading *The Boy in the Dress*, the students wanted to engage in a "gender swap" day, but they quickly altered their decision to be more fluid and inclusive due to their understanding that gender is a societal ideology and should not be defined by items of clothing. The teachers were surprised by this concept as they had not realized how well versed their students were in relation to queerness and societal norms. This will be discussed further in the "Discussion of Research Findings" section which appears later in this thesis.

To further analyse the data collected from the interview, I used axial coding to draw connections between the codes I developed in open coding. Further, grouping the codes into categories. These categories became the axes that tie the codes together. My two categories made under the axial coding reflect two of my research questions (1) Investigate the use of LGBTQ+ Literature and Themes in EFL classroom and (2) Exploring the Challenges faced when implementing LGBTQ+ texts and themes. The open coding process resulted in making the subcategories Literary Books and Texts, Theme or Project Based Learning and Open Dialogue and Conversations for research question (1):



Figur 2 - Axial Coding

Axial Coding

Lack of Knowledge and Teacher Unawareness, Puberty and Matureness and Students Foul Language Use for resulted in subcategories for research question (2). During the process of axial coding one should continuously go back and do further rounds of coding based on codes and categories derived in each step (Glaser & Straus, 1967). In contrast to the previous open coding, axial coding is used to draw connections between the codes and identify which codes are the most central to the thesis. Here, one organizes the codes developed in the open coding process and find how these codes can be grouped into categories. The categories are created on an existing code and align with your research questions. The result of the axial coding gives the research a number of categories that are supported by the collection of supporting codes. During the axial coding process, I found codes that could closely resemble to one another. This is part of the process and results to merging and further organizing my research. After I was done with the axial coding I had two main categories and six subcategories, each of which have emerged from the codes developed in open coding.

The selective coding process is the last and fundamental component of the core category for this thesis. Postholm (2011) explains how the core category represents the central theme of the research and, for this thesis, that is *Perspectives and Attitudes Towards Using LGBTQ+ Themes and Topics in the EFL Classroom*. The following figure displays how the core category was created and the final hierarchy order of the categories and subcategories:



Figur 3 - The Final Hierarchy

Selective coding

The selective coding process connects all of the categories together around one main core category. This defines and unifies the research. The core category developed is Use of LGBTQ+ topics and themes in the EFL Classroom and represents the central thesis of my research. This hierarchy represents the findings and themes that were found to be relevant for this study. The categories and subcategories deal with LGBTQ+ themes and topics in the classroom, and the challenges connected to teaching LGBTQ+ topics. These coded categories are pivotal to this study's research questions, and allow for further discussion and reflection on the inclusion of LGBTQ+ educational practices in EFL classrooms in Norway. The overall findings indicate that there is a lack of knowledge surrounding these themes. Therefore, I will present textual examples of LGBTQ+ themes as a way to implement the topic into the EFL classroom. The picturebooks *Tale of the Shadow King and Maiden & Princess* both by Daniel Haack will be analyzed to showcase the possible pedagogical implementation of LGBTQ+ oriented texts in the classroom. My analysis will contribute to the discourse of LGBTQ+ literature for future pedagogic implementation which is my third and final research question.

4.1 Analysis – Tale of The Shadow King

Both picturebooks chosen for my pedagogical implementation are by the Emmy Award-winning children's book author Daniel Hack. *Prince & Knight: Tale of the Shadow King* is a follow up sequel to *Prince & Knight* which was named as one of the best children's books of 2018 by Amazon, Kirkus Reviews and the Chicago Tribune. However, it has also received excessive controversy and been part of the Top 100 most Banned and Challenged Books of the Decade (2010-2019) by the American Library Association's Office of the Intellectual Freedom. This is a result of parents not wanting to expose their children to books they think include offensive or hurtful content. Other books including LGBTQ+ content have also made it on the list and these types of censorship are alarming and dangerous. These books are important contributions to LGBTQ+ individuals mental health. If LGBTQ+ children and youth are going through life without having one's own experiences and own realities mirrored through literature and media it contributes to fostering exclusion and otherness of LGBTQ+ individuals. Many people get to know themselves and develop their own identity through reading about others, and this makes

it very disturbing that children and young people are deprived of the opportunity to reflect themselves and identity in literature. These censorship send a clear message about which lives and identities are valued and how different people are classified. When you delete and erase the lives and stories of some children and young people to protect others, you indicate that there is only one type of life and stories that are worth protecting. These stories are important to combat bullying and strengthen mental and physical health, and gaining in knowledge, which is often the answer. I will be analysing the contemporary non-heteronormative fairytale *Prince & Knight* through the lens of Gillian Rose's visual methodology framework. I will discuss how and why this book can be used as an example for further LGBTQ+ inclusive teaching. I will focus on the composition, perspective and visual meanings of the picturebook.

Prince & Knight, the first book in the sequel tells the story of a prince and a knight who fall in love and journey to save the kingdom from a threatening dragon. As there already are studies discussing *Prince & Knight*, I wanted to take a deeper look into *Prince & Knight: Tale of the Shadow King* which has been less researched. I will refer to it as *Tale of the Shadow King* from now on. *Tale of the Shadow King* was published in 2021 and continues the couple's journey from a third-person point of view. It includes the story of the Shadow King whose feelings and emotions have been oppressed and led him to spread darkness over the kingdom. The illustrations are done by Stevie Lewis, who has also illustrated the previous book. We can tell that the *Tale of the Shadow King* is a sequel to the previous book, *Prince and Knight*, because the book is starting with "Have you heard of the thrilling tale of prince and his dear knight. Their love for each other inspired everyone in sight." (p.1-2). The couple and villagers are happily living in the kingdom until a fog of darkness blocks the sun and spreads across the land. The story follows up with their journey to solve the darkness that has fled their land and encounter obstacles along the way. They soon encounter the mysterious Shadow King which is the reason of the darkness. The Shadow King was banished by the others in the kingdom for the way he dressed and spoke and because he was in love with a squire he was banished to the dark and his sadness became so strong that he enchanted darkness over the land (p.23-24). After encountering and watching the Prince saving the Knights life the Shadow King wishes to end the darkness because he sees the love between the Prince and the Knight and feels that there is hope for him again. Together with this and the recognition from the Knight the Shadow King starts to feel warm and is radiated with light. The Shadow King joins the Prince and Knight back to the village where he is welcomed by the squire (p. 31) and ends the book with "How wonderful life is, when I can truly be me." As soon as the Shadow King sees the love that is shared between the Prince and the Knight he feels hope. The Knight also has a wonderful conversation with him about how differences make us unique (p. 25) and that he feels sorry for the Shadow King. The aspects of representation, acknowledgement and acceptance are part of letting the Shadow King be true to himself and could be seen as the overall moral of the story.

The picturebook is recommended for ages 4-6, following from an earlier assertion that children should be educated on same-sex relationships, and develop positive gender identity at age 9-12 (WHO, 2011). Children should be educated about the difference between gender identity and biological gender which these picturebooks can accomplish by inciting discussions around these topics. By letting the students question and discuss why the Shadow King has been othered by the kingdom and talking about how this must feel. Connecting it to emotions and feelings of being excluded, which is something students can probably relate to. Giving them the opportunity to explore their own identity

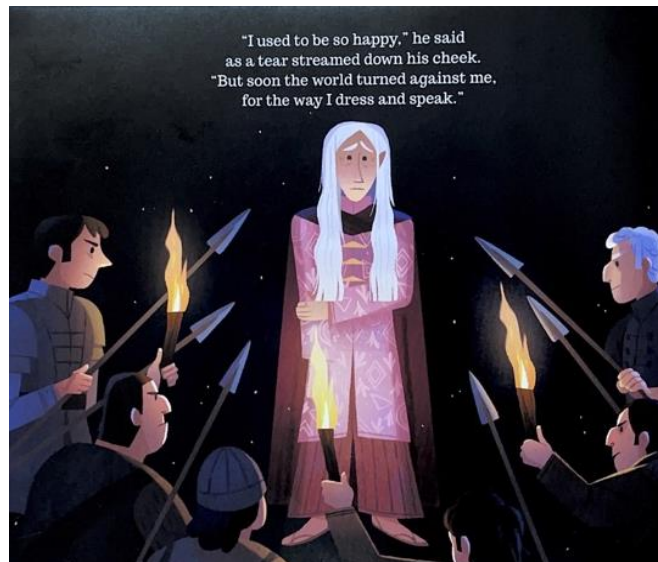
and also empathize with those who are “different” from them. Rudine Sims Bishop (1990) refers to this as providing windows and mirrors for your students through books. It reassures them that they are not alone, giving them a sense of recognition and acknowledgement, which is one of the crucial elements of not feeling othered and excluded. The picturebook can be used in the EFL classroom for all ages in primary grades as it includes short, rhyming vocabulary together with double paged illustrations. This allows students to engage with both the visual and textual and enhances language teaching. By including both text and visual helps students to see an immediate meaning in the language by pictorially clarifying the message the text has.

The Shadow King has fairytale aspects such as a kingdom, a battle and a homecoming which is something that all students are familiar with and can help to see connections with other and within the fairytale genre. The illustrations are rich in colour and carry a cinematic experience for the reader. We can see a transformation of the light throughout the story. The story begins with bright and vibrant colours but are faded into gloomy and dark when the darkness of the Shadow King has conquered the land. The darkness of colour does not change until the Shadow King sees and feels acceptance. We are then taken back to the vibrant and bright colours when he feels that he can be his true self, (p. 29). The contrasts of dark and light can symbolize despair and hope and is used throughout the whole story. By observing where the light hits, one can find hope. Together with the text and visuals, readers fill gaps and create bridges depending on the interoperation and experience they carry with them. Daniel Haacks’ writing is targeted to break the heteronormative children’s literature that we are used to. The Prince & Knight series are an inclusive modern take on fairytales; not every prince would like to marry a princess.

The protagonists of the book are the prince and the knight, and the shadow king can be discussed whether he is a protagonist or a side protagonist. He is introduced early in the book, but his face does not appear visually until page 23. Rose (2012) refers to this as the spatial organization of an image and states how this can shift our perspective regarding who/where the focus should be. The Prince and Knight are often in front of the illustrations assuring that they are the main focus of the story, however when the shadow king appears, the spotlight shifts on him. Prince and Knight are still the main characters, but there is a little shift on who has the “spotlight”. These changes in perspective are used to highlight certain elements, and guide the reader to focus on those elements. In addition to the size of the subjects, that also differs from page to page. The size of the characters changes regarding to the perspective of the story or the focus. Occasionally, Prince and Knight are small and almost distant on the page, whilst on contrasting pages they are zoomed in on and seek to grab the readers whole attention.



Figur 4 - Depiction of racial diversity



Figur 5 - The Shadow King, p. 23.

The Prince and Knight are married which makes us think that they could be anywhere from 18 years up. One can assume that they are young male adults. The illustrations are not overdetailed, but enough to see the characters facial expressions. An example is when the prince and knight first face the Shadow King; he looks miserable and sad (p. 23), but this changes when he has received acknowledgement from the Knight.

While it is not the primary focus of this thesis, it is important to note that this text includes various ethnic and racial diversities. The book is not only inclusive in queer representation. The first page of the book has the text "Their love for one another inspires everyone in sight" illustrated with a (figure 4) brown and white girl holding hands in addition to a tall brown girl and white boy holding hands. We can also see characters from another book that Daniel Haack has written; *Maiden & Princess*, which is my other chosen book for this thesis. They appear both at the wedding on page 3, and the maiden is also present in the battle against the monster and the beast. There is also an indication that girls are part of the battle against the beast because of the maiden and someone depicted with long braids (does not have to mean that this is a girl, but it is an indication). The Shadow King has long, straight and white hair. He is wearing a pink almost kimono like suit. He can remind us of an old, enchanted wizard and the text tells us that the world has turned against him because of the way he dresses and speaks; "I used to be happy, but soon the world turned against me, for the way I dress and speak" (p.23). Together with his appearance this can indicate that he liked to dress different from others in the kingdom which we can also see by how the others in the kingdom dress. It is certain that he did not feel that he "fits in" with the others and therefor was forced to vanish into the mountains. Another visual aspect of the tale is displayed on the front and back hard.

We can see how the Shadow King has red eyes and is alone amongst the monsters on the front while on the back cover he is holding hands, standing in between the prince and knight, together with a colourful rainbow (p.26). This is an explicit symbol that can be connected to the gay pride flag, which reflects the diversity of the LGBTQ community.

The book thus does have explicit symbolism and illustrations regarding that this is a queer children's book. The story of the Prince and Knight is explicit in the pictures and text of how in love they are. The fact that they get married and illustrations of them holding hands, saving each other and hugging are indicators that they are a homosexual couple. The use of pronouns "he" indicates that they preferably are cisgender homosexuals. The pronoun "he" is also used for the shadow king; which means that this book could be criticized of not including any gender neutral pronouns. *Tale of the Shadow King* ends the story with a double page picture of the Shadow King himself and the squire with a child. Together with the text "He was welcomed to their home and built his own family" (p. 31). These last pages can be a representation of a non-heteronormative family and lets students acknowledge diverse family-dynamics, which fosters LGBTQ+ inclusive teaching.

4.2 Analysis – *Princess & Maiden*

Maiden & Princess was published in 2019 and written by Daniel Haack and Isabel Galupo with illustrations by Becca Human. This picturebook is very similar to the first *Prince and Knight* fairytale but instead of a homosexual relationship it portrays a lesbian one. It has a third-person objective point of view indicating a neutral narrator. The maiden and other ladies of the village are invited to a ball by the king and queen to find a match for their son. We are early introduced to the maiden who is the main protagonist of the story together with the princess. Together with the illustrations and words of the text we get the sense that she is tough and brave compared to the other maidens (p.6). The maiden soon figures out that the prince is not the one for her and meets the princess, which turns out to be the love of her life. Like the previous picturebook I will use Rose's (2012) visual methodology framework focusing on the composition, perspective, and visual meanings of the picturebook.

The section below describes the Maiden and how she is perceived differently from the other females in the kingdom. She is described and illustrated as brave, tough and more masculin dressed. On most illustrations she is pictured together with a red dragon, almost like her pet. A red dragon in fairytales can symbolize good fortune and is often a symbol used in weddings and other celebrations to encourage happiness and good luck. The maiden, unlike the other girls of the village, is not exactly excited to be invited to the ball. We can see this in her face (p. 4), together with the text "except for one young maiden, who wasn't that excited."

She further explains to her mother that she sees the prince as a brother and there are pictures of him and her together going to battle. Her mother tells her to give it a go, and that "The prince might not be right, but you could meet the one." p. 8). Just focusing on this statement can already give us an indication that the prince is not the one for the maiden, but that there might be someone else. This can also indicate that her mother is supportive of her choice to not want to marry the prince.



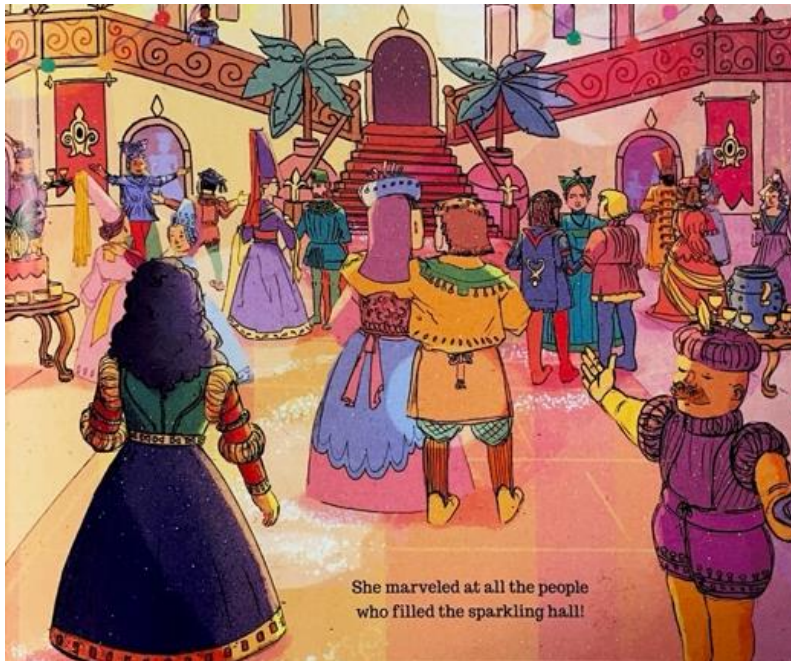
Figur 6 - The Maiden, p. 4

After the encouragement of her mother, she decides to attend the ball and starts with putting on a gown, p. 9. Before this she is depicted in armor with a helmet and sword. Wearing a gown is something that might be considered as more ladylike and something she might not be as comfortable in as in her armor. The maiden attends the ball in her gown and receives a lot of attention from the other villagers, p.12. She is asked to dance with the prince, but rushes out to get some air with tears in her eyes. That is when she meets the princess, who she is blown away by. Her tears disappear as she is approached by "a beautiful girl who emerged and took the maiden's breath away. She sat down close to the maiden, and asked if she could stay. (p. 19). From page 18 to the last page, 32, the princess and maiden are pictured together from sharing a kiss at the ball to more adventurous pictures of them playing with swords and bows and arrows (p. 30). The story ends with a double-page picture of them riding on the big red dragon into the sky with the text "When the day finally came to prove their love was true, the maiden and the princess happily said, "I do." (p. 31-32).

Maiden & Princess has many similarities to Prince & Knight series as they have the same author, Daniel Haack. They are both recommended for 4-6 but, like *Tale of the Shadow King* it has the same easy, short rhyming vocabulary which is appealing and useful to use in EFL classrooms. The opportunities to modify these picture books to fit different ages and for different focus areas is endless. The fairytale storyline is familiar to all students, including kings, queens, knights dragons and a love story. This lesbian love story between maiden and princess is just as needed as any other love story we see in other fairytales. The main goal of including such LGBTQ+ books is to expand the students' world of who they are and who they are surrounded with. The key difference between the first picture book and the second are the illustrations. Becca Human is the illustrator of *Maiden & Princess* and her illustrations are a lot more detailed compared to the Prince and Knight series. The focus of detail on the characters facial expressions are done carefully and are easy to "read" just by looking at their faces. These are hand drawn illustrations which then are scanned and coloured digitally. Most of the pictures are double-paged but there are some exceptions where there are small pictures or several illustrations on the same page. The colours used are very vibrant, sharp, and bold and add a lot of contrast between the characters and the background colour which is a crucial component of the images composition (Rose, 2012, p. 39). These vibrant and sharp colours can be used to stress certain elements of an image. It is clear the light follows the main character, Maiden. Some illustrations depict a spotlight-like light on her or her and the princess. In the beginning of the book on the first double page illustration, we are not yet introduced to the main character but if you look closely, you can see a beam of light hitting the maidens back head as she stands within the crowd of villagers (p.2). This is already indicating that it is her story we might follow. The light also represents that there is hope for the maiden, when she is at her lowest, and needs to leave the ball to get some air, we can see her looking out into space with a strong light beaming onto her face resulting in the meeting with the princess. The light, according to Rose (2012) is used to highlight elements and adds to the composition of the image.

As mentioned earlier there are a lot of details in these illustrations. It would be possible to understand a lot of the book just by looking at the details of the illustrations, including getting a sense of how the characters feel. Picturebooks make room for different interpretations and give each individual reader the possibility to imagine and make connections (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006). One can do this by studying the pictures, text or both together as a whole. This engages the reader to use different literacy skills, helping

them to create meaning in the EFL classroom. On page 10, when the maiden attends the ball you can see the princess standing from afar. Only the careful eye will be able to notice her, but she is already present in the story even though she has not yet been introduced with words. Other details on page 10 is that you can see another lesbian couple dancing amongst the many other couples dancing. The maiden is looking straight at them and shortly after needs to leave the ball. Maybe this couple helped her understand that she wasn't interested in the prince.



Figur 7 - Depiction of details, p. 10

The queer aspects of this picturebook are very explicit. It is early presented that the maiden finds the princess beautiful "A beautiful girl emerged who took the maiden's breath away. She sat down close to the maiden. And asked if she could stay." (p. 19) In addition to them sharing a kiss as "they held each other close as they spun across the floor. And when they shared a kiss? Their hearts began to soar." (p. 27-28) It is explicitly shown in the illustrations and text that they are in love. The two's parents also seem quite supportive of them being in love displaying acknowledgement from family members. When the princess's parents find the two out on the balcony they "could feel the magic in the air. The queen said to the king. They're the perfect pair!" (p.23-24). The maiden's mother also seems to be supportive even before the maiden falls in love with the princess. She mentions to the maiden that she should attend the ball even though she doesn't want to. And says "Just go! And have a bit of fun. The prince might not be right, but you could meet the one." These examples showcase how family members are supportive of their daughters not falling in love with the opposite sex.

5 Discussion of Research Findings

In this chapter, I present and discuss the findings that resulted from my in-depth interview with my two teachers of a seventh-grade class, as well as the suggestions to include the *Tale of the Shadow King* and the *Maiden and Princess* as a tool for LGBTQ+ inclusive teaching. The results are analyzed in connection to relevant theory, including queer theory, queer pedagogy and LGBTQ+ inclusive teaching. As described in my methodology framework, the interview is conducted by using an ethnographic semi-structured interview in three stages: open coding, axial coding and selective coding. I have focused on two categories that represent my thesis and research questions: approaches to teaching LGBTQ+ Themes and topics and challenges dealing with LGBTQ+. By discussing these categories I will add implementation of the picturebooks as tools to include LGBTQ+ themes and literature.

5.1 Approaches to Teaching LGBTQ+ Themes and Topics

Both participants shared their experience regarding LGBTQ+ themes and topics in the classroom. According to their responses, LGBTQ+ topics and themes are not heavily prioritized. Throughout the interview it became clear that the (few) approaches being used were through literary books and texts, Open Dialogue and Conversation and Theme or Project Based Learning which this chapter has been divided in.

5.1.1 Literary Books and Texts

In the interviews, both teachers shared their experiences dealing with instructional teaching practices for promoting or including LGBTQ+ literature in the EFL classroom. Both teachers clearly state that they use little literature in their instructional practices including LGBTQ+. This was also evident in their general educational practice in all other subjects. Sarah, the English teacher came with one example where she has used an LGBTQ+ book in her English classroom. She came across this book through the website Skolestudio which is Gyldendals digital learning space, that a lot of schools now use instead of or in addition to textbooks. It was not her intention to include LGBTQ+ themes, but a by-product when finding text-material, -which was an extract on Skolestudio. She further explains how she read the extract with her students and how this initiated a meaningful discussion. Kumashiro (2002) states how literature can help students to realize varying representations of several identities and help them gain in critical thinking. By including literature with meaningful topics, such as LGBTQ+ themes, representation of LGBTQ+ individuals are provided and the reader can think and engage critically to the heteronormative thinking pattern. Another aspect of including such themes through literature is that it engages in learning a language naturally as the students learn about themselves and who they are as a person which is key to developing and thinking in a foreign language. Supplementing the texts with a guide with words and definitions regarding one's gender expression allowing individuals to place themselves on the chart gaining a more nuanced understanding of gender and sexual identity. This will help them to be aware of words and phrases that are masculine and feminine (Neto, 2018). This is something that Sarah did not mention through the interview but is something that can be discussed in more targeted grammar lessons as well. How the use of personal pronouns and how the Norwegian neutral gender-pronoun

hen and how this can be replaced with *they* in an English context. By exploring these grammatical aspects of pronoun it can teach us about ourselves as people and how we portray ourselves. In addition to reading the extract of the boy in the dress (Capitals?) Sarah explains how the children started to discuss that they should have a gender swap day:

We talked and discussed around this, and then there was a suggestion from the students that we should have a change gender day. That the guys boys should come in girls clothes and vice versa. But they quickly came to an agreement that we could not do this because we can actually wear different clothes anyway. And that some guys boys can wear girls clothes anyway ~~still~~. And that we should rather have a change style day.

This response from Sarah builds on several aspects of how literature creates a space for critical thinking and raising children's awareness of gender identity. It is interesting to see how reflected the students were on this even though they do not have a lot of LGBTQ+ representation at school. This was something that surprised Sarah and she mentioned that she was caught a bit of guard and proceeded to say that she in the future wants to include more literature as she saw how engaged the students became. It is important to state that both teachers were positive to using more literature, it is just something they have not prioritized. Teachers have different ways of doing their instructional practice and it is clear that literature is something that is not heavily focused on in Sarah and Gina's teaching. I was surprised by this and asked them several times, trying to investigate the use of literature in different ways. Why there is a lack of literature in their teaching can be discussed further and there can be several reasons for this. Through the interview it became very clear that Skolestudio is the main tool they use for planning and getting ideas for their teaching. Skolestudio provides extracts and examples of literature that can be used in teaching. It is then up to the teacher to do further research for classroom application. Sarah seemed to be very pleased with what Skolestudio provides and might not do further research than what is provided on the website. In addition to having little time to plan and find material, it might be seen as a more effective and easy solution to use what is already provided. This can become concerning when it effects the students learning. As stated in the core curriculum of identity and cultural diversity it is teachers' duty to ensure that pupils are confident in their language proficiency, that they develop their language identity and that they are able to use language to think, create meaning, communicate and connect with others. Language gives us a sense of belonging and cultural awareness (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p. 6). As literature can be used as a tool to fulfill this core goal of the curriculum it can become critical for students that are not exposed to it. Another reason to why there is a lack of literature might be that the teachers? they do not read themselves.. Sarah mentioned that she does not read a lot with the students because a whole book can be very time-consuming and since the students are at such different reading levels it can be difficult to find the time and appropriate book to grasp all the different reading skills that the students have. Also finding a book that encourages them can be challenging, as students have different interests. Research by Crawley (2020) and Lester (2014) argue why using LGBTQ+ literature can help all students to feel validated and appreciated, knowing that there is someone out there just like you. There is a need for providing windows and mirrors for your students as Ryan & Herrmann-Willmarth (2018) and Rudine Sims Bishop (1990) emphasize. By including LGBTQ+ literature you are providing both mirrors and windows of something other than the heteronormative

society, which is one of the key elements to queer theory. To challenge, represent and include different identities letting lets students experience and see diversity. When engaging with picturebooks and including all segments of society, such as LGBTQ+ themes authenticity will help the students to understand their world (Lechner, (1995). It is important for all children, no matter their gender identity, to be exposed for marginalized groups. As children´s literature often mirrors and represents childhood, it needs to reveal them interacting with and representing the full scope of gender identities. Sarah mentioned how she worked with books and the extracts that came from Skolestudio, regardless of LGBTQ+ themes. This roused my curiosity and I asked how she worked with literature in the classroom:

We did that together. And then we spoke about the chapter and had discussions around it. There are a lot of resources available for this book, including a website specifically for this book. On the website it includes a description of the characters and a mind-map. We discussed the characters and what they think of them, before we read the actual book. They were pretty informed about the book, before we started reading.

In this example the students read the whole book, where they read some parts together and have homework for the next lesson so that they could talk and discuss what they had read in the next lesson and then to continue reading it together aloud. The fact that the students engage with the book before they start to read is a good way to activate them and help to start their thinking process. It is powerful to include larger books this way, and if done regularly teachers can increase their length, difficulty and introduce more advanced themes and subjects.

5.1.2 Open Dialouge and Conversation

Apart from elaborating on using LGBTQ+ literature in the classroom, both teachers recognize that LGBTQ+ topics occur regularly throughout the school day. One of the first examples that came through during the interview is how the use of homo as a swearword opens up for conversations about LGBTQ+ topics. The teachers explain how they use this to talk about why it should not be used, how they do this is uncertain:

But at the same time, it is something that is mentioned regularly. Just like how homo is a swearword used boys. And that is something we have talked a lot about. We have talked about why it shouldn´t be used as a swearword.

A study by Slåtten, Andersen & Fosse (2007) showcase how words such as homo are common around children´s playgrounds. They continue to explain how it is important to talk about not using these words, however it is even more important to talk about the less visible aspects of heteronormativity which are often more difficult for teachers to include. From the interview, it does seem that there is a link between how the teachers talk and open up about LGBTQ+ topics and the study by Slåtten, Andersen & Fosse (2007). It can be very alarming but crucial for those students that might identify as LGBTQ+ as the only time they are represented in the classroom is by stating that it should not be used as a swearword. If this is the case teachers are being hold accountable for not fulfilling the core curriculum about identity and diversity. This is very alarming and can play a crucial part in the lives of students who identify as LGBTQ+. It is

also thought for students that do not identify as LGBTQ+. The representation they get from this marginalized group is that they are not to use it as a swearword. This results in a lack of fair representation and students will continue to be stuck in a framework of a heteronormative society. By including aspects of queer theory in the curriculum, teachers can be held accountable and have a responsibility to consider and include visibility of LGBTQ+ identities. The heteronormative classroom does not make room for this and this has negative consequences for LGBTQ+ students which is why following these norms need to be challenged and awareness created.

Both Sarah and Gina did give other examples that did not include using swearwords in an open dialogue or conversation. Sarah mentions for example that LGBTQ+ topics are more present in other subjects, and not so much in English. She mentions the use of girls and boys groups several times:

We have several times had girls and boys groups for example. Where we talk about everything, that is everything from, well this. Puberty, well is very relevant for this age group... The students come with anonymous questions on a piece of paper and put it in a box. And then each take one question and read it out aloud. Those are often about menstruation and related topics. But sometimes deeper questions appear (such as?), and I think they really appreciate those. They are allowed to write down anything they want to, anything they are curious about. And then often there is a little bit about sexuality.

Nelson (2006, 2007, 2009) emphasizes the necessity for open dialogue and conversations in the EFL classroom on subjects about gender and sexuality. The fact that Sarah opens up and reads every question from the box anonymously can create a safe space to discuss, reflect and shed light on LGBTQ+ topics. That is if the questions and answers are spoken about in a respectful and open way and not stigmatizing LGBTQ+. Having girls and boys groups can be a good approach but can also create difficulties if some students identify as non-binary. The participants have a very close relation to their students and this also contributes in creating a safe space for sensitive discussions. Exactly what discussions is a topic I could have elaborated on when having the interview. The teachers do mention that sexuality and puberty are themes that often occur. Sarah explains how she thinks that the children come more to them than their parents to talk about these issues. Gina follows up with saying:

Hmmm, we have a very open dialogue about most stuff, maybe it is easier. You do not go to your mum and dad about these things. That is just embarrassing for some.

I follow up with asking what are these "things" that you talk to them with. Gina replies "puberty and sexuality".

Another conversation point that we discussed was talking about family dynamics. I asked them how representing diverse family dynamics can contribute to normalizing LGBTQ+ topics from an early age. Sarah explains that she talks a lot about it at home with her own children and goes on reflecting about the feelings and emotions students connect to LGBTQ+ themes. That she emphasizes how "no feeling is wrong, and that feelings can change, and they can change several times through life". According to Ryan & Herrmann-Willmarth (2018) there are three entry points that can be used to promote inclusive LGBTQ+ teaching: Connecting to the diverse families in your classroom and school,

responding to instances of bullying around LGBTQ+ identities and discussing LGBTQ-related current events. From the interview we can conclude that both Sarah and Gina are on the path of using two of these entry points in creating conversations about LGBTQ+ themes and topics. It seems that they have included these aspects in their teaching, how frequently or effectively can be questioned though.

5.1.3 Themes or Project Based Learning

Both Gina and Sarah share explicitly that they tend to teach LGBTQ+ topics through project-based learning, specifically connecting it to social science and SMISO. Sarah refers to SMISO twice through the interview. SMISO is a helping center for incest and sexual assault that offer schools a program in grades 2 and 5. The program aims at preventing domestic and sexual assault in addition to giving teachers and students the tools to talk about their experiences. It is interesting and a bit disturbing that Sarah associates LGBTQ+ themes to SMISO which is not really connected, or at least not in queer theory. This can reflect on the lack of knowledge that teachers have on LGBTQ+ themes. Kumashiro (2002) states that the problem lies when society continues to privilege one group, supposedly hetero-cisnormative individuals, whilst marginalizing the other through for example SMISO. I believe that Sarah connects SMISO to LGBTQ+ themes because these types of issues regarding sexuality are present during the program. It can be seen as alarming if students are only engaging with questions of sexuality during a 4 hour lesson by an organization that is focused on preventing sexual assault. What message does this send out to and about LGBTQ+ individuals? That they are only to be represented when it has to do with violence. This is extremely stigmatizing and can result in othering LGBTQ+ individuals. Teachers should rather engage in changing their practices, moving away from such project-based learning and let students question and raise awareness for how some individuals are privileged and others marginalized in society. It is important to not only rely on these projects as that will be the only connection that students will make with LGBTQ+. It is crucial that teachers represent marginalized groups through their teaching and not just associate it with one theme. By queering the curricula for example. To use real life situations and classroom situations as a starting point. Let the students see that this is part of our everyday life, that we are part of a diverse society where nobody is the same. Using real life situations will help your students see and find connections to what they already know and are familiar with, and to expand this knowledge (Ryan & Hermann-Willmarth, 2008). Sarah concludes her statement about SMISO by saying:

We have talked about it, it is talked about regularly, but it is probably more theme-related than it is part of our everyday teaching.

This statement continues to underline that including LGBTQ+ is not something they prioritize and how it is talked about as a theme or project. Both Sarah and Gina mention social science as a subject where LGBTQ+ themes are included. Gina uses the term "it" when she speaks about LGBTQ+:

We have spoken about it a lot. Especially on sexuality and puberty in autumn. We go through a lot of different words that we write on the board on these themes, that they feel are close to them, and that they relate to puberty. I write down everything, but we did touch on this. That it shouldn't be used as a swearword. Because there can be someone sitting in the classroom. And yes, both lesbian and homo was something they took quite seriously.

Again, the use of it not being a swearword comes up again. As well as words such as sexuality and puberty. A lack of understanding around LGBTQ+ results in the teachers associating it with puberty, sexuality and homophobic slurs.

5.2 Challenges Dealing with LGBTQ+ Themes and Topics

Both participants shared their experience with challenges they face when implementing LGBTQ+ themes and topics in the classroom. All challenges are connected to the lack of teacher knowledge.

5.2.1 Lack of Knowledge and Teacher Unawareness

The main reoccurring challenge that stood out the most throughout the interview is the lack of knowledge and awareness when it came to LGBTQ+ themes and topics. This is stated explicitly by the teachers, but also due to them connecting LGBTQ+ to SMISO, puberty, matureness, and swearwords as a lot of their answers consist of these, which is connected to the lack of understanding of terms and knowledge. There is a clear lack of professional development and both Sarah and Gina mention that they do not recall having any LGBTQ+ topics at university, which is one of the main practices that Murray (20015) advocates for. The knowledge they have about these themes comes from their own experiences and basic knowledge. However, Gina does express that it is important to shed light on LGBTQ+ themes:

Well, I do feel it is important, to shed light on those themes, of course. The knowledge we have is really just basic knowledge and from our own experiences, really.

Sarah continues with:

It really depends on us, really. Up to what we know. I did not learn anything about it at university either. Not, that I can remember, no.

I continued the interview with asking them whether the administration emphasize including LGBTQ+ themes. Where Sarah answers "No, it really isn't". When there is a lack of prioritizing from the administration together with the lack of explicitly stating to include LGBTQ+ themes in the new curriculum, LK-20, the responsibility falls on the teachers as individuals. Like Sarah and Gina state "It really depends on us, really". The new curriculum, LK-20 does, however include the word *mangfold*, diversity in Norwegian (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p. 5). Which of course not only represents including different ethnicities, races and disabilities, but also means including identity LGBTQ+, and gender diversity. As the curricula has become more open-ended and does offer possibilities for including any topics that teachers consider relevant. What is relevant then depends on the teachers values and perspectives. The new curriculum might also become too broad for some teachers, making it difficult for them to narrow down specific goals for their students, which can result in them finding "premade" lesson plans like Skolestudio offers, or in textbooks. According to Smestad (2018) LGBTQ+ themes and topics are not included in English textbooks. Which then results in a complete neglect of representing LGBTQ+. This neglect results in promoting only hetero- and cisnormative practices which prevents teaching about social justice, based on human rights and equality. Ryan & Hermann-Willmarth (2018) emphasize the importance of having knowledge about intersectionality and how this can help including diversity when

using representations in your classrooms. Sarah and Gina do not mention anything about diversity or identity (except when brought up by interviewer) in relation to the curricula, but Sarah does mention health and life skills and how this can fit under LGBTQ+ themes. Health and life skills is part of the core curriculum of Health and Life skills (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p. 14) which describes that the school shall give the pupils exposure to classes that promote physical and mental health. As well as it explicitly uses the words sexuality and gender to be discussed as part of these classes. The connection that Sarah makes is not until the very end of the interview and can be a result of discussing LGBTQ+ themes. This is a step towards Ryan & Hermann-Willmarth's (2018) shift of perspective when understanding LGBTQ+. Gaining awareness of who people are, how they live and whom they love. Gina elaborates how she is open to gaining more knowledge and mentions how she has had experiences with not being able to answer students when they have come across these topics:

We came across these topics. And they are curious, and sometimes they educate me, more than I can educate them. Difference in pan and bi for example, I couldn't give them a good answer on this, but some of the students could.

In addition to Sarah's experience with the students discussing the need of a gender swap day which points to the students being more enlightened than the teachers are. By introducing picturebooks like *The Shadow King* and *Maiden & Princess*, from an early age, students and, in this case, teachers can prevent that these situations occur. The lack of professional development is again present in this situation and reflects how the students are more aware of that gender is a societal ideology and how this is not defined by items of clothing. Teachers need to have knowledge of using the right terms and terminology when bringing LGBTQ+ themes and topics to the classroom. When teachers are lacking the knowledge, it can result in disrespect and further misrepresentation of the LGBTQ+ community. Using authentic picturebooks written by authors who themselves are part of the LGBTQ+ community can gain with the "insider" perspective, representing true, authentic voices. The co-author of *Maiden & Princess*, Isabel Galupo is a queer, part-Filipina, Jewish woman with three moms and a dad. Having this knowledge of her intersecting identities results in a more authentic perspective of the book. *Princess & Maiden* has illustrations of different intersecting identities and by bringing this to students at an early stage makes them more aware how identities can intersect. It is important for teachers to use books like this to fight against heteronormative expectations and roles in society

5.2.2 Puberty and Maturity

The interview participants shared their opinion on whether LGBTQ+ themes and topics should be implemented in primary education. Gina elaborated how there is a gap in maturity and how this can be a challenge when educating LGBTQ+ themes and topics in elementary grades:

Well, there is a big gap in terms of maturity, with the class I have now. Some are more open and receptive than others. Some don't really know what you are talking about and are not quite able to connect it to anything and are unable to deepen their understanding when we are trying to teach, so it is the gap of maturity that might be a challenge, at such grades. Because most of them are 12 years. But at the same time I feel they are very much more aware, like, when

we were young. When we were 12, we had never heard about this before. But they are way ahead of us now.

Gina's statement on that there is a gap in maturity is of course relevant. All students are not the same and some are more mature than others. However, this does not mean that they are too young to learn and understand diversity of sexual identities. As WHO (2011) claims children should be educated at ages 4-6 that it is possible to fall in love with the same sex and gain positive gender identity. And by ages 9-12 children should learn that there can be differences in gender identity and biological gender. The statement of Gina's can again result in a lack of understanding of LGBTQ+ themes and topics. In addition to this statement, both teachers connect LGBTQ+ to puberty and that these themes are talked about when discussing puberty in social science. In relation to this it can be mentioned that these teachers connect LGBTQ+ topics to sex education. This can alienate the central theme of implementing LGBTQ+ topics as it is more about identity rather than sexual practices. Ryan & Hermann-Willmarth (2018) present that we need to shift the perspective of understanding LGBTQ+ away from sex and towards who people are. To let students think about their own identities and participate in challenging the heteronormative thinking patterns our society is built up on. By including *The Shadow King* and *Maiden & Princess* students will be shown a same-sex romance between two human characters which proves that this can be done in a way accessible for kids. Daniel Haack states his books are really about bravery and young love, and that it doesn't unnecessarily scandalize the romance at the center of it at all. Teachers that connect LGBTQ+ topics to sexual education can be quite misleading and several studies show that sexual education in Norway is quite poor. Using the right terminology and terms is something that might result in teachers not daring to advocate LGBTQ+ themes and topics, but it is important to note that one can come a long way with being aware that there is diversity in gender and sexual identities. Such as by acknowledging and representing these, as by for example in *Tale of the Shadow King* and *Princess & Maiden*.

5.2.3 Students Foul Language Use

Studies by Smestad (2018) and Røthing (2007) show that heterosexuality is privileged in Norwegian schools. It is not the teachers' intentions but homosexuality is often "othered" and appears invisible compared to heterosexuality. This is also documented in several international studies. The studies done by Smestad (2018) and Røthing (2007) discuss situations where homonegativism and homophobia are expressed in the classroom, and that homophobic slurs and attitudes are present. It presents how teachers deal with these verbal or violent outbursts. Some of the results are reflected in my interview with the participants. It is clear that students' foul language regarding LGBTQ+ themes and topics are something the teachers see as a challenge, but also use it as an opening to start conversations about LGBTQ+ topics. Sarah states:

But at the same time, it is something that is mentioned regularly. Just like how homo is a swearword used within, well by the boys. And that is something we have talked about a lot. And we have talked about why it shouldn't be used as a swearword and so on.

The statement carries on after I asked them how they address these swearwords. If they address it in the playground directly, or if they bring it into the classroom and discuss it there. Sarah continues with:

Well we do both. We have, had, well it is a long time since we have had it now, but we have several times had girls and boys groups for example. Where we talk about everything, that is everything from well this. A lot of these types of themes.

Gina provides to the discussion with:

We take it very seriously. Because when it is used, in a connection with verbal abuse, we strike down quit harsh.

Sarah talks about how she strikes down on verbal abuse when it happens, but also uses boys' and girls' groups to discuss these types of themes. In Røthings (2007) study it is mentioned how grouping the students in girls and boys groups can attribute to the problem as boys may want to prove their "masculinity" more than if they were in mixed groups. These homophobic attitudes may be more present because they are attempts to produce and portray their own masculinity by marking distance from stereotypical notions of homosexuality, especially by boys. Gina states how she strikes down on verbal abuse very seriously. An important note in the discussion is when these swearwords are being used. When being used in the classroom it becomes more clear who said what and it is easier for the teacher to have control over the situation, in contrast to when it happens in the playground or outside of school when teachers might "brush over" the situation. An important factor to prevent these types of homophobic attitudes is to give students access and representation of LGBTQ+ representation from an early age. Participating in not othering homosexuals and acknowledging diverse sexualities and identities. *Tale of the Shadow King* and *Princess & Maiden* are examples of literature that can include these representations of LGBTQ+ individuals. However, homophobic attitudes and outbursts can still occur and teachers need to have the knowledge on how one should deal with this. The organization FRI has information on how teachers can react to these types of situations by addressing the person with "what you said now, what did you really mean?" This will help the students to be aware of the meaning and message behind the outburst and signals what attitudes one has. My participants attitudes towards inappropriate language is something that they take very seriously and that it is their responsibly to spread awareness about not using these types of words. They deal with it both when it has occurred and use it as an opening factor for LGBTQ+ themes and topics. However, if these are the only situations where they discuss LGBTQ+ themes, it can give a misguided signal that contributes to othering LGBTQ+ individuals, because it connects with verbal abuse.

6 Conclusion

In this chapter I will describe the main findings, limitations and further research. My thesis has described some of the approaches teachers use to include LGBTQ+ themes and topics in primary education. I have also covered some of the challenges teachers face when implementing these. Finally, I looked at how teachers can promote more LGBTQ+ inclusive teaching, by implementing the picturebooks *Tale of the Shadow King* and *Maiden & Princess*.

6.1 Main Findings

The overall main finding of this thesis is the lack of knowledge teachers have on LGBTQ+ themes and literature. From the interviews it shows that teachers were not able to grasp the concept of LGBTQ+ themes and topics. My knowledge and research of using LGBTQ+ themes and topics in the classroom has contributed to gaining awareness in implementing diversity in relation to sexual orientation and gender identity. The interview data resulted in gaining awareness of teachers' attitudes and perspectives and the results indicated that they do not prioritize LGBTQ+ themes and topics. These findings can be results of low LGBTQ+ content specified in the curriculum (LK20), and due to low presentation in the material provided to the teachers (Skolestudio), except from one example that has been discussed in the previous chapters. These materials continue to follow the heteronormative society resulting in representations of only hetero- and cisnormative examples and excluding and othering LGBTQ+ representations from the classroom. These findings can also be a result of a lack of professional and pedagogical support from the administration and teacher education. Both participants stated that it was up to themselves, if they were to prioritize LGBTQ+ themes and topics. However, both had positive attitudes gaining more knowledge on these topics. Another main finding is students' awareness of the topic. In contrast to the teachers, it was clear that their students understood the social constructions of gender. This finding can have results to how today's children are more consumed with inclusive materials, such as LGBTQ+ individuals. TikTok, has for example become an app that children spend a lot of time on and I consider that this has an effect of including and portraying LGBTQ+ identities. Thus gaining an awareness and acknowledgement of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities that their teachers have not yet experienced. When it comes to the challenges teachers meet in the education system, one of the main findings is again connected to the lack of knowledge teachers have on these topics, in relation to them connecting these topics to puberty and maturity as well as using students' foul language as a starting point for LGBTQ+ themes and topics. My findings and conclusions in relation to my research questions (1) Investigate the use of LGBTQ+ texts, topics and themes in the EFL classrooms and (2) Exploring the challenges faced when implementing LGBTQ+ texts and topics have resulted in similar findings by Anicic (2020), that there is a lack of knowledge on LGBTQ+ themes in primary education. However, my study adds to the important field of gaining awareness and that there is a need of implementing LGBTQ+ themes and topics to the classroom. Arriving at a more inclusive classroom that represents all aspects of our diverse society. Through my analysis and discussion of *Tale of the Shadow King* and *Maiden & Princess* by Daniel Haack I have (3) contributed to the

discourse of LGBTQ+ literature for future implementation by showing how these books can be used as a tool for LGBTQ+ inclusive teaching.

6.2 Limitations and Further Research

This masters thesis is limited due to teacher's individual and subjective experiences with using LGBTQ+ texts and topics. Therefore, it is difficult to draw any generalizations and the findings are partly contextualized and subjective. In addition the number of participants is not very representative, as I only was able to interview two teachers in primary education. My aim was, however, to explore approaches and investigate challenges that teachers face when implementing LGBTQ+ themes and topics; and future research could be explored. An interesting perspective would be to include more participants from different areas in Norway, to see if there is a difference in approach and challenges within different regions. This will make the sample size larger and allows for more generalization. Another interesting perspective would be to observe and interview the teachers over a longer period of time in relation to how they deal with these topics and if there is correlation to practice and belief. Observation gives the opportunity to discover how teachers and students act in the classroom, when engaging with LGBTQ+ themes and topics. The chosen picturebooks, *Tale of the Shadow King* and *Princess & Maiden* are only two of many LGBTQ+ contemporary picturebooks, and by including these, students and teachers are only scratching the surface of LGBTQ+ inclusive teaching and there is therefore a need for more LGBTQ+ literature in the classroom. Diversity and intersectional identities within the LGBTQ+ community is still needed to be represented in order to break and challenge heteronormativity in classrooms. Although my thesis is somewhat limited, there is absolutely a necessity for more research on how LGBTQ+ themes and topics can be implemented in the future to help teachers awareness and knowledge of the topic.

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Appendices

Appendix A Interview Guideline

Background of teacher

1. How old are you? *Hvor gammel er du?*
2. How long have you been working as a teacher? *Hvor lenge har du jobbet som lærer?*
3. What grades have you previously taught? *Hvilke trinn har du nylig undervist i?*
4. How many credits to you have in the English subject? *Hvor mange studiepoeng har du I Engelsk faget?*
5. To what extent do you use literature in your teaching on topics such as race/LGBTQ+/culture themes? *I hvilken grad bruker du litteratur til å undervise om temaene rase/LGBTQ+/kultur?*
 - What tools do you use? *Hvilke metoder bruker du?*
 - Any methods you use more than others? (Why/Why not?) *Noen metoder du bruker mer enn andre? (Hvorfor/Hvorfor ikke?)*
6. Have you had any professional guidance (example course) in teaching on LGBTQ+ themes? *Har du fått noe veiledning eller profesjonell hjelp til å undervise LGBTQ+ temaer?*
 - Please describe your experience. *Vennligst forklar dine erfaringer og opplevelser.*

Perspectives and Beliefs

7. Which elements do you find difficult or challenging when teaching about LGBTQ+ themes? *Hva synes du kan være utfordrene når det gjelder å undervise LGBTQ+ temaer?*
 - Parents, religion, time, knowledge, priorities?
8. Why do you (not) feel it is important to use LGBTQ+ themes in your practice? *Hvorfor føler du (ikke) det er viktig å bruke LGBTQ+ temaer I din undervisning?*
 - Elaborate on the benefits (Har det noe fordeler å bruke LGBTQ+ temaer I undervisning? Forklar hvorfor/hvorfor ikke.
9. Have you encountered any observations/interactions with other colleagues/pupils when it comes to including LGBTQ+ themes or materials? *Har du opplevd/sett noen kollegaer/elever inkludere og eller bruke LGBTQ+ temaer eller materialet? (eksempel, homofobisk, elever/kolleger/administrasjonen snakke om seksuell identitet?)*
 - Please elaborate on your experiences. *Vennligst utdyp dine opplevelser*
10. What are your experiences with teaching LGBTQ+ themes?
 - Explain experiences you have had with your colleagues, pupils?
11. Do you think it is needed to have conversation with parent before implementing LGBTQ+ topics? Why/why not? *Synes du det er nødvendig å snakke med foreldre på forhånd av bruken av LGBTQ+ temaer I din undervisning? Hvorfor/Hvorfor ikke?*

Instructional Practice

12. How do/would you implement LGBTQ themes into your everyday teaching of English? *Hvordan ville du/bruker du å integrere LGBTQ+ temaer til å lære elever engelsk?*

13. What would the goal of the lesson be (learning goals) *Hva ville blitt læringsmålene for timen?*
14. What other references than textbooks could be used to integrate LGBTQ+ themes? *Hvilke andre kilder enn lærebøker kan du bruke for å integre LGBTQ+ temaer?*
 - Is it hard to find other material? *Er det utfordrende/vanskelig å finne kilder utenom lærebøker?*
15. Have you prioritized teaching/using LGBTQ+ themes in your instructional practice? Why/why not? *Føler du at du har prioritert å undervise LGBTQ+ temaer I din undervisning? Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke?*
16. Do you read any books that feature LGBTQ+ characters to your class? *Har du lest noen bøker med LGBTQ+ karakterer i?*
17. When you have taught about LGBTQ+ themes, have you focused on the whole community or mainly on the lesbian/gay community? *Når du har undervist om LGBTQ+ tema, har du undervist om kun det lesbiske og homofile miljøet eller også det biseksuelle, tran og andre skeive?*
18. Is it easy and comfortable for you to address questions your pupils may have when implementing LGBTQ+ topics? Is it easy (or difficult), explain why. *Føler du deg komfortabel med å svare på spørsmålene elevene dine har når det gjelder LGBTQ+ spørsmål?*

Appendix B Information and Letter of Approval

Informasjon om forskningsprosjektet

«Holdninger og perspektiver med bruken av LHBTIQ+ tema og litteratur i klasserommet»

I dette skrivet gir vi deg informasjon om målene for dette forskningsprosjektet og hva prosjektet innebærer for deg.

Formål

I dette forskningsprosjektet ønsker jeg å finne ut hvilke holdninger, erfaringer og perspektiver du har når det gjelder LHBTIQ+ temaer i klasserommet. Formålet med denne masteroppgaven er å finne ut hvilke tanker du som lærer har rundt dette temaet. Jeg ønsker å bruke deg som intervjuobjekt til innsamling av min data. Det innebærer et intervju med deg som blir anonymisert. Forskningsområdet mitt har tre hovedfokus:

1. Undersøke bruken av LHBTIQ+ litteratur og temaer i klasserommet
2. Utforske eventuelle utfordringer knyttet til bruken av LHBTIQ+ litteratur og temaer i klasserommet.
3. Bidra til diskursen om LHBTIQ+ litteratur for fremtidig pedagogisk implementering.

Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?

Norges teknisk-naturvitenskapelig universitet (NTNU) er ansvarlig for prosjektet.

Hvorfor er du inkludert i studien?

Du er inkludert i denne studien fordi du er engelsk lærer som jeg ønsker å samle inn data fra. Du er utvalgt til denne henvendelsen fordi du er lærer på den skolen jeg har fått tillatelse til å innhente data fra.

Hva innebærer prosjektet for deg?

For å utføre dette intervjuet vil jeg bruke en diktafon som vil ta lydopptak. Intervjuet vil inneholde tre ulike deler:

- Bakgrunn av lærer
- Perspektiver og holdninger
- Undervisningspraksis

Jeg vil ha intervju spørsmålene foran meg på et ark, men vil oppfordre til enn samtale hvor jeg er interessert i å høre om dine erfaringer og opplevelser knyttet til LHBTIQ+ temaer og litteratur. Intervjuet vil foregå på norsk, men vil bli transkribert til engelsk.

Du kan protestere

Du kan når som helst protestere mot at du inkluderes i dette forskningsprosjektet, og du trenger ikke å oppgi noen grunn. Alle dine personopplysninger vil da bli slettet. Det vil ikke ha noen negative konsekvenser for deg hvis du velger å protestere.

Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger

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

- Det er kun jeg, Ida Marie Haug Knipscheer og min veileder Jade Dillon som vil ha tilgang på dataen.
- For å anonymisere intervjuet vil jeg bruke en fiktiv skole i Trondheim slik at det ikke vil være mulig å gjenkjenne dine personopplysninger.
- Du vil ikke kunne bli gjenkjent i en eventuell publikasjon
- Lagring av data vil være i NTNU sin OneDrive hvor kun jeg som student har tilgang med brukernavn og passord

Hva skjer med opplysningene dine når vi avslutter forskningsprosjektet?

Opplysningene anonymiseres når prosjektet oppgaven er godkjent, noe etter planen er 25.06.2022. Personopplysningene og opptaket vil bli slettet ved prosjektslutt. /

Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg fordi forskningsprosjektet er vurdert å være i allmennhetens interesse, men du har anledning til å protestere dersom du ikke ønsker å bli inkludert i prosjektet.

På oppdrag fra NTNU har NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Dine rettigheter

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

- å protestere
- innsyn i hvilke personopplysninger som er registrert om deg
- å få rettet personopplysninger om deg,
- å få slettet personopplysninger om deg, og
- å sende klage til Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger.

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

- Forsker i prosjektet:
Ida Marie Haug Knipscheer
48112709
idamarieknip@gmail.com
- Prosjektansvarlig:
Jade Dillon
jade.dillon@ntnu.no
73592141
- Vårt personvernombud
Thomas Helgesen
thomas.helgesen@ntnu.no
93079038

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

- NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS på epost (personverntjenester@nsd.no) eller på telefon: 53 21 15 00.

Med vennlig hilsen

Ida Marie Haug Knipscheer
Forsker

Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet *holdninger og perspektiver med bruken av LHBTIQ+tema og litteratur i klasserommet*, og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til:

- å delta i et intervju
- at intervjuet kan bli brukt til denne forskningsoppgaven

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

(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

Appendix C NSD Approval

Meldeskjema for behandling av personopplysninger

22.05.2022, 12:20

[Meldeskjema](#) / [Masteroppgave: Perspectives and attitudes on the use of LGBTQ+ t...](#) / Vurdering

Vurdering

Referansenummer

200235

Prosjekttittel

Masteroppgave: Perspectives and attitudes on the use of LGBTQ+ texts in the EFL classroom

Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon

Norges teknisk-naturvitenskapelige universitet / Fakultet for samfunns- og utdanningsvitenskap (SU) / Institutt for lærerutdanning

Prosjektperiode

20.10.2021 - 25.05.2022

[Meldeskjema](#) 

Dato	Type
16.12.2021	Standard

Kommentar

Det er vår vurdering at behandlingen vil være i samsvar med personvernlovgivningen, så fremt den gjennomføres i tråd med det som er dokumentert i meldeskjemaet den 16.12.2021 med vedlegg, samt i meldingsdialogen mellom innmelder og NSD. Behandlingen kan starte.

TYPE OPPLYSNINGER OG VARIGHET

Prosjektet vil behandle alminnelige personopplysninger og særlige kategorier av personopplysninger om seksuell orientering frem til 25.05.2022.

LOVLIG GRUNNLAG

Prosjektet vil innhente samtykke fra de registrerte til behandlingen av personopplysninger. Vår vurdering er at prosjektet legger opp til et samtykke i samsvar med kravene i art. 4 nr. 11 og 7, ved at det er en frivillig, spesifikk, informert og utvetydig bekreftelse, som kan dokumenteres, og som den registrerte kan trekke tilbake.

For alminnelige personopplysninger vil lovlig grunnlag for behandlingen være den registrertes samtykke, jf. personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 a.

For særlige kategorier av personopplysninger vil lovlig grunnlag for behandlingen være den registrertes uttrykkelige samtykke, jf. personvernforordningen art. 9 nr. 2 bokstav a, jf. personopplysningsloven § 10, jf. § 9 (2).

PERSONVERNPRINSIPPER

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

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

DE REGISTRERTES RETTIGHETER

<https://meldeskjema.nsd.no/vurdering/6167e783-caf4-499b-b676-7efe9becdb0b>

Side 1 av 2

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

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

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

FØLG DIN INSTITUSJONS RETNINGSLINJER

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

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

MELD VESENTLIGE ENDRINGER

Dersom det skjer vesentlige endringer i behandlingen av personopplysninger, kan det være nødvendig å melde dette til NSD ved å oppdatere meldeskjemaet. Før du melder inn en endring, oppfordrer vi deg til å lese om hvilken type endringer det er nødvendig å melde:

<https://www.nsd.no/personverntjenester/fylle-ut-meldeskjema-for-personopplysninger/melde-endringer-i-meldeskjema>

Du må vente på svar fra NSD før endringen gjennomføres.

OPPFØLGING AV PROSJEKTET

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

Lykke til med prosjektet!

