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Perceptions of Self-Selected Texts in the EFL Classroom

Master's thesis in Primary and Lower Secondary Teacher Education for Years 5-10
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Abstract

With the implementation of the new curriculum (LK20), self-selection and texts in general have received an enhanced position. Because this is a new position, there are still several aspects of self-selection that have not yet been investigated. Previous research mainly considers high school and college students who have English as their first language. Additionally, the research is limited to books, which excludes a great variety of sources for self-selection. This research aims to consider those who will be affected by this new and enhanced position and therefore investigates teachers' and students' perceptions of self-selected texts in the English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom through surveys, focus groups, and interviews. While the participants see the value and benefits that arise from self-selection, they still consider the challenges to be bigger than the advantages. However, this research paper argues that such opinions stem from a lack of experience and knowledge of how one could implement self-selection in an EFL classroom. The purpose of this master's thesis is therefore to turn this conception and find possible ways to work around the encountered challenges. In order to do so, a thematic analysis has been conducted on the collected data. From the analysis it is clear that students want to choose for themselves, however in order to not become overwhelmed by the choice, they prefer to choose from a limited selection provided by the teacher. Although teachers, as well as some of the students, seem to have a relatively broad interpretation of the term "text", they all seem to narrow the term to only include books whenever "self-selected" is put in front of it. Adjusting this would address some of the teachers' main concerns regarding implementation, such as the issue of time. Through this research paper, I have not tried to find one "right" way to implement self-selection, but rather suggest a few possible options that counter what have been presented as challenges by those who participated in the study.

Key words: Self-selection, EFL classroom, autonomy, texts, reading

Sammendrag

Med implementeringen av ny læreplan (LK20) har selvvalg og tekster generelt fått en styrket plassering. Fordi dette er en ny stilling, er det fortsatt flere aspekter av selvvalg som ikke er undersøkt. Tidligere forskning tar i hovedsak for seg elever på videregående og høyskoler som har engelsk som førstespråk. I tillegg er forskningen begrenset til å gjelde bøker, og utelukker dermed en stor variasjon av kilder for selvvalg. Denne forskningen tar sikte på å ta de som vil bli berørt av denne nye og forsterkede posisjonen i betraktning, og undersøker derfor læreres og elevers oppfatninger av selvvalgte tekster i EFL-klasserommet gjennom spørreundersøkelser, fokusgrupper og intervjuer. Mens både lærere og elever ser verdien og fordelene som oppstår ved selvvalg, anser de likevel utfordringene som større enn fordelene. Denne forskningsoppgaven argumenterer imidlertid for at slike oppfatninger stammer fra mangel på erfaring og kunnskap om hvordan man kan implementere selvvalg i et EFL-klasserom. Målet med denne masteroppgaven er derfor å snu denne oppfatningen, og finne mulige måter å omgå utfordringene man møter. For å gjøre dette er det gjennomført en tematisk analyse av de innsamlede dataene. Av analysen er det klart at elevene ønsker å velge selv, men for å ikke bli overveldet av valget, foretrekker de å velge fra et begrenset utvalg gitt av læreren. Selv om lærere, så vel som noen av elevene, ser ut til å ha en relativt bred tolkning av begrepet «tekst», synes de alle å begrense begrepet til kun å inkludere bøker når «selvvalgt» står foran. Å justere dette vil være til fordel for noen av lærernes hovedbekymringer angående implementering, for eksempel spørsmålet om tid. Gjennom denne forskningsoppgaven har jeg ikke forsøkt å finne én «riktig» måte å implementere selvseleksjon på, men heller foreslå noen mulige alternativer som motvirker det som har blitt presentert som utfordringer av studiens deltakere.

Nøkkelord: Selvvalg, EFL klasserom, autonomi, tekster, lesing

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List of Abbreviations (or Symbols)

EFL	English as a Foreign Language
NDET	Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training
L1	First Language
NSD	Norwegian Centre for Research Data
TA	Thematic Analysis
L2	Second Language

1 Introduction

The complexity of today's society has created a greater need for increased language skills. The availability of more rapid communication and transportation technologies has made it easier to travel and communicate with people who do not share one's language. Additionally, extreme weather, war, and persecution have made such global communication necessary. In turn, students' perceived need for English has changed. In Norway, the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (NDET) is responsible for supervising education and the governance of the education sector. Their objective is "to ensure that all children, pupils and apprentices receive the high quality education they are entitled to" (NDET, 2022, p. 1). To obtain this objective, the national curriculum is regularly revised and renewed to reflect society and its developments. Through use of the ever-developing technology, students have easy access and are constantly exposed to a significant amount of texts, including multimodal ones. This development, as well as the desire to create independent students, has contributed to provide self-selection with an enhanced position in the most recent curriculum (LK20).

Regarding the English subject, the school is supposed to teach English to students in a way that is relevant for their future work life, as well as their present daily lives and in society. Maagerø and Tønnessen (2022) argue that due to a complex world and its many challenges and conflicts, it is more important than ever to achieve high standard communication in English. Additionally, the authors argue that the English subject should be taught in a way that fosters cultural awareness and enables global communication (Maagerø & Tønnessen, 2022, p. 28). Young people of today are exposed to a great extent of English language through internet, social media, computer games, with and by their peers and so forth. Maagerø and Tønnessen (2022) further explain that because this is a language students are surrounded by at most times, and not only exposed to in school, some scholars consider it a second language instead of a foreign one (p. 27). With English being such a dominant language, it has shown itself as an everyday element in most young people's lives. This fact might serve as a motivation for many students to develop their English language competence.

According to the Ministry of Research and Education (2019), as described under the English subject's core elements, "Language learning takes place in the encounter with texts in English" (p. 3). The Norwegian curriculum for the English subject provides the term "text" with a broad definition and includes contemporary and historical texts that can be both formal and informal, printed and digital, spoken and written, graphic and artistic as well as fictional and factual. They further emphasize that texts can contain and combine different forms of expression to strengthen the message the author wants to present, such as "writing, pictures, audio, drawings, graphs [and] numbers" (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p. 3). Working with texts in English is supposed to enable students to deal with different ways of living, thinking, and communicating. This is achieved by interpretation, reflection, and critical assessment of different types of texts that promote knowledge of culture and society, which in turn develops intercultural competence.

The Norwegian curriculum promotes four basic skills that the English subject should help students develop. In addition to writing, oral and digital skills, reading is one of these. According to the Ministry of Research and Education (2019), reading in the English subject means that students should be able to understand and reflect on various types of texts. Additionally, reading should contribute to language acquisition as well as reading pleasure. The curriculum further highlights that through working with English texts students will encounter texts that are multimodal. Multimodal texts can present competing messages, and students are supposed to benefit from various reading strategies to retrieve information that contributes to understanding both implicit and explicit content.

The creators of the curriculum have pointed out a need and provided a space for more advanced English skills. Nevertheless, teachers and students are the ones who will be affected by it. While the curriculum requires teachers to provide students with opportunities to work with self-selection, it has no explicit directions as to how this should or could be conducted. This leaves teachers with a lot of individual freedom to decide and figure out the construction themselves. Although this can be seen as a positive aspect that allows the teachers to create a self-developed project based on their information and knowledge of the students, it could also pose some challenges. Without any previous experience or guidance as for how to complete such a project, teachers might feel insecure and unsupported in the implementation of a project that someone else placed upon them. During such a project, students will also be trusted with a lot more freedom and responsibility to manage and participate in decision-making in their own education.

After looking through various online libraries of education research, such as *ERIC, ORIA,* and *Google Scholar*, I have found that most research regarding self-selection addresses students in high school or university. It seems as though more research has been conducted on self-selection concerning students who have English as their first language, compared to EFL students. Additionally, the research focuses on benefits of providing choice and self-selection, and few researchers discuss the selection process in itself. Often the research seems to be limited to books, excluding other types of texts such as poems, comics, and social media texts. With this in mind, I suggest that there is a gap in the research which I would like to help fill by investigating the perceptions of EFL students in middle school (8-10) regarding self-selected texts with a specific focus on the process of selection. In order to do this, I will through this study present previous research conducted on the subject, a theoretical framework that includes relevant and important aspects such as literacy, reading, different types of texts, and motivations to read. Furthermore, I will present the data and results obtained through student questionnaires, focus group discussions as well as interviews, and discuss them in relation to the aforementioned theoretical framework.

2 Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, I will present some relevant theories that cohere with the topic of my paper. Firstly, I will present previous research on the field and address the gap that is missing between research and today's practice. Second, I will introduce theory regarding reading and the benefits and challenges that follow. Third, I will turn the focus to providing choice in the classroom and including our students in said choices. Lastly, I will discuss different types of texts and possible ways to work with them within a self-selection project.

2.1 Literature Review

This literature review will briefly discuss what has been investigated, however a more detailed description will be provided in section 2.6., *Working with Texts*. Most research regard high school or college students with English as their first language and focuses on books. Additionally, there is limited research on the process of selecting.

In his research, Furr (2004) elaborates on the use of literature circles in an EFL classroom where students have been assigned different role sheets, and with them different perspectives to read the text from. The study was conducted with Japanese first and second year college students, where the students were put in small groups with the purpose of reading, discussing, and reflecting on a book. The book was chosen for them by their teacher, and the different groups usually read the same book. Although Furr (2004) describes the positive outcome his students had from such literature circles, he does not include anything about the selection of books. Nor does he include a justification for why he chose to have the texts chosen for the students instead of by them, as was the case in the list of key ingredients that he used as a starting point.

Hsu (2004) implemented literature circles in his college classroom to counteract what he refers to as unsuccessful college education that turns students into book haters. His literature circles are based on the same key elements as Furr's (2004) and the author highlights the benefits the various discussion roles bring. While Hsu's (2004) implementation occurred in an L1 (first language) classroom, he strongly expresses that he believes it is equally possible and valuable to integrate in an EFL classroom. The author claims that choosing books is the first and most important step for both teachers and students. He further suggests three questions to consider, that teachers can ask themselves before providing books for students, or could aid teachers while consulting students about books. However, Hsu (2004) also argues that these questions can become possible self-directed questions guiding students to choose their own books. The first question suggests that content matters: "Does the book succeed in arousing learners' emotions?", the second concerns whether students can easily understand and assess the book: "Is the book well written?", and the last question determines whether the students are able to relate the book to their lives outside of the classroom: "Is the book meaningful?".

Dickerson (2015) implemented 10 to 15 minutes of reading zone at the beginning of all her lessons in a high school classroom. Students chose their own books, either from the classroom library or they could bring their own. To find suitable books for her classroom

library, Dickerson (2015) tested two students who read with ease, two students who struggled, and two in between to find their reading level. Throughout the process, students kept track of their reading (titles, genres, minutes and pages read) in a notebook. They were encouraged to ask each other for recommendations and could abandon a book whenever they wanted. However, reading zone was sacred – everyone had to read in addition to talk and write about their books. Dickerson (2015) argues that starting all classes like this creates a routine that students find comforting and provides a sense of security. She further expresses that, due to choosing their own books, students are highly engaged which in turn limits usual classroom disruptions such as talking (Dickerson, 2015, p. 7). The information retrieved from the initial test, performed to reveal students' reading levels, was used as a foundation to build a classroom library. While this ensures that students have books that fit their reading proficiency, the author does not provide any information on whether effort was made to find books that would also appeal to the students' interests.

Morgan and Wagner (2013) designed a three week choice reading unit where the teacher applies minilessons with important concepts such as point of view, plot, and conflict. Students are asked to keep a journal where they apply and reflect upon the concepts from the minilessons, as well as participate in short conferences with their teacher to discuss the same topics. The students are allowed to choose their own books and they can be either fiction or nonfiction, the only requirement is that the book must be approved by both the teacher and the student's parents. The article does not include any information as to what would make a book not approved.

2.2 Literacy

Maagerø and Tønnessen (2022) claim that to what we mean by "literacy", historical, cultural, and semiotic changes in texts are significant (p. 27). The authors explain that literacy regards how we make sense of the world and manage our lives. They refer to UNESCO (2018) who argue that learning is closely connected to literacy, because it "empowers people, enables them to participate fully in society and contributes to livelihoods" (UNESCO, 2018 in Maagerø & Tønnessen, 2022). Both in print and digital media, verbal communication is closely intertwined with other modes which means that mastering today's textual word includes more than words and sentences. Texts that students encounter, both in and outside of school, are multimodal and consist of language and other meaning making resources such as "images, colours, sound, music, numbers, graphs, etc." (Maagerø & Tønnessen, 2022, p. 28). The authors argue that in today's English language classroom, literacy means learning to speak, read and write English and highlight that reading and producing multimodal texts are part of this. The change from a sentence focus to a text focus in English language learning generated an awareness of how texts consist of more than just words and sentences. Texts construe different representations of the world, and students need to understand that the choices of semiotic resources used in such texts are motivated by interest "as people and groups define the world in ways that can befit them (Maagerø & Tønnessen, 2022, p. 29).

2.3 Reading

In the Norwegian curriculum, under basic skills in the English subject, reading is described as "understanding and reflecting on the content of various types of texts on paper and on screen" (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p. 4) and is supposed to contribute to "reading pleasure and language acquisition" (Ministry of Education and

Research, 2019, p. 4). Furthermore, it is specified that through reading, students should work with and locate information from multimedia texts and develop reading strategies to understand explicit and implicit information. According to the subject's different competence aims, students are supposed to read and work with various types of texts including fiction and factual texts in addition to self-chosen texts.

Cambria and Guthrie (2010) argue that there are two sides to reading and that one of those is often neglected. One side consists of the skills needed to read, such as vocabulary, word recognition, and phonics, while the other side incorporates the will to read. By "will" the authors indicate motivation and explain that this includes the student's enjoyments, desires and behaviors regarding reading. Cambria and Guthrie (2010) further state that a skilled student might be capable to become a reader, but without the will they are not going to because "It is her will power that determines whether she reads widely and frequently and grows into a student who enjoys and benefit from literacy" (Cambria and Guthrie, 2010, p. 16). To further elaborate on their arguments, the authors describe three powerful motivations that drive students' reading and explain that by motivation they refer to an individual's behaviors, beliefs and values encircling reading. The three motivations that affect students' reading are: (1) interest, (2) dedication, and (3) confidence. Whether these versions of motivations come in a positive or a negative form impacts whether they drive the students towards reading or push them away. Cambria and Guthrie (2010) claim that "An interested student reads because he enjoys it; a dedicated student reads because he believes it is important, and a confident student reads because he can do it" (p. 16). According to Cambria and Guthrie (2010), these motivations are independent and a student can, for example, be interested in reading, but lack the dedication or the confidence to put hard work into it. Another factor that contributes to whether or not students will put effort into their reading is to what extent they understand the texts they read.

Allington and Gabriel (2012) underline the importance of students understanding the texts they read and argue that this is the goal of reading. To further strengthen their claim, they refer to research that shows that "reading at 98 percent or higher is essential for reading acceleration. Anything less slows the rate of improvement, and anything below 90 percent accuracy doesn't improve reading ability at all" (Allington & Gabriel, 2012, p. 12). The authors compiled six elements of effective reading instruction that every child should experience every day. They underline how these implementations neither require a lot of money nor time, but will profoundly benefit the students. While there are a total of six elements, I have chosen to only include and focus on the three first elements that I consider to be the most relevant for this paper. Namely, that: (1) Every child reads something he or she chooses, (2) every child reads accurately, and (3) every child reads something he or she understands (Allington & Gabriel, 2012, pp. 10–13). Allington and Gabriel (2012) question how one textbook can meet all students when, for example, a fourth grade classroom has students who read from everything between second and ninth grade reading levels. They advocate for self-selection and argue that this will help the students read texts on their level which in turn will help develop their reading skills. By following the first element, where students are supposed to read something he or she chooses every day, students will also "develop the ability to choose appropriate texts for themselves" (Allington & Gabriel, 2012, p. 11), which the authors argue is a key skill that will influence and increase the likelihood of students reading outside of school. This skill coheres with both element number two and element number three. Allington and Gabriel (2012) contend that what determines a student's progress in reading is not only hours spent reading a book, but rather the extent and magnitude of

high-success reading (p. 12). They further elaborate by saying that it is likely that a successful and a struggling reader who engage in the same book for 15 minutes will not receive the same outcome or equivalent practice.

According to Pustika (2018), reading interest and reading comprehension has a positive relationship. She elaborates that when students are highly interested in a topic they will read texts that are beyond their level, however if the interest in the topic is low, students might even consider a text below their grade level as too difficult. The author further cites Arias (2007) and proposes some criteria for the teacher to consider when choosing a text. They are all related to either the student or the text and are intended to aid the selection of appropriate texts. Elements that consider the students are interest, level, needs, and background knowledge, while those related to the text are authenticity, relevance and content (Pustika, 2018, p. 74).

2.3.1 Struggling Readers

Guthrie and Davis (2003) argue that the traditional way of describing a struggling reader fails to recognize that the student is disengaged from literacy. While struggling readers have been perceived as low achievers who lack cognitive competencies such as reading comprehension, reading fluency and word recognition, the authors suggest a more fitting definition: "Those who are disengaged from reading activities that are related to schooling" (Guthrie & Davis, 2003, p. 61). These students often struggle with motivation and have low confidence in their reading as well as demonstrate what Guthrie and Davis (2003) call self-handicapping strategies which enable them to explain their poor achievement with lack of effort rather than lack of intelligence or worth as individuals (p. 60). Students' intrinsic motivation tends to decrease as they raise in grade level. While this could be caused by several things, Guthrie and Davis (2003) suggest the difference in classroom practice as one possible source (p. 64). Middle school classrooms often provide fewer opportunities for self-management, choice and student decision making, and are often more teacher-directed than student-centered. However, what struggling readers need is support for their autonomy and decision making, which Guthrie and Davis (2003) argue comes from allowing and providing students with some control over important aspects of their learning (p. 68).

2.3.2 Motivations To Read

According to Guthrie and Davis (2003), a primary challenge for middle school teachers is to re-engage students to reading. They suggest six classroom environment characteristics that aid in the achievement of reading competence and foster engagement:

1. Knowledge goals. This includes constructing teaching objectives in a way where the goals emphasize students' understanding of meaningful material, which is significant for motivation and cognitive strategy learning.
2. Real-world interactions. The authors argue that students should be provided with opportunities for sensory interactions with real objects as they appear in their natural environment.
3. An abundance of interesting texts. Teachers should teach from an abundant supply of books and keep in mind that diverse material which focuses on content that deals with real-life problems are valuable.
4. Autonomy support. Students should be allowed to exercise some feelings of control and choice over their reading activities.

5. Strategy instruction. Students should be provided with a direct strategy instruction such as scaffolding, modeling and guided practice with feedback.
6. Collaboration support. All students deserve to feel a sense of belonging in the classroom and should be provided with opportunities to interact with peers to learn.

(Guthrie & Davis, 2003, pp. 71–77)

In order to fully benefit from the advantages that self-selection brings, teachers should keep these six elements in mind while planning for such a project.

As previously mentioned, Cambria and Guthrie (2010) claim that there are three powerful motivations that drive reading: (1) interest, (2) dedication, and (3) confidence. Researchers often connect interest to intrinsic motivation, which as for reading will mean that a student read for the sake of reading – because it is something they enjoy. Cambria and Guthrie (2010) argue that the motivation that has the most significant impact on reading achievement is to believe in yourself and to have confidence as a reader. They further elaborate that students who successfully read one page will be confident that they are capable of reading the next as well. However, students who struggle to read a page will doubt their abilities to read the one following. According to Cambria and Guthrie (2010), the biggest problem for lower-achieving students is that they often exaggerate their limitations which eventually will make them stop trying and retrieve from all situations where they are asked to read. Because the curriculum might demand students to perform activities that do not promote their interests or build their confidence, Cambria and Guthrie (2010) argue that dedication is severely important. To support their claim, the authors explain that dedication is connected to will and therefore argue that every student has the potential to be dedicated. A dedicated student is often recognized and characterized by their ability to persist, plan and put priority on their reading. In order to contribute to reading pleasure, a favorable way of creating motivation amongst students are by making the texts relevant for the students and providing choices. This will be further discussed in the following section, *Providing Choice in the Classroom*.

2.4 Providing Choice in the Classroom

Beymer and Thomson (2015) argue that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation tend to co-exist in the classroom. As students progress in school, their need for autonomy increases. However, schools tend to tighten control and reduce choice at this time. The authors argue that providing more choice in the classroom strengthens intrinsic motivation and interest considerably (Cambria and Guthrie, 2010, p. 110). They further refer to the self-determination theory and claim that in order for students to experience social development and growth, their needs for autonomy, competence and relevance must be met. Autonomy refers to the need for having some control and decision over things that concern oneself. Beymer and Thomson (2015) argue that experiences that promote feelings of autonomy can enhance intrinsic motivation. Such experiences could be acknowledgement of feelings, opportunities for self-direction and choice. The authors further elaborate that when students understand the value of the task they are asked to complete, they will feel autonomous. According to Beymer and Thomson (2015), students who are provided with opportunities to choose demonstrate self-regulated learner behaviors and are more persistent. To further support choice in the classroom, the authors describe it as unreasonable to expect students to participate in a functioning society after blindly following directions throughout all school years.

According to Allington & Gabriel (2012), the experience of choosing in itself ignites motivation (p. 11). A common misunderstanding amongst teachers is that sustained

silent reading where the students choose their own texts, is the only way of providing choice. However, Cambria and Guthrie (2010) highlight that several mini choices can be implemented to allow students to express preferences that might spark their motivation. Beyond choosing their own text, such choices can consist of choosing whether to partner-read or not, or specialize in a specific character or concept. Merkler (2017) suggests that many teachers have a desire to empower students' choices while also being able to monitor their decision-making (p. 19). She argues that by allowing students to exercise control over their reading, it is probable that motivation and engagement will build. To motivate students for reading as well as allow them to exercise control, Merkler (2017) supports other researchers and claims that teachers should allow students to self-select texts. In order to implement this successfully, the classroom environment needs to be autonomy-supported. For teachers to be able to support their students in becoming independent, they need to know their students and their interests. Hsu (2004) argues that providing choice not only increases motivation in students, but also lifts the burden of forcing knowledge upon students who are unwilling to accept it from teachers.

While several researchers argue that student-centered classrooms which endorse autonomy will increase student motivation, there are some that suggest too much choice might be followed by negative consequences (Beymer & Thomson, 2015, p. 106). Students who have prior knowledge about a task will feel competent and experience higher motivation when provided with opportunities to choose. However, for students who lack confidence in a task, choosing might seem overwhelming and when forced to they might experience a decrease in their motivation. Students might experience the phenomenon termed *choice overload* which indicates that too much choice can create feelings of regret that stem from being overwhelmed (Beymer & Thomson, 2015, p. 111). To avoid feeling overwhelmed, students might prefer choosing from a smaller set of items rather than a big one. Additionally, experiencing time constraint on their choice might provoke increased regret and less satisfaction. However, Dhar et al. (2000) argue that limited time to choose might provoke students to choose more extreme choices that better fit their interests (in Beymer & Thomson, 2015, p. 113).. Without the time constraint students have the opportunity to contemplate their choice and often end up picking a compromise option (Dhar et al. in Beymer & Thomson, 2015, p. 113).

2.4.1 Including Students in Choosing

Álvarez (2012) argues that an important goal in second language acquisition is learner autonomy (p. 104). She further explains that the usual assumption is that students achieve better while actively participating in the learning process. Hsu (2004) agrees with this and claims that allowing students to execute self-selection provides them with a real purpose to commit and invest themselves which in turn will make them both highly motivated and engaged readers (p. 6). To elaborate on the engaged reader, he describes four qualities they possess: (1) They are motivated to choose, and read for a variety of purposes, (2) they are knowledgeable to retrieve information from text and apply it in various contexts, (3) they are strategic to interpret and comprehend the text, and (4) in the process of constructing and extending meaning, they are socially interactive and share and communicate with others (Hsu, 2004, p. 6).

Allington and Gabriel (2012) also support the benefits of self-selection and claim that it boosts motivation. They further explain that if students initially have trouble choosing a text that fits their reading level and interests, the teachers can provide a few options to choose from. Doing this for their students allows teachers to "guide them toward successful reading experiences" (Allington & Gabriel, 2012, p. 11), as well as help them

develop the skills needed to choose appropriate texts for themselves at a later stage. This will in turn increase the probability of students continuing to read outside of school as well. According to Sewell (2003), students need to be involved in their reading in order to become successful readers. For students to become lifelong readers who enjoy reading, student interest and choice should be an integral part of the reading program. Kragler (2000) suggests that self-selection allows students to be more involved in the learning process which sparks an interest in as well as develops ownership of the reading process (as cited in Sewell, 2003, p. 5). Students prefer to read books they can make personal connections to, or that meet their personal interest or expertise in a way. However, books that embody their ethnic, linguistic and cultural identities are also highly regarded by students.

2.5 Texts

According to the Oxford Learner's Dictionaries (n.d.), a text is any form of written material. The Purdue Online Writing Lab (n.d.) agrees that this is the usual definition, however, they add that in rhetorical terms "text" can be understood as any form of communication that humans create. They further describe that whenever humans engage in any form of communication, a text can be seen as the vehicle transporting the meaning from one person to another.

2.5.1 Multimodal Texts

Maagerø and Tønnessen (2022) express that today's digital learning materials have great potential for language learning, and further argue that any material brought to school could have in specific contexts (p. 28). To elaborate, they mention texts such as "short stories, poems, picture books, newspaper articles, films, documentaries, advertisements, and also material from students' out of school activities such as music videos, YouTube videos, games, texts from social media, etc." (Maagerø & Tønnessen, 2022, p. 28). Anstey and Bull (2010) argue that in total there are five semiotic resources: linguistic (spoken and written language), audio (use of volume, pitch and rhythm), visual (still and moving images), gestural (movement of body such as facial expressions and body language), and spatial (use and organization of a space). In order for a text to be multimodal it needs to combine at least two of these systems. A multimodal text can be presented through various media or technologies such as live, digital electronic or on paper. In other words, multimodal texts require students to simultaneously utilize various interpretation tools to understand and critically assess them.

2.5.2 Literary Texts

According to Khan and Alasmari (2018), literary texts have an important role in learning English. To justify their argument, they refer to Moody (1971) who claimed that "the study of literature is fundamentally a study of language in operation" (Moody, 1971 in Khan & Alasmari, 2018, p. 167), and can fit into any language methodology. They further allude to Collie and Slater's (1990) four essential reasons to implement literary texts which say that they provide "profitable and authentic material, language enrichment, personal involvement and cultural improvement" (Collie & Slater, 1990 in Khan & Alasmari, 2018, p. 167). To explain the relevance of such texts, Brumfit and Carter (1986) argue that "literature is an ally of language" (Brumfit & Carter, 1986 in Khan & Alasmari, 2018, p. 168). In other words, literature helps students learn the language. To emphasize the benefits of literature in the classroom Lazar (1993) presents five reasons to convince teachers to integrate literature in their English language teaching: (1) it

expands students' language awareness, (2) encourages language acquisition, (3) develops students' interpretative abilities, (4) is motivating material, and (5) educates the whole person (Lazar, 1993 in Khan & Alasmari, 2018, p. 169). Khan and Alasmari (2018) further present significant benefits to implementing literature such as how it increases creativeness, stimulates students' critical thinking skills, promotes tolerance and fosters students' reading skills as well as interest and involvement with the texts. Unlike most textbooks, authentic materials are rich sources of figurative language and contains "beautiful sentences, idiomatic expressions, interesting proverbs, and suitable vocabulary items filled with connotative meanings" (Khan & Alasmari, 2018, p. 171). Floris (2004) agrees with this and expresses that because literary texts are not created to aid the purpose of teaching, the language used is far more varied and rich (p. 2). Furthermore, Floris (2004) and Khan and Alasmari (2018) agree that literary texts help develop formulating sentences and generate curiosity.

Floris (2004) claims that many features of the language, such as different ways of connecting ideas or the formation or function of sentences, are displayed at many levels of difficulty (p. 2). Khan and Alasmari (2018) describe that authentic texts allow students to discover different language patterns regarding how to build a sentence or a paragraph, and motivate learners to explore, criticize or ask questions (p. 171). Besides language enrichment, Floris (2004) argues that compared to informative texts, literary texts contain three other distinctive qualities, namely cultural enrichment, authentic material and personal involvement. The author describes literature as a doorway into other cultures, that allows them to "see a world through another's eyes, observing human values and a different kind of living" (Floris, 2004, p. 2). This will broadly enhance their understanding and awareness of social, political, historical and cultural events happening in different societies. In other words, reading literary texts broadens students' minds and cultural understanding. Additionally, the author points to literature's habit of addressing common themes and values, as well as genres, conventions and devices that are recognizable from the students' first language. Such authentic material might address real-world concerns in a range from "individual concerns to social issues such as death, love, pollution, [and] ethnic conflicts" (Floris, 2004, p. 2). The authenticity of literary texts, which are real language in context, makes them suitable and valuable for language teaching. As for personal involvement, the themes addressed in literary texts are often universal and relatable to the students. This will help them develop their emotional awareness as well as their critical abilities and imagination. However, personal involvement will also increase students' pleasure in reading which in turn might spark an intrinsic motivation toward reading. While these qualities might make us conclude that literature includes many benefits, Floris (2004) highlights that the most important justification is one of Lazar's (1993 in Floris, 2004) reasons - it educates the whole person.

2.6 Working with Texts

While working with and creating texts, students are asked to interpret and utilize semiotic resources to ensure that the text's intended meaning is clearly conveyed. This includes assessing whether, and if so, which semiotic resources should be combined to achieve the desired outcome. By asking students to redesign semiotic resources in text, they obtain "insight into the potential of meaning-making systems and the power of choice" (Maagerø & Tønnessen, 2022, p. 31). When students are aware that people make meaning through more than language, they also gain insight of the potential, for

example, gestures, intonation, and voice quality have in meaning-making in all digital and printed texts.

2.6.1 Literature Circles

For centuries, adults have enjoyed discussing and reflecting on books in book circles, however, Furr (2004) refers to various researchers who argue that the same enjoyment, passion and excitement for books are nowhere to be found when students are asked to read and discuss texts. In his article, he promotes literature circles and includes Daniels' (2002) 11 key ingredients for such circles, and suggests four adjustments for implementation in an EFL classroom. The original features will be presented subsequently, with a star to mark the four Furr (2004) suggests need some alteration before being integrated in an EFL classroom:

1.* Students choose their own materials
2.* Small temporary groups are formed, based on book choice
3.* Different groups read different books
4.* When books are finished, readers share with their classmates, and then form new groups around new reading
5. Groups meet on a regular, predictable schedule to discuss their reading
6. Students use written or drawn notes to guide both their reading and their discussion
7. Discussion topics come from the students
8. Group meetings aim to be open, natural conversations about books, so personal connections, digressions and open-ended questions are welcome
9. The teacher serve as a facilitator, not a group-member or instructor
10. Evaluation is by teacher observation and student self-evaluation
11. A spirit of playfulness and fun pervades the room.
    (Daniels, 2002 in Furr, 2004, p. 4)

Furr (2004) highlights that he does not disagree with this list, however, he suggests that the first four ones should be revised such before being implemented with EFL students:

1. Instructors select materials appropriate for their student population
2. Small temporary groups are formed, based on student choice or the instructor's discretion
3. Different groups are usually reading the same texts
4. When books are finished, readers may prepare a group project and/or the instructor may provide additional information to "fill in some of the gaps" in student understanding.
   (Furr, 2004, pp. 4–5)

Furr (2004) further argues that the magic of such literature circles is the different roles that enable students to read the text from different perspectives as well as ensure that students have an "expert area" to bring and present in the group discussion. By assigning the students different roles they are given a clear purpose for reading the story which simplifies the outcome they are expected to obtain which might make the group discussion less intimidating.

Hsu (2004) also builds on the premises of Daniels' key ingredients, but refers to Daniels' 1994 publication instead of the 2002 revision. Hsu (2004) also includes a twelfth element, suggested by Daniels, that ensures that students rotate the different discussion roles. There are four required roles: The *discussion director* is responsible for igniting the

discussion by asking important questions and retrieve comments from other members. The *literary luminary* should present memorable passages of text that are "interesting, powerful, puzzling, thought-provoking, or important" (Hsu, 2004, p. 3). The *connector* is supposed to connect ideas, people, relationships or places to things outside of the text. Last of the required roles are the *illustrator*, who are bringing a graphic dimension to the discussion by sketching, making graphs, stick persons, draw comics, or so on, that the other members can try to analyze or find the meaning of before the artist reveals their reasoning. These four roles will benefit the discussion in addition to offer four different reactions to the text: analytical, oral, associative and symbolic. Hsu (2004) expresses that for L2 (second language) learners, two additional roles would be beneficial and of significant importance. The role of the summarizer might activate other members' prior knowledge about a specific text or topic, and the vocabulary enricher promotes newly encountered words, idioms and lexical phrases (Hsu, 2004, p. 3). The author argues that literature circles embrace two of the most important concepts in education: *collaborative learning* and *independent reading*.

Vygotsky's zone of proximal development is widely used to support and promote literature circles. This theory suggests that in collaboration with more capable peers, students can reach a level of potential development that is greater than the actual one determined by independent problem solving. Hsu (2004) proposes different activities that promote reading-writing connection and require students to share knowledge obtained from their books:

> Writing a song about your book, designing a map of the setting of your book, making puppets and writing a script from a scene you choose, creating a story banner from about an important aspect from your book, advertising the book, writing a new ending, and reporting an interview with a character. (Hsu, 2004, p. 5)

Hsu (2004) states that he believes literature circles are possible to implement in EFL classrooms, and refers to Nelson (1984) who has tried and succeeded with such. Nelson (1984 in Hsu, 2004) argues that L2 learners equally benefit from small group, fear-free discussions. The author further argues that with a multicultural class, the students' different funds of knowledge can severely enrich the discussion and bring valuable perspectives of various students' different worldviews.

2.6.2 Reading Zone

Dickerson (2015) implemented sustained silent reading in her classroom, but experienced that whenever asked to participate in such, her students expressed a dislike. She elaborates that this attitude probably comes from bad experiences with such, because when she changed the wording to talk about a reading zone, students exhibited a more positive attitude. Reading zone refers to a time dedicated to independent reading at the beginning of Dickerson's class. The students can either choose a book from the school library, which is based on their reading levels, or bring a novel from home. Students are provided with a notebook and are asked to use this actively while participating in the reading zone. In the notebook, students keep track of their reading and list the titles of the books they have finished as well as the date they finished and rate it by putting between one and five stars. Students are also asked to list and organize thinking stems, such as sentence starters, by level of difficulty. Three times a week, Dickerson asks her students to write journal entries about the book they are currently reading, starting their sentences with a thinking stem and being encouraged to challenge themselves with the level of difficulty. In addition, at the back of the classroom there is a colorful tracker that shows the different genres students read. One tracker that Dickerson

(2015) finds particularly valuable is also found at the back of the classroom. A running list of the titles of books read by the students including who read them. According to Dickerson (2015), this allows students to go to one another and ask for recommendations about books that are of interest to them (p. 2). Dickerson (2015) further established five rules that she argues help make reading zone successful for both her and her students:

1. A book is a book. Dickerson (2015) highlights that all students have different interests and therefore prefer different books and pleads that this should be honored by allowing them to read these without judgement.
2. I read, too. The author contends that it is best to lead by example and therefore when her students reads, so does she.
3. We talk about our books. This can either be by a short think-pair-share, as a transition from reading zone to class or by pulling a student aside recommending a book that could be suitable for them. Dickerson (2015) claims that this is also a good way to strengthen the teacher-student relation (p. 7).
4. We write about our books. The students have a notebook where they are asked to write about their reading. Dickerson (2015) states that most of these are based on reader-response theory which allows them to reflect, verbalize ideas and opinions as well as connect their independent texts to the curriculum (p. 7).
5. We are free to ditch our books. Because this segment of the class period is based on choice reading, students are allowed to ditch the books if they turn out to be of no interest after all.

2.6.3 Reading Workshop

Morgan and Wagner (2013) integrated self-selected reading in the latter's high school classroom, by implementing a reading workshop format. The goal was to investigate what it would take to help bring students back to reading for pleasure and for the sake of reading. Wagner's class consisted of students with various ethnic identities and reading proficiencies. The high school teacher found it difficult to teach this wide range of students and described a growing dilemma: "I found I was either simplifying a lesson to reach the lower learners or shooting over the heads of those students in order to challenge more advanced readers" (Morgan and Wagner, 2013, p. 661). To meet all his students' needs, Wagner wanted something that allowed more advanced students to select something that would challenge them, while also providing an opportunity for those who read below grade level to apply the concepts without feeling too overwhelmed. This resulted in a three-week choice reading unit. First off, Wagner wanted input on students' perceptions of the idea and proposed the project and asked for both benefits and drawbacks of it. Many students were thrilled about the idea, but had some concerns such as how it would be difficult for the teacher to know whether the students actually did their readings due to the lack of quizzes. However, most of the students considered the idea to be too good to be true and looked for a hidden trap. To ensure students learned different concepts of reading a book, he integrated 10 to 15 minutes mini-lessons about the following concepts: point of view, conflict, plot, direct/indirect characterization, mood/tone, flashback/foreshadowing and irony. During the minilessons students were asked to keep journals and apply the concepts to their reading. To further assess whether the students understood the different concepts and were able to apply them, Wagner conferred with his students and challenged them to find connections between the minilessons and their current book. Conferring with his students allowed Wagner to identify and help those who struggled with concepts, as well as challenge upper-level

students toward deeper thinking. Additionally, Wagner was able to give the students scaffolded instruction and target feedback that enhanced their understanding and aided their growth. As the unit progressed, students developed and became more comfortable with the conference, came better prepared and were able to better support their claims as well as apply the different concepts. While the teaching benefits of these conferences were significant, Wagner argued that he gained more than just his students' understanding of different concepts – he got to know his students better by taking "the time to give them choice, while also giving them the attention they deserved" (Morgan & Wegner, 2013, p. 664). Wagner learned that the three-week choice reading unit was beneficial for both struggling readers as well as those who read above grade level. The students who struggled allowed themselves to choose longer, more complex work because there was no book report to be graded on at the end of the unit. As for those who advance in reading, they were able to read more books in the time it would take their classmates to finish one. They were also encouraged to read more advanced books if they could easily get through a high-school level one, which allowed them to stretch their abilities and grow as readers without discouraging lower-level readers.

3 Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the methodology utilized to conduct this study. With the intention of investigating perceptions and possible experiences, I have decided to conduct a qualitative research study. Qualitative research aspires to understand how humans make sense of the experiences they encounter in life (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 24). In this case, I will investigate how teachers and students make sense of the experience of working with self-selected texts in English. Consequently, this chapter will present the methodology for my project which seeks to investigate teachers' and students' perceptions of self-selected texts in the EFL classroom. To accomplish this, I have designed the following research questions:

- How do students and teachers perceive the value of students selecting their own texts?
- What do students and teachers consider as challenges with self-selection and is it possible to work around these?
- What is needed to make the implementation of the self-selection process easier for both teachers and students?

In order to answer my research questions, I have collected data through a student questionnaire, semi-structured interviews with teachers as well as focus group discussions with students from eighth and tenth grade. By collecting three kinds of data, I am performing a triangulation which might increase confidence in the responses. This is because I have the opportunity to make students elaborate on the answers from the survey in focus group discussions. In addition, the teachers' responses can function as either support or counteract the students' responses. In other words, it made it possible to retest and compare the responses obtained for this study (This is further described in section 3.4, *Reliability and Validity*). It also allowed me to adjust and adapt the questions where needed before a following round of collection. The subsequent sections will account for the participants in the research, qualitative research methods in general as well as the use of questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions.

3.1 Qualitative Research Methods

Qualitative research is a broad term that consists of several, various techniques and methods. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) state that such research is "based on the belief that knowledge is constructed by people in an ongoing fashion as they engage in and make meaning of an activity, experience, or phenomenon" (p. 23). The method is beneficial for investigating new topics or comprehending complex issues. Not only self-selection of texts, but texts in general has obtained a new and enhanced position in the English subject curriculum in Norway. The Ministry of Education and Research (2019) claim that "language learning takes place in the encounter with texts in English" (p. 3), and underline how broad the concept of text is. Furthermore, it is specified in the core elements, that working with texts in English should help the students develop intercultural competence as well as insights into different ways of thinking and living in

addition to communication patterns (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p. 3). As this is a new position, little research has been done on this field. Therefore, conducting a qualitative study will be beneficial because it provides an opportunity to dig deeper into a carefully chosen group of people's perceptions and experiences with self-selection. According to Hennik et al. (2011), "Qualitative research is most suitable for addressing 'why' questions to explain and understand issues or 'how' questions that describe processes or behavior" (p. 10). The approach allows one to investigate people's detailed experiences by utilizing specific methods such as in-depth interviews, focus-group discussions and observation (Hennik et al., 2011, p. 8–9). While looking at theories about the benefits of reading and texts in school are interesting, they are not fully valuable before one sees them in connection to the perceptions and experiences of those who are supposed to obtain a learning outcome from them.

Moreover, Hennik et al. (2011) claim that in qualitative research, "understanding" is a key word. They clarify that there are two perspectives to view this term from - namely "understanding" and "*verstehen*" (p. 17). While "understanding" means looking at a research problem from the lenses of the researcher itself, "*verstehen*" is viewed through the lenses of the study population, by adopting their perspectives on the research problems. To further clarify, the researchers explain that the term "*verstehen*" refers to "understanding the life of the people whom you study from their own perspective, in their own context and describing this using their own words and concepts" (Hennik et al., 2011, p. 17). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) also address how understanding is the goal of qualitative research (p. 16). They further explain how the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis and must therefore be aware of and deal with their potential influence. Self-selected reading was my biggest source of motivation to learn English, and I must therefore design the interview guides with caution to make sure they are not biased by assuming everyone else also enjoys self-selected reading.

3.2 Participants and Context

This section will present the participants who took part in this study and the context it was conducted in. All participants are based at the same school. Firstly, I will provide some information about the school, its scope and surroundings before turning to the different participants. The participants will be introduced in the following order: (1) Students from eighth and tenth grade who participated in focus group discussions, (2) teachers who teach the subject of English who participated in semi-structured interviews, and (3) students who participated through a student questionnaire.

This study was conducted in January 2023, with students from eighth-tenth grade as well as with two of their English language teachers. Hennik et al., (2011) claim that **"**Due to the in-depth nature of qualitative research, few study participants are needed, as the purpose is to achieve depth of information (rather than breadth)" (p. 17). The study was conducted at a first – tenth grade school with 409 students located in the outskirts of a city. This study, however, will only focus on students from eighth – tenth grade and their English teachers. There are three different classes within each grade and all together there are 216 students who fit the category I wished to investigate. My intention was to first conduct a questionnaire with students from all three grades (eighth, ninth and tenth grade) before conducting two different focus group discussions – one with students from eighth grade, and one with students from tenth grade. However, because I needed to borrow time from actual class periods to conduct student questionnaires and the

teachers' schedules were quite busy, some of the students had responded to the student questionnaire prior to the discussion, while others had not.

The two focus group discussions each consisted of five participants, respectively from eighth and tenth grade, who volunteered to participate. When asking for volunteers, I quickly described that the reason for my project is that self-selected texts have obtained an enhanced position in the curriculum and that I therefore was interested in learning about the perceptions of those who will be affected by that – namely students and teachers. The different students who took part in this study will hereby be referred to as students of their significant grade. This decision was made to ensure their anonymity and still describe them as beneficially as possible. Who said what within the same grade is of no relevance to the study, however, it is interesting to investigate whether there are differences in the perception and practice for students in different grades.

The two teachers who participated in the study have been given pseudonyms to protect the policy of anonymity. To ensure this, I will henceforth refer to the teachers as Molly and George. I wanted to investigate English teachers who teach the students who were already participating in the study and therefore informed both George and Molly about the project before asking them whether they wanted to be part of the study, which they both accepted. Molly has taught the subject of English in middle school for seven years. Prior to that, she worked at an elementary school and taught the same subject to students in fifth-seventh grade. This school year, Molly is teaching English in two different classes in the tenth grade. George has taught the subject of English since 2016, but did not have any competence in the subject for the first two years. However, one of the criteria for hiring him was that he was going to take further education which he finished in 2018. During his years as an English teacher he has had some classes he followed from eighth – tenth grade, while that was not possible for other classes, due to various reasons such as time scheduling, and he therefore only had them for a year. George underlines that he prefers to follow the students throughout the three school years because that allows him to get to know the students as well as their previous teaching better. This school year, George teaches one tenth grade as well as one ninth grade class. Both Molly and George participated in separate semi-structured interviews which allowed me to investigate their beliefs regarding self-selection, and whether their perceptions were visible through their teaching.

As previously mentioned, 216 students fit the category I wished to investigate, however, not all classes had accessible timeslots that allowed me to conduct the student questionnaire. Despite this, I was able to conduct the questionnaire with a total of 120 students. To make sure the students understood the questions, the questionnaire was conducted in Norwegian and translated for this thesis. The purpose of the questionnaire was to get a broader understanding of the students' opinions on self-selected texts, and to see whether the questionnaire answers would support or stand as a counterpart to the answers obtained through interviews and discussions. One hundred and twenty-seven students answered the questionnaire, however, seven checked the box to say they did not wish for their responses to be used for research. As a result of this, I have 120 questionnaire responses distributed between the different grades as shown in Table 3.1.

Grade	Number of students
8	37
9	51
10	32
Total	120

Table 3.1: Questionnaire Participants

3.3 Data Collection

In this section, I will elaborate on the methods I used to collect the data material for my research paper. With the purpose of answering the research questions designed for this study, I decided to collect three kinds of data in order to achieve triangulation. Performing a triangulation provided me with a rich amount of responses that I can utilize in my quest to answer this study's research questions. Considering that working with self-selected texts is something that concerns both teachers and students I wanted input from both perspectives and collected data accordingly. I completed semi-structured interviews with two English teachers who primarily taught ninth and tenth grade, conducted focus group discussions with two groups of five students from respectively eighth and tenth grade, as well as obtained responses from questionnaires with two eighth grades, three ninth grades and two tenth grades which adds up to a total of 120 responders. The following paragraphs will provide a more detailed description of the different data collection methods in addition to why they are beneficial for this study.

3.3.1 Questionnaires

Johnson and Christensen (2014) describe a questionnaire as a "self-report data-collection instrument that each research participant fills out as part of a study" (p. 191). They further claim that questionnaires can be used in both qualitative and quantitative studies, as well as within mixed methods research, and is therefore useful to measure various types of characteristics (p. 191). For example, a questionnaire can help the researcher obtain information about the participants' thoughts, attitudes, values and perceptions. My study aims to investigate students' and teachers' attitudes towards the use of self-selected texts in the EFL classroom and conducting a questionnaire is therefore beneficial to ensure several responses and various perceptions of the aforementioned research issue. For this research study, I conducted a questionnaire with eighth – tenth graders, and designed questions that provided me with an insight into how middle schoolers experience working with self-selected multimodal texts (See appendix 1).

According to Christoffersen and Johannessen (2018), the starting point for the design of the questionnaire is the study's research questions (p. 129). They further argue that the questions in the questionnaire must be formulated in a way that allows them to provide adequate responses to the research questions. Unlike qualitative interviews, the questionnaire requires all questions to be prepared in advance of the conduction. This means that a thorough and thoughtful job had to be put into the design of these questions. The structure of a questionnaire can vary from very structured with pre-coded answers to open-ended questions where the participants have to physically write their responses (Christoffersen & Johannessen, 2018, p. 130). The questionnaire designed for my research study consisted of 17 questions with two sub-questions. The amount of time used to answer the questionnaire varied from 3 to 23 and a half minutes. The design of

the questions was mostly open-ended in addition to five Likert-scale questions, which measured the students' opinions on a five-point scale, and one that allowed multiple choice. Utilizing a scale with several values allowed the participants to nuance their responses in a way that reflect their perceptions (Christoffersen & Johannessen, 2018, p. 135). The questionnaire is a beneficial and efficient way to obtain several responses, and the combination of these questions provided me with an insight into a broader group of middle schoolers' perceptions of self-selected texts in the EFL classroom. For this study, I used a Norwegian website called *nettskjema* (Web form) to design my questionnaire. The website is developed and designed by University in Oslo (UiO) and is a secure solution for online data collection. The information cookies created in the browser upon answering the questionnaire contain no reference to the form-ID or name. The cookies only contain a session ID that is valid until the students log out or close the tab (UiO, 2022), and could therefore not be traced back to the participant. The questionnaire worked as a foundation and served as a supplement to two focus group discussions which were conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the perceptions of a smaller selection of students, as well as two teacher interviews. Most of the questions were designed as open-ended questions in order to allow the students to elaborate on the answers to the extent of their desire. However, due to the lack of previous experience with self-selection, students did not always have an idea of what to write and might have benefitted from the opportunity to choose an answer from a list of options. Regardless, I still obtained a lot of answers where students elaborated on their answers which I consider beneficial and valuable.

3.3.2 Focus Group Discussion

Focus group discussions are interactive discussions focusing on a specific set of issues, with a group of approximately six to eight participants. According to Hennik et al. (2011), the key characteristics are highlighted in the name itself: "a *focus* on specific issues, with a predetermined *group* of people, conducting an interactive *discussion*" (p. 136). An important aspect of this research method is to create an environment where participants feel safe to share and elaborate on their perspectives. I chose to conduct a discussion with the students, rather than an interview because I believe valuable information and perspectives can arise from the back-and-forth conversation that is a discussion. Additionally, by making it a discussion, students also have the chance to ask follow-up questions to each other to better understand others' perceptions, which would be beneficial for me as an unexperienced moderator. To ensure a safe environment, I started the conversation by highlighting that all answers are valid and will be valued. Additionally, I emphasized how having different opinions on something might contribute to a valuable discussion which could aid the purpose of the study, and made sure we agreed to respect each other's opinions and when necessary benefit from the community of disagreement. Due to the rich data that can be retrieved through group discussions, Hennik et al. (2011) claim that this method is able to "generate more insights on the research issues than a series of in-depth interviews with the same number of participants" (p. 136). In other words, the fact that data are collected in a group environment is a strength of the method, however, it can also be a limitation if "the moderator does not possess the skills needed to manage the group and the dynamics within" (Hennik et al., 2011, p. 165). Because these were the first focus group discussions I ever managed, I had to prepare well and prior to the discussions I tried to acquire the required skills that could be obtained without specific experience. However, because I have no prior experience as a moderator I cannot know for sure whether I moderated the conversation in a good way, or if there were important parts that I did not

follow up on, if I asked leading questions or in any other way directed the conversation down a path that could bias the students' answers. I am for example very positive toward implementing self-selection and the students might have picked up on this attitude and adjusted their answers accordingly.

Hennik et al. (2011) also emphasize how such discussions should be led by a trained moderator. Seeing as this was the first focus group discussion I led, I chose to ask a smaller group of approximately four to five students to participate. This decision was based on the assumption that it will be easier to moderate a smaller group. Concurrently I did not wish to take away the benefits provided through a group discussion. As for moderating the conversation, I started by informing the students about the terms of the conversation – namely that it is a conversation, not an interview, and that I am asking about their experiences and perceptions and that therefore there are no right or wrong answers. To help me with the moderation, I designed some thematical questions that helped me guide the students if they strayed off topic (See appendix 2). However, my hope was that their responses would develop into an engaged and relevant conversation without too much interference on my behalf. The choice of conducting a focus group discussion came from the desire to gain deeper and more detailed answers to my questions combined with the benefits a discussion in a group can provide. Putting the students in groups allows them to draw on each other's comments, agree or disagree with one another as well as gain new ideas based on the contents of the discussion. However, presenting one's opinions and perceptions in front of a group might seem challenging and frightening depending on the relation one has to the different group members, and how the group dynamic works. I was hoping that the fact that these discussions were based on voluntary participation would provide me with students who accepted this challenge head on and felt comfortable sharing their opinions, even though they could be countered with others' opinions. This was mostly the case for the eighth graders who seemed to embrace the community of disagreement and shared different opinions, reflected further on each other's input and profited from the benefits of a group discussion. On the other hand, the tenth graders seemed to rather prefer a community based on agreement, and whenever one student said anything the rest of the group tended to agree with whatever this student said. Whether this tendency came from the fact that this group had very homogenous beliefs about the subject or from other reasons such as a fear of saying something "wrong" is unclear.

3.3.3 Semi-Structured Interviews

One of the most common strategies for collecting qualitative data is through interviews (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006, p. 314). Utilizing in-depth interviews allows the interviewer to discuss specific topics in depth with their interviewee. Hennik et al. (2011) describe it as "a conversation with a purpose" (p. 109). According to DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006), in-depth interviews "seek to foster learning about individual experiences and perspectives on a given set of issues" (p. 314). Furthermore, the use of interviews allows researchers to reach areas of reality that otherwise would not be accessible, including people's subjective experiences and attitudes (Peräkylä & Ruusuvuori, 2018, p. 1163).

For this project, I decided to conduct interviews with the teachers rather than ask them to answer a questionnaire because I wanted a deeper insight of their perceptions and opinions. The interviews were carried out face to face at the school where the teachers worked, and while Molly's interview lasted approximately 20 minutes, George's took 35.

Qualitative interviews typically employ a semi-structured form. Semi-structured interviews are one-to-one conversations conducted with "a blend of closed- and open-ended questions, often accompanied by follow-up *why* or *how* questions" (Newcomer et al., 2015, p. 493). Opposed to more structured interviews, semi-structured ones allow more leeway for the interviewer to follow up on whatever angle they find relevant, making "better use of the knowledge-producing potentials of dialogues" (Brinkman, 2018, p. 1002). A semi-structured interview was beneficial for my study because I was looking for the teachers' perceptions and instead of interpreting answers in a written questionnaire, I could ask the teachers to elaborate so that the data I was left with was their actual thoughts in their own words. However, conducting semi-structured interviews is time-consuming in all parts – preparation, conduction and analysis. While producing my interview guide, I tried to be as cautious as possible to make sure that I was not designing leading questions which might bias the responses (See appendix 3). In my study, I only interviewed two teachers who work closely together which made it challenging to draw conclusions from their answers. Additionally, I did not have a lot of prior experience with interviewing people and was therefore not always able to pick up on where I should have asked my interviewees to further elaborate or give more examples. Nonetheless, the interviews provided me with relevant and valuable information that contributes to a solid set of data material.

3.4 Reliability and Validity

An important aspect of conducting a research study is evaluating whether the study is reliable and valid. While reliability concerns the accuracy of the study's data, validity addresses how relevant the data collected for the study is. Christoffersen and Johannessen (2018) argue that data is not "reality itself, but representations of it" (p. 24) and a crucial question is therefore how well the data represents the phenomenon in question. There are different ways to investigate the study's reliability, one of them is called *test-retest reliability* (Christoffersen & Johannessen, 2018, p. 23). This involves retesting the data two to three weeks later to see whether you get similar results. If you do, your data accounts for high reliability. In my study, I conducted a questionnaire with students from eighth – tenth grade as well as conducted two focus group discussions with a smaller selection of the same students. Even though I did not retest the same data collection method after a few weeks, the focus group discussions allowed me to ask similar questions and compare them to the results of the questionnaire. In addition, it provided me with an opportunity to ask for clarification and therefore obtain a deeper understanding of the different responses. To make sure that my interpretation of the data collected from teacher interviews was the same as the one they provided it with, I sent a copy of their respective interview transcription to George and Molly. In the e-mail, I asked them to read through the transcription and encouraged them to correct me if something did not correspond with their perceptions. Both George and Molly replied and approved the transcription. As for the relevance of the data collected for this study, I will argue that I have included and researched the most important participants, namely those in play for such a situation – English teachers and students. Because self-selected texts have gained a new and enhanced position in the curriculum, I asked for their perceptions and experiences with self-selected texts as well as to what extent and how they wish to work with such texts.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Due to several of the participants being students under 16 an application was filed and sent to SIKT (At the time of the application, the organization was called NSD). A request to execute the research with young students was approved because they are key elements in the classroom, and their perspective is important and should be taken into consideration when it comes to things that happen inside the classroom. The two different focus group discussions that were conducted, one with eighth graders and one with tenth graders, provided the project with an opportunity to see whether the students' perception of self-selection changes as they get older, feel more comfortable with their English and hopefully with their teacher and the classroom environment. During these discussions, questions that could promote information about a third party who was not present, namely the students' English teacher, was asked. To avoid any ethical breaches, the teachers whom this might apply to, were informed and asked to consent to such information being used prior to the discussions (See appendix 4).

Interviews were conducted with two English teachers who teach the students already involved in the project. Participation in the project was based on voluntariness and measures were taken to maintain anonymity for all participants. For example, participants are given pseudonyms and other information that could trace back to the participant was coded. At the beginning of the interviews, I reminded the teachers about the duty of confidentiality. Additionally, I avoided asking for sensitive information, and asked the teachers not to share the same type of information unsolicited.

3.6 Positionality

One important aspect to consider when working on research papers is the positionality one has as a researcher, and the impact this might have on the participants.
As already mentioned, the data collected for this study was retrieved from a school where I have previously conducted one of my teaching practice periods. Throughout that period I worked with and received feedback from both teachers who participated in this study. Additionally, I taught all three tenth grade classes in the subject of English. As a result, there was a difference in the relation between me as a researcher and the different participants. While I was a new and unknown person for some, I had some familiarity with others. Reflecting on my role as a student researcher, the fact that I am in a similar situation as the students – I am still learning –, and that I am relatively young might have had an impact on how the students acted and responded to the questions. The teachers, on the other hand, might have felt as though the roles were turned which might have created a tension that contributed to and affected the direction of the conversation. Another important aspect to remember is that as a researcher one might have opinions about the researched topic. For example, I am a person who loves to read, and reading self-selected texts was how I excelled in English. Although my intention was to remain neutral, my preconceived notions might have colored the conversation. Additionally, both students and teachers might have picked up on my passion for the subject and adjusted their answers accordingly. Keeping in mind that all of this could affect the data, I tried to make sure the environment felt safe and that all perceptions and contributions were welcomed and valuable and would be very appreciated.

4 Data Analysis

In this chapter, I will present and explain the steps made to analyze the data material collected for this study. First, I will present some theory on data analysis in general before turning to the analysis method chosen for this research. I decided to conduct a thematic analysis (TA) to explore and investigate the data material provided through triangulation and will in the subsequent paragraphs elaborate on how this was done.

Christoffersen and Johannessen (2018) state that there are four main steps in analyzing data. The first stage includes an overall impression where the researcher does not get lost in details, but aims to identify the main themes presented through the material. The purpose of the second stage is to locate meaningful elements through the use of coding and organizing different parts of the information. The third stage is also based on the codes, however, it seeks to reduce the material and develop more abstract categories under which to situate the different codes. The last stage of analyzing data includes recontextualizing and going back to see whether the newly produced material lines up with the original impression of the non-coded data (Christoffersen and Johannessen, 2018, pp. 100–105).

According to Clarke and Braun (2017), a thematic analysis is "a method for identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns of meaning ('themes') within qualitative data" (Clarke & Braun, 2017, p. 297). This analysis method provides accessible and systematic procedures to develop codes and themes from qualitative data such as interviews and focus group discussions (Clarke & Braun, 2017, p. 297). Clarke and Braun (2017) argue that a beneficial aspect of TA is its flexibility when it comes to several stages of the study, for instance through the means of data collection, sample size and research questions (p. 297). Guided by the research questions, TA seeks to identify and interpret key elements of the data. In my study, I have implemented the following six phases of TA to achieve this: (1) Familiarizing yourself with your data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes and (6) producing the report (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87).

4.1 Analysis of Qualitative Data

In this section, I will elaborate on how I utilized the thematic analysis to interpret and process my data. Because the questionnaire mostly consisted of open-ended questions it provided me with a lot of written text, and I was therefore able to perform a thematic analysis of most of these questions as well. However, due to the five Likert-scale questions in the questionnaire, I also had more specific data to work with. This provided me with an opportunity to create tables that reflect the numbers derived from the collected data. While analyzing the responses I followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six steps of analyzing data, meaning I looked for recurring patterns and themes in the students' answers. Simultaneously, I tried to find unique answers that through an in-text citation would enrich the study and provide clear insight into student's perceptions.

During data collection, the interviews and focus group discussions were audio recorded. To familiarize myself with the data I started by manually transcribing the material, which

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) argue is rudimentary analysis (p. 200) and Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest might provide the close reading and interpretive skills needed to analyze the data (p. 88). Transcribing the focus group discussions proved itself more difficult than transcribing the teacher interviews due to the inclusion of more participants who, at times, talked simultaneously. Despite this, repeatedly listening to the audio files as well as doing the transcription shortly after conducting the discussions allowed me to write a good and thorough transcription of these focus group discussions as well. As for the questionnaire, the open-ended design of the questions required me to look through them one by one. Although the web form *nettskjema* allows users to put all participants' answers for one question on the same page, it was sometimes also interesting to see what grade the students who answered a specific question were in. I therefore started working question by question, compiling another document with excerpts from the different questions.

Secondly, I identified features of the complete data set that seemed interesting and pasted these on a separate document, where I tried to sort them into meaningful groups with initial codes. The codes were collected "in vivo" which means they were direct words or sentences produced by the participants.

Thirdly, I started analyzing the codes and tried combining some of them to see if this might create a potential overarching theme that I could sort my codes into. Codes differ from themes which are broader and where the interpretive analysis of data occurs (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 88). For this stage, I benefitted from visual aids and utilized a mind-map to help me sort the codes into broader themes.

The next stage involved revisiting the themes that I produced in the third phase to investigate whether some of them overlapped and could be combined, or whether some of them differed too much or did not have enough supporting data. For me, this meant that I had to recode and generate new themes because the first ones were too general which made it difficult to clearly distinguish which codes fitted in which overarching theme.

In the fifth phase, I defined and refined the themes to look for the essence of what each theme was about, as well as determined what aspect of the data each theme captured (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 92). This process resulted in six themes which I placed within three categories together with their associated themes:

1. How to Choose: Text selection and differentiation. The first category addresses the students' concern of being overwhelmed by choice and how they prefer to choose texts. It also includes teachers' concerns about differentiation and their students' will and skill to choose a book that fits their reading level.
2. What to Choose: Text criteria and student desired texts. The second category talks about various text criteria that will ease the selection of a text. Additionally, it presents what types of texts students prefer to read.
3. How to Choose: Lack of libraries/funds and misconception of key terms. The last category addresses the issue of the lack of available texts in the EFL classroom. Furthermore, it questions whether both teachers' and students' misconception of key terms contributes to creating an unnecessary challenge for implementation.

Lastly, I produced the report where I tried to convey the complicated story of my data by going beyond description of the data and make arguments related to my research questions. This report will be presented in the following chapter.

5 Findings

In this chapter, I will present the main findings of my study. Because the research study aims to investigate perceptions of self-selected texts, it is valuable to have an understanding of how the participants interpret the term "text". Therefore, this chapter will start by presenting the participants' definitions of the term "text" as well as the sub-term "multimodal texts". Afterwards, I will present teachers' and students' perceptions of how often they work with self-selected texts to gain an understanding of their experiences and whether their perceptions derive from actual experiences or beliefs. Subsequently, I have categorized the main findings that emerged from teacher interviews as well as focus group discussions and questionnaires with students into three categories, and will present these as follows: (1) How to Choose – Exploring Students' Preferences in Choosing Texts , (2) What to Choose – Identifying Appropriate Texts, and (3) Where to Choose – Finding English Texts in the Community.

5.1 Teachers' and Students' Understanding of the Term "Text"

According to the curriculum for the English subject, students are expected to be able to "read, discuss and present content from various types of texts, including self-chosen texts" (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p. 9). Due to this phrasing, all participants, no matter how they provided their answers, were asked the following question: What does the term "text" mean to you? The question was asked to reach a greater understanding of the involved participants' interpretations of the used term, and whether there were coherence or differences in their understanding. Their responses will be presented in this order: (1) eighth graders who participated in a focus group discussion, (2) tenth graders who participated in a focus group discussion, (3) eighth – tenth graders who participated through a questionnaire and (4) two teachers who shared their opinions in semi-structured interviews.

When asked about the term, one of the eighth graders replied with a similar question: "What do you mean with 'text'? Do you mean, like a long page with like - words?". This question prompted another student to say that her understanding of the term is just that – a long page with words. After discussing between them they agreed that a text is only a few pages long and is not a full book. One of the students justified this by explaining that "If I think about a book, it is a book", another student echoed this and added that "Yes, if you're thinking about a book you would not say text". The eighth graders did however agree that an excerpt from a book could constitute a text. Whether the students' misconception of a text not being a book has to do with the genre of the book or that the term is too complex to get a grasp on is unclear. However, an interesting - and for the students unconscious (or so it seemed) - turn in their understanding of the term occurred when asked about working with self-selected texts: all of a sudden it seemed like working with self-selected texts equaled to working with full size books. This issue will be further discussed in section 1.4.3, *Where to Choose*.

The tenth graders seemed to have a slightly broader, but still narrow understanding of the term. During the focus group discussion with tenth graders, the participants tended to not engage in discussions, but rather agree with whatever the first one to speak said. Due to this, the only information collected about tenth graders' understanding of the

term is from one student who said that "Maybe something that is a few pages long. Or maybe it could be a book. Or information that is relevant to what we are working with". The tenth graders include books under the term "texts" and we might therefore assume that they do not put a maximum number of pages before the text is "too long" to be a text. However, it might seem like they have an understanding that the text needs to consist of a minimum number of pages before it constitutes as a text.

The answers provided through the questionnaire showed a significant variation in students' understanding of the term. The respondents answered everything from how texts are boring and long to more informative interpretations. Some students talked about reading while other students talked about writing texts. One of the students' answer suggests that when working with texts they have "regular" criteria. This tenth grader explained that "For me it is an introduction, two main paragraphs, some facts and an ending." A ninth grader explained that a text is "A compound collection of consecutive sentences that provides a meaning". One of the eighth graders also had a broad understanding of the term and interpreted it such: "A text is printed or written words, sentences and paragraphs joined together to form a whole, for example in letters, stories, descriptions, novels, short stories, plays, poems and so on". Additionally, two of the students, respectively from eighth and ninth grade mentioned that a text also could include interpreting pictures. The responses collected through the questionnaire show that between and within all grades there are students who have a narrow understanding of the term, but also students who provide the term with a broader meaning.

The teachers, on the other hand, considered the question a big one and answered accordingly. Molly argued that a text is everything written by someone else than herself. She further explained that she can produce text, but if it is something she is supposed to read it can be student work or literary works. George thinks that everything that can be read is a text. He underlined that it does not matter whether it is a textbook, text on a blackboard or English subtitles on movies or videoclips. To support his claim he argued that the English subject evolves around communication, and highlighted that this can be expressed both orally and written. Summarizing his thoughts on the term, he said the following about texts: "It is communication and interpretation of communication".

5.1.1 Multimodal Texts

Participants were also asked about the sub-term "multimodal texts" to investigate whether this term was familiar to them and could be an option to work with. From students' responses, in both focus group discussions and through the questionnaire, it is clear that most students are unfamiliar with the term. More surprisingly, the term was also quite unclear or narrow for the teachers. In the following paragraphs, I will first present students' perceptions provided through the questionnaires, then I will continue by including some quotes from the focus group discussion before turning to the teachers.

Through the questionnaire, students were asked to answer the following question in their own words: "In your opinion, what does it mean that a text is multimodal?". In a variety of ways of describing it, only 28 students wrote that multimodal texts include several modalities or a combination of text, sound and pictures. Because what was interesting about this question was whether the term was familiar or not, the responses were analyzed and sorted into groups that display this. Additionally, I added a column for students who did not answer the question as well as those who provided other input such as: "That a text is multimodal means that it contributes to influence the society, it reaches everyone" or: "This question was asked during the morning, and therefore I am

not capable of answering it". The full extent of responses are presented in Table 5.1.

Do not know	Text/sound/pictures/different modalities	Other	Did not answer	Total
69	28	10	13	120

Table 5.1: Students' Interpretation of Multimodal Texts

Thirteen students did not answer this question, indicating that their answers therefore would fit under the category "do not know" which would provide a total of 68.33% questionnaire respondents who do not know or are unsure of the term. After answering this question in the questionnaire, students are presented with a definition to be able to answer questions that follows. Some of the eighth graders conducted the questionnaire before participating in the focus group discussion and due to this, two of the eighth graders had read the definition of multimodal texts before the same question was asked in the focus group discussion. While the students who had not read the definition implied that they had heard the term, but were unsure of its contents, the students who had read the definition aided each other and together agreed that the questionnaire mentioned both sound, pictures and videos before adding that it could be a TikTok. The conversation went as follows:

Interviewer	What does it mean that a text is multimodal?
Student 1	With sound and…
Student 2	Yes, cause it said so in the… [Talks about the questionnaire]
Student 1	Yeah, with videoclips and stuff
Student 2	And pictures
Student 1	It could be a TikTok!

Table 5.2: Part of the Focus Group Discussion – Multimodality

When the tenth grader group was presented with the same question they all nodded to express that they knew the term, but when asked to explain and elaborate, one of the tenth graders still phrased their answer as a question: "Can't it be text, sound, pictures? Combining them?". This might suggest that the tenth graders have some knowledge of the term and maybe they have addressed it in class. Nevertheless, answering a question with a question suggests some uncertainty, and perhaps they do not understand the full extent of the lexical term.

The two teachers, George and Molly, were also asked what the term "multimodal texts" means to them. Molly replied that comics are multimodal, that it was text under pictures. While reflecting on what else she could include, she briefly mentioned song lyrics: "What else can it be? Song lyrics fits under normal texts. I guess comics is my answer then". By *normal* texts, Molly was referring to texts that only consist of letters and no other modality, clearly separating the sub-term "multimodal texts" from "texts". Replying to the same question, George whispered: "I don't know". After being presented with a short definition he added: "I can just jump in, because I have probably heard the term, but I haven't learned it". Continuing, he highlighted that he likes picture books and the benefits that follow the visual aid. Even though both teachers acknowledged Instagram posts and TikToks as multimodal when asked about them, it is interesting that both Molly's and George's (with some initial help) understanding of the term *multimodal* seems to both start and end with letters combined with pictures, and also with formal authorship instead of social media content.

5.2 Frequency of Self-Selection

Even though both Molly and George claim they have not really tried self-selection, the pair of them seemed to be under the impression that it is both time consuming and resource demanding. To justify his opinion, George argued that to be able to evaluate the students' work he needs some knowledge of all of the books, and that is a resource he does not have. After a short pause he adds: "Well, I kind of choose not to prioritize it right now". Molly also justified why she has not yet implemented self-selection by arguing that it poses more challenges for her as a teacher because she will need to spend a lot of time finding ideas for what the students can choose from. From these answers, it seems as though both teachers are reluctant to implement self-selection because of challenges they <u>might</u> encounter if they do.

Students' answers to how often they are allowed to choose their own texts align with that of their teachers – rarely to never. Through the questionnaire, students were asked: "On a scale from 1-6, where 1 is very rarely and 6 is very often, how often are you allowed to choose what text you wish to read in the English subject?". Their responses support what their teachers said and show that most of the texts read in class are teacher-selected (See Table 5.3). Even though the predetermined scale was from 1-6, the questionnaire allowed for open answers and some students therefore answered outside or between these numbers. However, these answers still provide an insight into the question asked and are therefore part of and presented in Table 5.3.

Scale	0/never	1	1-2	2	2-3	3	3-4	4	5	6	Total
Number of students	9	58	1	37	1	9	1	2	2	0	120

Table 5.3: Students' Perceptions of Frequency of Self-Selection

The majority of students from all grades claim that they very rarely work with self-selected texts. The questionnaire allowed for more elaborating answers, and the following includes some of the things students expressed: "I cannot remember any times we have been allowed to choose for ourselves". Another student argued the same thing, but added that: "On rare occasions we get to choose between a few texts, but then they are chosen for us". A tenth grade student put a three as his answer and justified it by saying that: "Sometimes there are different choices, or what we have to read is based on our English level, so then we get to choose". Out of the four students who put four or five on the scale, only one student justified their answer. However, it might seem as though this student has misunderstood the question, when their justification was: "Five, because then we get to choose the texts we like and what we need to learn more about". The frequency of how often teachers and students have worked with self-selection is important to keep in mind throughout the entire study. Due to the fact that neither teachers nor students have a lot of experience with actually working on self-selection, their opinions and perceptions are likely more based on thoughts and beliefs than actual hands-on experience.

5.3 Main Findings

For this part, I will present the main findings located through teacher interviews and focus group discussions. Additionally, I will utilize responses from the questionnaire to either support or stand as a counterpart to the presented ideas. Through reflection on self-selection, the new curriculum and their own teaching and/or learning practice, three

phases of the selection process and associated themes emerged from both teacher interviews and focus group discussions. In the following sections, the central findings from this study will be presented in their associated categories: (1) How to choose: text selection and differentiation, (2) What to choose: text criteria and student desired texts, and (3) Where to choose: lack of libraries/funds and misconception of key terms.

5.3.1 How to Choose – Exploring Students' Preferences in Choosing Texts

In this section, I will present the findings situated in the category "How to Choose", namely text selection and differentiation. Firstly, I will present how students prefer to choose the texts they read in the English subject and why. I will start by displaying some quotes from focus group discussions with both eighth and tenth graders before including some numbers of students' desires provided through the student questionnaire. Afterwards, I will include the teachers' view on the subject as well as their concerns regarding how to differentiate while working on self-selected texts.

Although both groups who participated in focus group discussions claimed that they considered self-selection as beneficial, some of the students expressed that they find it hard and at times overwhelming to have to choose. In the focus groups, students were asked: "How would you perceive being allowed to choose texts freely?" To elaborate on this question one of the eighth graders explained that: "For some people it can be a lot [to choose from], so if you instead were presented with 'you can choose from these' I think that would make it easier for some of us". Another student countered this and said that alternatives presented might not contain a text the students like and highlighted that if they chose completely freely they will be more engaged. On this cue, a third student entered and suggested that they could combine the two: "Or, you can have some alternatives, but also choose freely if you prefer". The rest of the group expressed that this was a solution they could support. To answer the same question of how they will perceive choosing freely, a tenth grade student said that: "I think it is nice to be able to decide and have some influence, but I am also somewhat bad at taking decisions so it might be a bit difficult too". When asked about choosing from alternatives, tenth graders seemed to accept that as something that would ease their choice while still allowing self-selection within a limited selection. The students also said this would make it easier for the teachers to evaluate because it will reduce the amount of books the teacher needs knowledge of, as well as benefit the time challenge. One of the tenth graders argued that it can be too much freedom. Presented with the eighth grader's solution they agreed it was a good way to please both students who struggle with choosing and those who are able to and enjoy it. A student saw this as very beneficial and suggested:

> Then it might be good if those books differ a bit, like for the level of the book, because not all of the students have the same reading proficiency, so if one of the books is a bit easier it is nice that they also have a text that fits them.

As a takeaway from this quote, it is possible to assume that students, at least tenth graders, are aware of the difference in reading proficiency and support providing students with different texts as a way of differentiating to meet the different students at their level of reading. Another interesting and perhaps problematic detail from the students' perceptions is how their understanding of a text, when talking about self-selected texts, seems to equal books. This is interesting considering how they defined texts in the beginning, where eighth graders considered a book to be too long to be a text.

Table 5.4 displays how the students prefer to choose books. The numbers are collected from the student questionnaire where students could choose between these four predetermined answers: (1) Choose completely freely what types of texts you wish to read for your English subject, (2) choose between 3-5 alternatives the teachers present, (3) that your teacher always chooses the texts you read for your English subject and (4) other. Students were allowed to choose more than one option and both asked and encouraged to justify their choice. This decision was made because the students' responses might differ for various reasons such as what theme they are working on. The results are split between the different grades to look for variation in their desires. Additionally, and for the sake of clarity, two rows have been added to display how many of the students chose more than one answer.

	Eighth grade	Ninth grade	Tenth grade	Total
Other	6	3	2	11
Teacher chooses	1	5	2	8
3-5 alternatives	23	35	24	82
Choose freely	13	21	13	47
Chose 2	6	7	9	22
Chose all	0	2	0	2

Table 5.4: Students' Preferences of Choice

The majority of students from all grades seem to prefer choosing between 3-5 alternatives presented by the teacher. However, being allowed to choose freely was also highly desired amongst all three grades. Of the 22 students who chose more than one option, *choose freely* and *3-5 alternatives* were the most preferred duo with 14 selections, leaving all other combinations, combined, to a total of eight. This calculation excluded the two students who chose all four options because there is no coherence with the desired outcome of finding the most preferred double option. Several of the students expressed that they wanted their teacher to provide some options to ensure that the text was at a level that fits their reading proficiency and that reading it would provide them with a learning outcome. A ninth grader described it like this: "I think that if we read whatever we want, we won't learn much, but when they [the teachers] choose a few books for us we will learn more. We get the illusion of choosing freely and want to read because of it". Several of the students argue that choosing completely freely is both difficult and time consuming, and that choosing from a few teacher selected options will help avoid these challenges while still allowing self-selection. One of the ninth graders reflected on why they put choosing from a few alternatives, and justified it such:

> I would choose to be able to choose between 3-5 teacher-selected text alternatives, because then you will limit yourself so that it becomes easier to choose. If you can freely choose what you want to read, it will be difficult to choose and many will choose bad texts. If you only have one option there might be a poor variety of texts, which is not good because everyone is different and wants to read different texts.

The students who always want their teacher to select texts for them justified it by arguing that it is quicker and easier. Some of the students expressed a dislike against conducting choices while others were afraid that they would misunderstand and choose texts that is not relevant for the task. From the responses provided by students, both through focus group discussions and student questionnaires, it seems like the students are split between wanting to take more control of their own learning and not wanting to take any choices. One of the students' biggest concerns when it comes to choosing freely

seems to be whether they are able to find a text that is relevant for the topic and fits their level of reading.

Molly was also worried about the students' ability to choose texts that fit their level of reading. She explained that students do not want to open texts or sites that look easy and therefore often end up choosing whatever their friend picks. While elaborating on this she added that:

> It is a point that the teacher has some kind of control [Of the chosen texts]. A lot of the students do not want to admit that they do not understand something. They do not want to choose, or enter a site that looks like it is a little bit easy... Often they end up choosing whatever their friend chooses.

George had similar concerns and added that self-selection makes it more difficult to differentiate and facilitate for the students, and that as teachers they will have to be very present and offer guidance and appropriate alternatives. This will again make the choosing process time consuming, and George is worried that students will simply choose the first book they find because they are afraid to take too long or because they are unsure of their selection skills. In turn, this might lead to students reading texts that are of no interest to them and does neither fit their age nor reading proficiency:

> It might take time, and if we bring them to the library and they stand there and have no idea. And then they just take something. And they do not like the book, the language is way too difficult and so on, and so on… So I think that self-selection is very positive for those who like to read, and I think it is almost like you should check with the kids before starting such a project.

To summarize the teachers' concerns regarding students' reading level, they seem to be about students' abilities to find a text that fits them, to actually make the choice of choosing a book that fits their level even though it is "embarrassing" to choose an "easy" book, and not be too influenced by the time limit and take their time to find a good fit. Additionally, the teacher seems to consider self-selection as too time consuming, and although they argue that students' ability to choose a text that fits their reading proficiency is a challenge, some of their answers suggest that they find it challenging if too many manage to do so as well. After stating that he wants to map the students who like to read before such a project, George added:

> And those who can choose, they can do that. The disadvantages will be that if 7-8-9 students, and it is very good if they had had self-selection, but then having 10 different books to deal with, that is a lot. But, I think that that should not be the limitation for them to choose, you rather have to see the possibilities, that it is very positive that so many are able to choose a self-selected text and work with that.

From this quote, it might seem like George has some conflicting thoughts about self-selection, which becomes even more visible at the end of the interview where George admitted that even though he wishes it was the other way around, for now, he sees more challenges with self-selection than benefits.

5.3.2 What to Choose – Identifying Appropriate Texts
In the following paragraphs, I will present the main findings from the category "What to Choose", which consists of text criteria and student desired texts. Both teachers and students seemed to agree that to be able to work with self-selected texts, some ground rules or criteria need to be put down. Through teacher interviews, focus group discussions and student questionnaires all participants were asked whether teachers should put criteria for the selection, and if so, what they should be. While the student questionnaire provided me with some insight into what type of criteria, if any, students

think are appropriate to guide their self-selection, teacher interviews and focus group discussions allowed me to retrieve a greater understanding of the teachers' and some of the students' opinions on the subject. Therefore, I will present the participants' thoughts and opinions regarding criteria, and organize them after how they participated: (1) Through a student questionnaire, (2) Semi-structured interviews, and (3) focus group discussions. Subsequently, I will present what type of texts students wish to read for the English subject.

Although none of the participants that I talked directly with conveyed that teachers should not place any criteria, some of the questionnaire respondents did. The questionnaire opened for students to write their answers using their own words. This was done to assure all students' opinions could be presented. Eight students expressed that they did not want any criteria when working with self-selection. One of these students went as far as claiming that: "Criteria sucks", while another student argued that: "I think it should be pretty free unless the text is one big piece of shit". Additionally, 24 students did not answer the question, 13 students answered that they do not know, five students put a question mark, while two students put either a dot or a dash. The majority of students who participated in the questionnaire did however seem to wish for some teacher criteria. A few students mentioned that the texts should include a varied language and be grammatically correct, it should fit the students' age group, the task assigned and type of genre should be a criterion. However, the criteria which were mentioned most frequently were length of the text, a text that fits your reading proficiency and a text that fits within a specific topic. One of the students argued: "Maybe that it should be relevant for the topic or that it is a specific genre", while another student wrote that: "I would say the teacher should have a demand that you have to choose a text that is so-and-so long, a text of a published author or texts that are classics". Although the students have different ideas for what criteria to put, it seems that the larger part of the students believe that being provided with some criteria would ease the action of choosing a text.

As for the teachers, they firstly underlined that the majority of students in year eighth-tenth grade do not like to read in general, and therefore do not. As a result of this, a lot of students do not have a clear idea of what they can choose. Additionally, Molly added that: "For many, the problem will be the choice. They do not have enough insight, perhaps, into own endurance, and choose too long texts". She further explained that the criteria she puts depend on where they are going with the work and what they are working on. While working on poetry, she once allowed her students to freely choose a song lyrics to work on, and did not put any criteria other than that it had to be lyrics from a song – what type of song was up to her students. George quickly expressed that he would put some criteria for the selection, but also admitted that he had not given any thought as for what they would be. After a short thinking break, he circled back to the issue of time. He concluded that working with self-selected texts takes so much time that it would not be possible to change texts half-way through, and because of that it is important to help the students find a good text on the first try. To achieve this, George considers it as important to be with the students in the selection process, guide them and perhaps offer a few suggestions. To help students ease the selection, George argued that it is possible to suggest books that the teacher believes might fit a specific student: "You can, without giving away too much, say something about the thematic and genre and so on, just to inform them. And they can take a choice based on that". He further stated that he would put criteria accordingly to what the students' expected learning outcome is, and argued that the presentation of the work could also be student-selected.

When asked in their focus group discussion about whether or not and what criteria should be included, students from eighth grade were quick to say that the length of the book should be a criterion. They express that it should not be more than 300 pages, but less than 100 pages would be too few. The eighth grader group was then asked whether it would be okay if students read texts with a different amount of pages, for example 300 versus 50 pages. Even though the students in this group agreed that it would be okay, they had some implications about it: "It would be okay, but it would kind of crash with everyone else. She will be done reading when I'm at page 50 and then she can start with the tasks". Another student agreed and added that it would also be more work for the student who read more pages and seemed to be implicitly expressing how that could be unfair. They further mentioned genre and finding a text that is age appropriate, and explained it with and expressed annoyance that: "when we've previously been to the library, the boys borrowed children's books". The tenth graders argue that providing some criteria for the selection would make it easier to choose. Another student agreed, and added that: "It might decrease the time it takes to choose too. You become very insecure when you can choose everything in the world". In addition to the eighth graders' suggestions, the students further claimed that whether the text should correspond with a specific topic should be a criteria. When asked whether it would be okay if students read texts that have different lengths, one student replied: "That depends on the student. At that point, you kind of just have to trust the student. That they will choose something that challenges them". From the different grades' responses it seems as though tenth graders have a greater understanding of differences in reading proficiency. The eighth grader students seemed to be under the impression that students read at the same pace and that reading texts with different lengths would create a big gap in the process of working with the texts. The tenth graders, on the other hand, seemed to be more aware of the differences in reading abilities and it is possible to assume that this student thinks students should be trusted more to take good choices concerning their own learning and development.

Through the questionnaire, students from all grades were asked what type of text they would prefer to work with. This question came after being presented with a definition of multimodal texts. The decision of including the definition before the question was made to ensure students have a broader understanding of the term "text" and to investigate whether students believe it is possible to gain a learning outcome from working with such texts. Students were asked to answer the question using their own words, which allowed the students to write more than one type of text. As a result, this question provided a total of 135 responses. The intended goal of the question was to investigate what type of text students wanted to read, however, some of the students added information to support their choice that was interesting for the sake of self-selection, and they are therefore also presented in Table 5.5.

Multimodal texts	Do not know	Short texts/easy to read	Up the level from teacher selection	Mentions a text due to personal interest	None	Specific genre/book
38	7	6	1	24	2	57

Table 5.5: Students' Desired Texts

One student started his answer with a question: "So computer games might be a form of multimodal text? Does that mean that I can play something like "Ori the Fallen" or "Hades" to learn English?". The student further commented that if this was not the case he wanted to read a comic, but only if he was allowed to choose because the student

does not find every comic funny or interesting. This student seemed to have a very sincere interest in computer games, but had perhaps not yet realized that it is possible to obtain a learning outcome from this interest. None of the students who participated in focus group discussions mentioned computer games, however, there was one other student who put "Fortnite and football-texts" as their answer to the student questionnaire. Whether this student wanted to read more written texts about the computer game or play it to learn English is unclear. Another student expressed that: "I would read some texts with difficult words, because the ones we do read are way too easy". From this quote it is possible to assume that this student feels that teacher selected texts do not fit their reading level, and that it would be better for the student to choose their own texts. A third student argued that the text should be short, but still include a lot of information, and supported his own statement by adding: "Not very long [texts], because I think a lot of people would then lose their concentration". Before finishing, this student added that they could read a book, but then it should be self-selected so that it is easier to keep focus throughout the entire book. Even though only 28 students had a vision of the term *multimodal texts*, 38 students said that they would choose to read such a text. This might suggest that students have previously not worked a lot with multimodal texts and were therefore perhaps not aware of the possibility and the benefits it can bring. Additionally, despite the fact that the teachers seem to be under the impression that they are better than the students at locating texts that fit the students' reading proficiency, at least one student disagrees. This student wanted to choose texts freely so that they could find a fitting text, because the ones they have read are too easy. In other words, they expressed a desire to be more challenged, and seemed to believe that self-selection will allow them just that.

5.3.3 Where to Choose – Finding English Texts in the Community

Another aspect that influences the selection process is the issue of where one is supposed to find texts. This section will therefore present the third category "Where to Choose" and its associated themes: Lack of library/funds and misconception of key terms. First, I will present the concerns regarding where to look for texts from students who participated in focus group discussions before turning to the teachers. Then, I will address and problematize a misconception of key terms found in both focus group discussions as well as teacher interviews, specifically how the participants' interpretation of the term "text" changes as soon as you put "self-selected" in front of it.

Before I had the chance to ask, students from the eighth grader's group confronted me with the question of where they were supposed to find texts. This led to a conversation about a missing school library and a desire for physical books. Students were asked whether they thought it would be easy to find a text that fits their reading proficiency when they countered with: "Where are we supposed to find texts? Is it, like, anywhere?". Some of the other students echoed this and said that they might know quite fast what they want to read, but not where to find that specific text. One eighth grader said that she would maybe use the internet to look for texts, which prompted another student to share that: "I have an internet site where you could get free books, but…". The student sounded reluctant about the site, for what reason is unclear, but we might assume that this student was hoping for some other possible way to retrieve texts. For example, the students expressed a desire for more physical copies of texts they are asked to read. They explained that they used to have a school library, but because the school needed the room as a classroom it was removed. One of the eighth graders added that there are some books in the cafeteria, but that no one wants to read them. A tenth grade student

also made a comment about how books you can find in a school library usually are not that great. Despite this, both groups expressed that they would like to have an available school library and the opportunity to borrow books. Students further commented that they usually work with a program called "Skolestudio" (School Studio) and that they spend most of their days reading from a screen. Over time this is tiring, and they would therefore prefer to have some physical texts to break up their screen time. Because this is a school close to a city, it is possible for the students to go to public libraries in their spare time, but it would be too time consuming to take them during class period.

In their interviews, both teachers expressed that they were positive towards the idea of self-selection obtaining an enhanced position in the new curriculum. However, as for now, they believe that the challenges of self-selection are greater than the benefits of it. Even if it was possible to work around some of these challenges, the teachers still consider the lack of available texts as a severe challenge. Molly explained that their school library is currently unavailable due to lack of space, but, "Also with an accessible school library, there are not enough books to give each student one book". George has tried a different approach where he reached out to the public library and made arrangements to borrow two classroom sets of a book (which still would be one class short per grade), but one week before they were supposed to read it, there had been a miscommunication and the books were not available anymore. He further explained that to be able to borrow such classroom sets from the library you need to plan very early. Although the teachers seemed to have a broad understanding of the term text, these interactions make it look like both teachers are under the impression that working with self-selected texts equals working with books. This brings us to the issue of misconception of key terms which I will address in the following paragraph.

In both focus group discussions as well as teacher interviews I started by asking for their interpretation of the term "text". This was done to assure that I had the same understanding as my participants regarding the central issue. In this conversation, as presented earlier in this chapter, the interpretation of the term varies, but both teachers mentioned that it can be anything that is written while the tenth grade students who participated in the focus group discussion said it could be everything between a few pages and a whole book. However, as visible in the previous paragraphs under section 1.4.3, *Where to Choose*, both teachers and students talked about the challenges of finding *books* and that there are no available *library* to help them in this process. Although libraries can provide, for example, comics or collections of poems it seems like a lot of the students as well as teachers are invested in the idea that self-selected texts equal books. It is interesting how the understanding of the term seemed to change from "text can be anything that is written" to "text equals books" just by adding the word "self-selected" in front of the term. This can however be problematic because it might discourage struggling readers to participate and also add to the teachers' concern about the time issue to a place where they do not allow self-selection at all. What causes this change in the participants' perception is unclear, but due to the teachers' many expressed disadvantages with self-selection one might assume that it stems from a subconscious prejudice towards working with self-selection that will make it easier to justify not implementing it.

6 Discussion

In this chapter, I will look at the findings presented in chapter five and discuss them in light of the theoretical frameworks included in this study. First of all, I would once again like to emphasize that this thesis investigates perceptions of self-selection, and as presented in the findings chapter neither teachers nor students have a lot of actual experience regarding this topic. The following discussion will therefore be based on participants' beliefs and preconceived notions toward self-selection. The intention of this discussion is to shed light on what Norwegian middle school teachers and students consider as obstacles to implementing self-selection and what they need to simplify the integration of this process. The research questions I intend to answer in this discussion are: (1) "How do students perceive the value of selecting their own texts?", (2) "What do students and teachers consider as challenges with self-selection and is it possible to work around these?", and (3) "What is needed to make the implementation of the self-selection process easier for both teachers and students?".

Before I start to investigate and provide information that will help me answer my research questions, it is necessary to explore the change in both teachers' and students' perceptions of the term "text" when it is combined with "self-selection". Initially, teachers seemed to agree with the Oxford Learners' Dictionary that a text can be anything that is written. Although the different student groups and their teachers had various interpretations of the term, they all had one thing in common: they all seemed to be under the impression that when the term "text" was combined with "self-selected" it equaled books. This is interesting in all parts, but perhaps particularly regarding the eighth graders who strongly argued that a book could not be a text, yet performed a 180-degree turn in their perception when talking about working with a self-selected text. As previously mentioned, most of the research conducted on this field seems to be about selecting books in particular (Dickerson, 2015; Furr, 2004; Hsu, 2004; Morgan & Wagner, 2013). This might contribute to and create an impression that "texts" and "self-selected texts" are two different and separate terms that do not necessarily need to be seen in relation to each other. This might promote a problem that unnecessarily contributes to the list that teachers consider challenges of self-selection. Another interesting remark located in the findings regarding "texts" is the notion of multimodality and participants' understanding, or lack of understanding, of the term. Almost 70% of the students provided answers which reveal that they are unfamiliar with or unsure of the term. Additionally, one of two teachers admitted to not knowing the term while the other teacher's understanding was limited to only include comics. One might assume that the participants are unaware of the possibility to select all texts that fall under the category of multimodal texts. Perhaps this narrow and almost absent understanding of multimodal texts contributes to the notion that "text" and "self-selected text" are separate terms and that the latter equals books.

It is also interesting to look at why self-selection and texts in general have gained this enhanced position in the curriculum. What qualities and what outcome do we want our students to be left with after working with self-selection? The LK20 curriculum clearly says that language learning occurs in the encounter with English texts. It is further

elaborated that such encounters include reflection, critical assessment and interpretation. In other words, working with texts should help students experience cultural and linguistic diversity and lay the foundation for students to see their own, as well as others', identities in a multicultural and multilingual context (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p. 3). However, the English subject should also contribute to reading pleasure. Allington and Gabriel (2012) argue that allowing students the experience of reading something they choose and that fits their reading proficiency every day will contribute to this. Additionally, several researchers express that self-selection will allow the students to be more involved in their learning, practice decision-making, create intrinsic (hopefully lifelong) motivation and fulfill their need for autonomy (Beymer & Thomson, 2015; Cambria & Guthrie, 2010; Guthrie & Davis, 2003; Merkler, 2017; Sewell, 2003). It then follows that working with self-selected texts may contribute to the development of independent students who can contribute to society on a local and global level as well as embrace and value cultural diversity. The new curriculum (LK20) includes very broad and open competence aims, which provides teachers with a lot of freedom for interpretation. Nevertheless, it might also contribute to confusion. Regarding self-selection, the curriculum is quite vague in describing what is supposed to be the primary takeaways, which in turn might contribute to the teachers' uncertainty of how to implement such a project.

6.1 Teacher Identified Challenges

Turning to the research questions, I will identify the key challenges teachers report concerning self-selection before outlining each of them in a separate paragraph. The participating teachers in this study seemed to be concerned about three main challenges: (1) The issue of time, (2) the students' abilities and will to choose a text that fits their reading level, and (3) what takeaways the students are supposed to be left with after such a project. However, and although the teachers did not explicitly express so, I will suggest a fourth source of concern among the teachers, namely (4) how to work with the texts during the project to enable students to reach the desired outcome when the project ends.

6.1.1 The Issue of Time

One major concern that appeared to contribute to the teachers' pile of reasons not to implement self-selection was the amount of time it would take to complete such a project. They identified problems regarding the time issue in several steps of the process. First of all, they were concerned that while self-selection has gained an enhanced position the subject has not received more hours, and as a result such a project would take away too much time to get through the rest of the obligatory curriculum. Second, they had a somewhat contradicting worry that students would take too much time choosing a text, but also that the time constraint would contribute to students not taking enough time to choose a text that fits both their reading proficiency, endurance and interests. Additionally, one concern regarded how long it would take the different students to finish a text, knowing that this can vary a lot from one student to another.

6.1.2 Students' Abilities and Will to Choose Texts

The biggest concern the teachers had concerned whether or not the students would be able to choose a text that fits their reading proficiency. They were concerned that factors such as the time constraint, how the level of the book they choose might impact how peers perceive them, friends' choices and lack of insight into their own endurance in

reading would complicate the choice and result in a book that is too long or too difficult for the student. In discussions with both teachers and students, the conversation tended to somewhat stagnate around the selection process. It seemed as though the selection process in itself was considered too big of an obstacle to be able to tackle and talk extensively about what follows the selection. As presented in Table 5.4, it is clear that for eighth, ninth and tenth grade students, the most desired way to obtain texts is to choose from two to three teacher selected texts. This option exceeded *choose freely*, and combined these two alternatives gained more than 87% of the votes, indicating that only a fair few wish to not take any part in what texts they are going to read. Justifying their answers, several of the students argued that being able to choose from anything would be difficult, indicating that they would experience what Beymer and Thomson (2015) call "choice-overload" and a sense of being overwhelmed. The authors claim that being forced to conduct a choice anyway might decrease motivation, which directly contradicts the purpose of the task. When the students still prefer to take some part in the selection, they justify it with a desire to be more involved in their learning process and that decision-making, although within a limited selection, will provide them with a sense of control and autonomy.

Guthrie and Davis (2003) argue that middle school classrooms tend to be more teacher-directed than student-centered. George also commented on this in his interview where he expressed that a positive aspect self-selection brings is allowing students to take back some control. He justified this by stating that there already is enough teacher control in middle school. Expressing a desire for being more involved indicates that students share the same belief. Another highly used justification considers students' own interests. Several of the students pointed out that a significant benefit of self-selection is that it is easier to find a text they think is interesting which makes it easier to focus throughout and finish the text. From the students' different responses, it is clear that the interests of students in middle school vary in both genre, topic and modality. However, from one of the students' responses we can also assume that the topic within the different genres and/or modalities matter. One student explicitly said that they would want to read comics, but only if they get to choose which one, because this student did not find every comic funny. According to Guthrie and Davis (2003), students' intrinsic motivation seems to decrease as they reach middle school, and teachers have to try to find ways to re-engage them to reading. The authors further claim that a possible approach to achieve this is by connecting current intrinsic motivation to reading before further building and strengthen this motivation to the act of reading itself. One way to do this is to help and/or encourage the students to locate several texts with genres or topics that are of particular interest to them.

6.1.3 Evaluation and Expected Outcome
When it comes to evaluating the students and the takeaways they are supposed to be left with, teachers seem to be stuck on a track that only leads to a book report. This could imply that the teachers see the book report as the most significant outcome of such a project, excluding other takeaways students might obtain such as point of view and language enrichment. While whether or not students were able to choose was considered a big challenge, George also found it challenging if too many students managed to, because that would result in a lot of books he would need knowledge of. The students also seemed to be under the impression that the teacher would have to read and know all of the different books the students chose. None of the researchers included in this study mentions anything about a need for the teacher to know each text

the students read. The idea that this is necessary might stem from the uncertainty that comes with trying new things. This would contribute to the issue of time, where the teachers would need to spend a lot of time reading texts that students read instead of aiding them in their process. Through conversations with the teachers, they seemed to be more willing to allow the students to self-select the way they should present the text they had worked with, rather than the text itself. According to Cambria and Guthrie (2010), providing students with such mini choices contributes to a sense of autonomy and increases motivation. However, reading a text that is of no interest to the student might dampen this motivation.

6.1.4 Working With a Variety of Texts
The fourth challenge concerns how to work with the text during the project to enable students to reach the desired outcome when the project ends. I argue that a lot of the teachers' concerns fall under this challenge, and that finding ways to solve this challenge would help teachers to adjust their vision of self-selection to include more benefits than challenges. Seeing as self-selection is a fairly new concept in the curriculum, teachers have not had a lot of time to find inspiration or creative ways to conduct such a project. Perhaps the biggest obstacle to the implementation of self-selection is lack of experience, and perhaps what teachers need is to be presented with possible ways to work with self-selection while still working on other aspects of the curriculum. The teachers do not have experience with it, nor do they know the framework around it, which feels unsafe and forces them out of their comfort zone. Perhaps the notion that self-selected texts must equate to books is an unconscious result of this uncertainty. Stepping out of the comfort zone can be considered a frightening affair, and maybe this notion is a defense mechanism the brain sets up to make it easier to avoid implementing self-selection. To justify my initial claim that what teachers need is examples of ways to work with self-selection, I will in the consecutive paragraphs discuss the issue of what is needed to make the implementation of self-selection easier for both teachers and students.

6.2 Turning Challenges Into Opportunities

As previously presented, both teachers and students seem to agree with researchers that there are several benefits and reasons to implement self-selection in an EFL classroom. While the highest regarded benefit seems to be including and working with students' interests, the strongest challenge concerns the ability and will to make good decisions. The students who participated in the focus group discussions appeared to be too concerned about the selection process and how the teacher was going to be able to read all of the different books they chose to have any clear idea of how they could actually work with self-selected texts. The teachers' list of disadvantages and challenges also seemed to overshadow and limit their creativity regarding different angles to work with the text. Both Molly and George seemed to be sure that their students would not be able to choose a text that fits their level of reading. However, according to Pustika (2018), when students read something they are interested in their persistence is stronger and they can read texts that are at a higher level than if the text was of no interest.

The first task for the students in a project that involves self-selection is just that - to choose a text. Both teachers and most of the students agreed that setting some criteria for the selection would both make it easier and ensure that the text suited the various students' reading skills as well as the task and theme they are to work on. While both teachers suggested they would put some criteria for the selection, they expressed that what these would be would depend on what they wanted to get out of reading that text.

Only 13 students explicitly argued that they did not wish for any criteria to limit their selection. However, some of the students provided an unclear response, leaving 68 students who explicitly expressed a wish for criteria to help limit and ease their choice. Although the teachers did not have a clear vision of what criteria they saw appropriate, students who participated in focus group discussions had. They admitted to having a hard time making decisions, being concerned the text they chose would not result in learning, that they would not find a text that suited the topic or their reading proficiency or that other students would not take it seriously and choose too easy books, which would be unfair towards those who did. Students also reflected on the length of the book in relation to the various reading levels, and although they expressed an understanding of how this should be taken into account, they seemed to be of the opinion that this adapting should take place by adjusting the level, but keeping roughly the same amount of pages – again to maintain the sense of fairness between the students and their workload. From the studies previously presented in this paper, they have put criteria such as length of the text, questions to answer before choosing a text (Hsu, 2004), or that it needs to be approved by the teacher and the student's parents (Morgan & Wagner, 2013). Other researchers suggested teachers should make the decision or did not mention specific details about the students' selection process at all (Furr, 2004; Dickerson, 2015). The fact that students are concerned that they choose texts that would not result in learning suggests that they do not consider reading in itself as a way of learning, but only consider the information they gain from the text as educational. This view excludes several benefits of reading that self-selected authentic texts bring, such as how it contributes to enhanced vocabulary, word recognition skills (Cambria & Guthrie, 2010), and provide opportunities to interact with idiomatic expressions, and interesting proverbs (Khan & Alasmari, 2018) as well as different ways of formatting a sentence and connecting ideas (Floris, 2004). To counter the challenge that students choose texts that are too difficult due to a fear of being seen as low-level readers, it is important to create a safe and supportive classroom environment. An environment where there is acceptance and understanding of differences between students' preferences, interests, levels, and perseverance.

The teachers who participated in this study seemed to be under the impression that working with self-selected texts takes so much time that when students have chosen a text they need to stick with it until the end. This, however, somewhat contradicts the purpose of selecting their own texts. As previously mentioned, working with self-selection should promote feelings of autonomy and contribute to reading pleasure. The experience of choosing a text that is not a good fit, whether this is due to interest, reading proficiency, modality or genre, is an authentic real-life experience that could benefit the students. Additionally, the idea that one must stick to and finish a book may suggest that teachers, as some of their students, do not fully see the value of reading in itself unless it leads to an end product such as a book review. George admitted to feeling that it was a challenge if too many of his students were able to choose a text, although it actually is a positive thing, because it would mean that he would have to read all of them. To turn this view to be exclusively positive, George needs a way to work with the texts that does not require him to read all the books. Morgan and Wagner (2013) suggested incorporating mini lessons on important aspects as a way of working with texts without the need to finish them, write a book report or answer questions after every chapter. By implementing this, the primary learning aspects occur during the reading itself where students have to identify and incorporate different aspects while reading and working with the text. The teachers would not need to know the text to be able to determine if

the students are using the concepts correctly. While countering the notion that teachers need knowledge of all the texts, this angle also opposes the idea that students have to finish the text they started with due to the time constraint. Morgan and Wagner's (2013) mini lessons puts emphasis on the concepts and utilize the texts as a means to understand and practice utilizing them. This means that the text as an entirety is not necessarily the most important, allowing students to choose a new text if it was a wrong match for them, as well as start new texts when they finish one. The fact that students can read several texts throughout the project might contribute to challenge the notion that a text equals a book because the length of the texts does not play a significant role.

Another way of turning the amount of texts that circulates in the classroom to a benefit is that students can use each other for text recommendations. Dickerson (2015), whose examination considers only traditional books and not multimodal texts, suggests implementing a tracker at the back of the classroom where students put their names and the titles of their books in relation to genre. Students were further encouraged to seek out other students for book recommendations. This would allow the students to benefit from the variety of text selections, and might also contribute to removing the stigma of choosing texts that are "too easy". Additionally, when asked about a text they read, students will have to critically assess the topic and level of it while at the same time feeling like they are helping peers to find a good match. This might in turn contribute to increase the students' motivation for reading as well as contribute to a feeling of autonomy. Guthrie and Davis (2003) as well as George argue that most things inside the classroom are controlled by the teacher. Involving the students in decision making means teachers will have to let go of some of their control. Not being able to control the outcome might create a sense of powerlessness and be a step out of the comfort zone for the teachers. However, the benefits this provides the students with are, as presented in this paper, significant and should for that reason be something every student are allowed to experience.

6.3 Limitations and Further Research

I have tried to contribute to fill a gap in the research regarding self-selection, nevertheless, my study has its limitations. First of all, this study obtained all its data from one school, and although I have collected a lot of data it would have provided a more reliable overview and insight by also including other schools. Additionally, and as previously mentioned I am neither an experienced interviewer nor have I ever managed any focus group discussions. When analyzing my material, I located some places where I wish I had asked more follow-up questions. In other words, my inexperience might constitute a limitation of my study. In the methodology section I discussed how my passion for reading might have colored the conversation. If so, my inability to maintain neutral can also be considered a limitation of the study. Qualitative research such as this provides a lot of free text data that requires interpretation on the behalf of the researcher, and although I have taken measures to counter this, I might have interpreted some answers differently than intended by the participants.

In order to counter potential limitations, I will suggest some possible directions for further research. My study has focused on teachers and students between eighth and tenth grade, however, self-selection is already mentioned in the competence aims after fourth grade. It would therefore be interesting to investigate perceptions as well as conduct a case study with students as low as in the third grade. Additionally, it would be interesting to complete a self-selection project with students of higher grades as well, in

order to see whether their perceptions regarding their desired method of choosing texts would change after gaining actual experience with it. However, investigating the lack of texts in the EFL classroom and how more accessible texts would affect a self-selection process would also be interesting. More specifically, how it would impact the students' ability to choose texts that correspond with, and perhaps slightly challenge, their level of reading.

7 Concluding Remarks

Throughout this qualitative study I have presented findings from two separate semi-structured teacher interviews, two focus group discussions with eighth and tenth grade students as well as answers from a questionnaire with 120 students from eight, ninth and tenth grade. I have investigated and discussed these in light of a relevant theoretical framework with the aim of answering the following three questions: "How do students and teachers perceive the value of students selecting their own texts?," "What do students and teachers consider as challenges with self-selection and is it possible to work around these?," and "What is needed to make the implementation of the self-selection process easier for both teachers and students?" In order to do so, I have discussed the benefits that follow with allowing students to participate and make decisions for their own learning, as well as different ways to implement self-selection while also incorporating other parts of the curriculum. Because neither teachers nor students had explicit experience with self-selection, their perceptions are mostly based on preconceived opinions and beliefs.

Both teachers and students considered the idea of self-selection as profoundly valuable. Students expressed that being allowed to choose would provide them with a better focus, enhance their motivation and increase their interest for completing a task. They further explained that reading texts of their choice would also simplify the reading process for those who struggle because they can read about topics that cohere with their interests. Furthermore, being involved in the decision-making process and being provided with an opportunity to influence one's own learning creates a sense of ownership and responsibility that further motivates the students. The teachers also saw the value of implementing self-selection and in addition to what the students mentioned, they specifically highlighted the benefit of students being allowed to take part in their own learning. Additionally, they supported the feeling of autonomy students might obtain through working on such a project.

Although both teachers and students viewed self-selection as greatly valuable, they still indicated some concerns regarding the actual implementation. While the students saw several benefits of choosing their own texts, they expressed that it is possible to have too much freedom and were concerned that being allowed to choose completely freely would be both overwhelming and difficult. Additionally, they were concerned that some students would not take the selection seriously which in turn would be unfair towards those who did due to the difference in amount of work it would require. As for the teachers, the issue of time was presented as the most challenging. The time issue relates to the choosing process, the expected outcome and the evaluation process. First, teachers expressed that a self-selection project would take so long that the outcome students are left with should be equally extensive. Second, they implied that self-selection made it difficult to differentiate and they were concerned the students would not be able to choose a text that fits their reading level and proficiency. The teachers were also under the impression that they needed to have read all the texts their students read in order to evaluate them, adding to the issue of time on the behalf of the teachers.

Throughout this text I have suggested possible ways to ease the implementation of a self-selection project. In order to counter students' fears of being overwhelmed by

choice, they expressed a desire to be allowed to choose within a limited selection provided by the teacher. Nevertheless, those who want to and are capable of, should be allowed to choose freely. Throughout such a process, the teacher should be present and offer support and guidance, thus helping the students in developing the ability to eventually choose for themselves. Turning to the teachers, they considered the challenges of self-selection to be greater than the benefits. I have argued that this misconception might stem from the lack of knowledge of how to conduct such a project as well as a perhaps unconscious fear of implementing a project of this size without any particular experience or guidance. In order to counter this, I have claimed that the main thing needed to ease the implementation of a self-selection process is ideas of various approaches to adopt. Changing the focus of the outcome to not always include content, but also concepts such as point of view and connotation versus denotation, would aid the fact that students have different texts and the perception that teachers need to know the texts students read.

Through this study I have not tried to advocate for any "right" way to work with self-selected texts, but rather present possible suggestions in an attempt to ease the implementation of such in Norwegian EFL classrooms. These suggestions are based on the theoretical framework and guided by answers provided from the study's participants. My hope and desire is that these suggestions will aid teachers in their quest to allow students to obtain more control and a sense of autonomy by putting into practice a project in which they believe and find value.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Student Questionnaire

Appendix 2: Interview Guide for Focus Group Discussions

Appendix 3: Interview Guide for Semi-Structured Interviews

Appendix 4: Information Letter

Appendix 5: NSD approval

Appendix 6: Translations

Appendix 1: Student Questionnaire

Spørreundersøkelse «Oppfatninger av selvvalgte tekster i engelsk»

Svarene kan brukes i forskningsøyemed (sett kryss):JA   - NEI

(Med selvvalgte tekster menes tekster utenom de vanlige tekstbøkene dere får utlevert fra skolen. Altså tekster du selv har valgt å lese. En tekst kan være bøker, nyhetsartikler, tegneserier, blogger osv., men det kan også være en YouTube film, en TikTok eller en Instagram post)

Spørsmål

1. Hvilket trinn går du på?
2. På en skala fra 1-6, hvor 1 er svært sjelden og 6 er svært ofte, hvor ofte vil du si at dere selv får velge tekstene dere skal lese i engelskundervisningen?
    (Velg et punkt på skalaen og begrunn valget ditt)
3. Hva innebærer begrepet *tekst* for deg?
4. I din oppfatning, hva innebærer det at en tekst er multimodal?
5. Når du nå kjenner til hvor vidt tekstbegrepet er; hva slags type tekster ville du lest i engelskundervisningen hvis du fikk velge selv?
6. På hvilke måter kunne du fått et læringsutbytte av en slik type tekst som du beskrev i spørsmål 5?
7. På en skala fra 1-6, hvor 1 er svært lite og 6 er svært mye, hvor læringsrikt synes du det er å jobbe med tekster i engelskundervisningen?
8. Hvilke fordeler ser du ved å selv velge hva slags tekster du skal lese i engelskundervisningen?
9. Hvis du kunne velge, ville du helst:
    (Kryss av for boksen som passer best med dine ønsker)
    ☐ Velge helt fritt hvilke tekster du skal lese i engelskundervisningen
    ☐ Velge mellom 3-5 alternativer læreren legger fram
    ☐ At læreren alltid velger hvilke tekster vi skal lese i engelskundervisningen
    ☐ Annet
    a. Begrunn valget du tok i spørsmål 9
10. Hvis noen – hvilke kriterier mener du læreren bør sette for tekstene dere velger når dere skal jobbe med selvvalgte tekster?
11. På en skala fra 1-6, hvor 1 er svært lite og 6 er svært mye, hvor mye vil du si at du deltar i engelskundervisningen?
    (Velg et punkt på skalaen og begrunn valget ditt)
    a. På hvilken måte tror du deltakelsen din hadde endret seg ved bruk av selvvalgte tekster?
12. På en skala fra 1-6, hvor 1 er svært lite og 6 er svært mye, hvor viktig er det for deg at du kan kjenne igjen deg selv i tekstene du leser?
    (Velg et punkt på skalaen og begrunn valget ditt)
13. Hvilke fordeler ser du ved å lese tekster hvor du føler deg representert?
14. På en skala fra 1-6, hvor 1 er svært lite og 6 er svært mye, hvor verdifullt synes du det er å lære om mennesker som er forskjellig fra deg i tekstene du leser?
15. Hvilke fordeler ser du ved å lese tekster hvor folk som ikke er som deg er representert?
16. Hvordan lærer du best engelsk?
17. Hva er en ting du skulle ønske læreren din visste om deg, eller tok mer hensyn til, som vil gjøre engelskundervisningen lettere for deg?

Appendix 2: Interview Guide for Focus Group Discussions

1. Er det noen av dere som er glad i å lese på fritiden? (Håndsopprekning)
2. Hva slags type tekster leser dere helst på fritiden?
3. Hva legger dere i begrepet tekst?
4. Kjenner dere til begrepet multimodale tekster?
    a) Tror dere at dere kan få noe læringsutbytte av å lese slike type tekster i engelskundervisningen? Læringsutbytte vil da si hva dere sitter igjen med etter å ha lest og jobbet med den selvvalgte teksten
    b) Hva slags utbytte kan man få av å lese slike type tekster?
5. Hvordan opplever dere det å jobbe med selvvalgte tekster
6. I hvor stor grad får dere selv velge hva slags type tekster dere skal lese i engelskundervisningen?
7. Hvordan opplever dere det å få velge tekster helt fritt?
8. Hvis dere kan velge helt fritt hva dere skal lese, hvor lang tid tar det før dere har bestemt dere for hva dere skal lese?
9. Selvvalgte tekster har fått en større plass i læreplanen. Dersom læreren deres hadde sagt "Dere kan selv velge hvilken av disse tre tekstene dere skal lese" - hvordan ville dere opplevd det?
10. Kan dere lære noe av å være på plattformer som tik tok, YouTube eller Instagram? I så fall hva og hvordan?
11. Opplever dere at engelskundervisningen er variert?
12. Er det viktig for dere å se dere selv i tekstene dere leser?
    a) Hvorfor
13. Hvordan opplever dere det å se folk som er ulik deg selv i tekstene dere leser?

Appendix 3: Interview Guide for Semi-Structured Interviews

1. Hvor lenge har du undervist i engelskfaget?
2. Hvilke trinn har du hatt engelskundervisning på?
   a. Har du fulgt en og samme klasse gjennom ungdomsskolen eller holdt deg til et trinn og dermed fått ny klasse for hvert år?
3. Hva innebærer begrepet *tekst* for deg?
4. Hva innebærer begrepet *multimodale tekster* for deg?
5. Hvilke tanker har du rundt multimodale tekster og implementering av det i ditt klasserom?
6. I hvilken grad lar du elevene dine selv få velge hva slags tekster de skal lese i undervisningen din?
   a. Legger du noen begrensninger/kriterier når elevene skal velge tekster?
7. Hvordan arbeider elevene når de jobber med selvvalgte tekster?
   a. Avviker dette mye fra hvordan dere jobber med tekster du har valgt for elevene dine?
8. Hvilke tanker har du rundt det at selvvalgte tekster har fått en større plass i læreplanen?
9. Når elevene får jobbe med selvvalgte tekster, lar du de fritt velge mellom alle typer multimodale tekster?
10. Hvilke fordeler ser du med å la elevene selv få velge hva slags tekster de skal jobbe med i undervisningen?
11. Ser du noen ulemper med å la elevene velge tekster selv?
    a. Hvordan kan du unngå/jobbe rundt disse ulempene?
12. Har du noen bekymringer rundt det å implementere selvvalgte multimodale tekster?
13. Tenker du at elevene kan få utbytte av å jobbe med multimodale tekster som for eksempel en Instagram post eller en TikTok – hvis ja, på hvilken måte?

Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet "Oppfatninger av selvvalgte tekster i engelsk"?

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er å undersøke oppfatninger om og bruk av selvvalgte tekster i engelskundervisningen. I dette skrivet gir vi deg informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.

Formål

Formålet med dette prosjektet er å undersøke elevers og læreres oppfatninger av selvvalgte tekster, og hva de anerkjenner som en tekst. Selvvalgte tekster har i LK20 fått tilegnet en mye større plass og denne oppgaven ønsker å gjøre rede for følgende spørsmål;

- Hvor verdifullt opplever elevene det er å jobbe med tekster i engelsk undervisningen?
- Hvordan tenker lærere rundt det å inkludere selvvalgte multimodale tekster i sin undervisning?
- I hvor stor grad får elevene selv velge tekster de skal arbeide med i engelskundervisningen?

For å svare på disse spørsmålene vil jeg intervjue noen lærere, samt gjennomføre en spørreundersøkelse både på 8., 9. og 10. trinn. Etter spørreundersøkelsen ønsker jeg deltakere fra 8. og 10. trinn til å gjennomføre to fokusgruppeintervjuer for å komme med i dybden og få en større forståelse for svarene, og deres tanker rundt selvvalgte tekster i engelskundervisningen.

Dette er utgangspunktet for et masterprosjekt i emne MGLU5207 ved NTNU.

Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?

Institutt for Lærerutdanning (ILU) ved NTNU er ansvarlig for prosjektet.

Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?

Ettersom dette er et masterprosjekt er det lagt opp til muligheten for å samle inn data i løpet av praksisperioden, og som lærer/elev i engelsk på praksisskolen blir du spurt om å delta på et intervju knyttet til mitt prosjekt. Utvalget til prosjektet er basert på hvilket trinn deltakerne underviser på. Henvendelsen blir sendt ut til elever/engelsklærere ved 8., 9. og 10. trinn for å få en forståelse for om oppfatningen av selvvalgte tekster endres i løpet av ungdomsskoleløpet.

Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?
Engelsklærere:

- Hvis du velger å delta i prosjektet innebærer dette et intervju. Intervjuet vil ta ca. 15-20 minutter og omfatter omtrent 10-12 spørsmål. Det vil tas lydopptak og notater fra intervjuet underveis.

Elever ved 8. og 10. trinn:

- Hvis du velger å delta i prosjektet innebærer dette et fokusgruppeintervju. Dette vil bestå av en gruppe på 4-6 elever fra ditt trinn som ønsker å delta i intervjuet. Intervjuet vil ta ca. 20-25 minutter. Det vil bli tatt lydopptak av intervjuet. Dette vil bli anonymisert og opptakene vil bli slettet ved prosjektslutt.
  - Hvis ønskelig kan foresatte se intervjuguiden på forhånd. Hvis dette er ønskelig ta kontakt i forkant (mail: marievei@stud.ntnu.no, tlf: 90583715)

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

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.

- De som vil ha tilgang til dataen som blir hentet inn er Marie Veimodet (Student)
- Navnet ditt vil bli anonymisert slik at du ikke vil bli gjenkjent i oppgaven
- Alle lydopptak blir lagret på NTNUs egen passord-sikret server som kun er tilgjengelig for prosjektansvarlig. Opptakene anonymiseres.

Hva skjer med personopplysningene dine når forskningsprosjektet avsluttes?
Prosjektet vil etter planen avsluttes 25.05.22. Ved prosjektslutt vil alle personopplysninger og opptak bli slettet.

Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?
Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

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

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

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

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

- NTNU ved Marthe Sofie Pande-Rolfsen (marthe.s.pande-rolfsen@ntnu.no, tlf: 91331905) eller Marie Veimodet (marievei@stud.ntnu.no, tlf: 90583715).
- Vårt personvernombud: Thomas Helgesen (thomas.helgesen@ntnu.no, tlf. 93079038)

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

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

Med vennlig hilsen

Marthe Sofie Pande-Rolfsen   Marie Veimodet

(Forsker/veileder)   (student)

Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet *Oppfatninger av selvvalgte tekster i engelsk*, og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til:

å delta i intervju

at det blir tatt lydopptak av intervjuet

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

----

(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet *Oppfatninger av selvvalgte tekster i engelsk*, og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til at mitt barn _____ kan:

delta i fokusgruppeintervju

at det blir tatt lydopptak av intervjuet

Jeg samtykker til at mitt barns opplysninger behandles frem til prosjektet er avsluttet

----

(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

Appendix 5: SIKT Approval

Sikt

Vurdering av behandling av personopplysninger

Referansenummer   **Vurderingstype**   **Dato**
622018   Standard   05.12.2022

Prosjekttittel
Oppfatninger av selvvalgte tekster i engelsk

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

Prosjektansvarlig
Marthe Sofie Pande-Rolfsen

Student
Marie Veimodet

Prosjektperiode
21.10.2022 - 15.06.2023

Kategorier personopplysninger
Alminnelige

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

Behandlingen av personopplysningene er lovlig så fremt den gjennomføres som oppgitt i meldeskjemaet. Det lovlige grunnlaget gjelder til 15.06.2023.

Meldeskjema 🗗

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

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

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

TAUSHETSPLIKT
Lærere har taushetsplikt. Intervjuene må derfor gjennomføres uten at det fremkommer opplysninger som kan identifisere enkelte elever eller avsløre taushetsbelagt informasjon. Vi anbefaler at du er spesielt oppmerksom på at ikke bare navn, men også identifiserende bakgrunnsopplysninger må utelates, som for eksempel alder, kjønn, trinn, diagnoser og eventuelle spesielle hendelser. Vi forutsetter også at dere er forsiktig ved å bruke eksempler under intervjuene.

Studenten og læreren har et felles ansvar for det ikke kommer frem taushetsbelagte opplysninger under intervjuet. Vi anbefaler

derfor at studenten minner deltagerne om taushetsplikten før intervjuet startet.

TYPE OPPLYSNINGER OG VARIGHET
Prosjektet vil behandle alminnelige kategorier av personopplysninger frem til 15.06.2023.

LOVLIG GRUNNLAG FOR UTVALG 1
Prosjektet vil innhente samtykke fra de registrerte og samtykke fra foresatte til deltagerne (barn under 16 år) 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 og samtykke fra foresatte for barn under 16 år, jf. personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 a.

LOVLIG GRUNNLAG FOR UTVALG 2
Prosjektet vil innhente samtykke fra engelsklærere (utvalg 2) til behandlingen av personopplysninger. Vår vurdering er at prosjektet legger opp til et samtykke i samsvar med kravene i art. 4 og 7, ved at det er en frivillig, spesifikk, informert og utvetydig bekreftelse som kan dokumenteres, og som den registrerte kan trekke tilbake.

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

LOVLIG GRUNNLAG FOR TREDJEPERSONER
Prosjektet vil innhente samtykke fra tredjepersoner som er engelsklærere til utvalg 1 til behandlingen av personopplysninger. Vår vurdering er at prosjektet legger opp til et samtykke i samsvar med kravene i art. 4 og 7, ved at det er en frivillig, spesifikk, informert og utvetydig bekreftelse som kan dokumenteres, og som tredjepersoner kan trekke tilbake.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Du må vente på svar fra oss før endringen gjennomføres.

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

Kontaktperson hos oss: Callan Ramewal
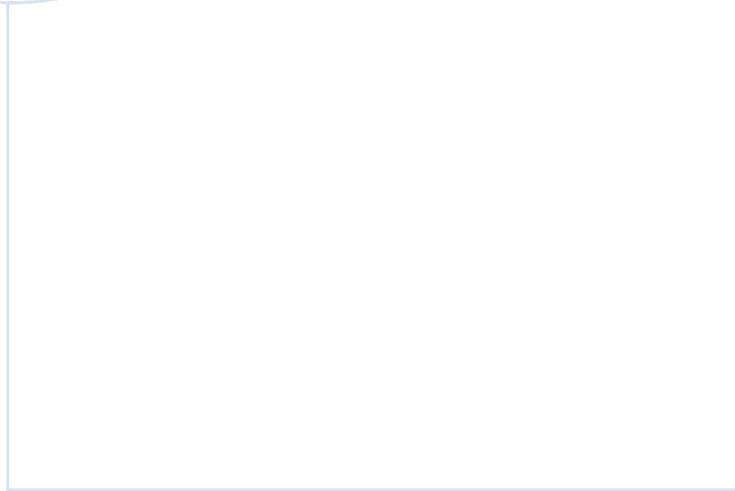
Lykke til med prosjektet!

Appendix 6: Translations

Participants' answers in Norwegian	My translation
Hva tenker du på med tekst? Mener du sånn, en lang side med sånn – ord?	What do you mean with *text?* Do you mean, like a long page with like - words?
Hvis jeg tenker på en bok, så er det en bok liksom	If I think about a book, it is a book
Ja, hvis man tenker på en bok så sier man ikke tekst da	Yes, if you're thinking about a book you would not say text
Noe som er sånn noen sider langt kanskje. Eller at det er en sånn bok kanskje. Eller at det er informasjon som er relevant for det vi jobber med	Maybe something that is a few pages long. Or maybe it could be a book. Or information that is relevant to what we are working with
For meg er det en innledning, to hoveddeler, noe fakta og en avslutning	For me it is an introduction, two main paragraphs, some facts and an ending
En sammensatt samling av setninger etter hverandre som gir mening	A compound collection of consecutive sentences that provides a meaning
En tekst er trykte eller skrevne ord, setninger og avsnitt som er føyd sammen til en helhet, for eksempel i brev, fortellinger, skildringer, romaner, noveller, skuespill, dikt og så videre	A text is printed or written words, sentences and paragraphs joined together to form a whole, for example in letters, stories, descriptions, novels, short stories, plays, poems and so on
Så det er jo kommunikasjon og tolkning av kommunikasjon	It is communication and interpretation of communication
Det at en tekst er multimodal betyr at den er med på å påvirke samfunnet, den når ut til alle	That a text is multimodal means that it contributes to influence the society, it reaches everyone
Dette spørsmålet ble stilt om morgningen og jeg er derfor ikke i stand til å svare på det	This question was asked during the morning, and therefore I am not capable of answering it
Er det ikke sånn at det kan være tekst, bilder, lyd? Kombinere dem?	Can't it be text, sound, pictures? Combining them?
Hva annet kan det være da? Sangtekster går jo under vanlig tekst. Tegneserier er vel det jeg svarer da	What else can it be? Song lyrics fits under normal texts. I guess comics is my answer then
Jeg vet ikke	I don't know
Jeg kan jo skyte inn på det da, for jeg har sikkert hørt begrepet, men jeg har ikke lært med det begrepet	I can just jump in, because I have probably heard the term, but I haven't learned it
Eller, jeg velger på en måte å ikke prioritere den akkurat nå	Well, I kind of choose not to prioritize it right now
Jeg kan ikke huske noen ganger vi har fått velge	I cannot remember any times we have been allowed to choose for ourselves
En sjelden gang får vi velge mellom et par tekster, men da er de valgt for oss	On rare occasions we get to choose between a few texts, but then they are chosen for us
Det hender at det er flere forskjellige valg, eller at det vi må lese er basert på nivået våres i engelsk, så da får vi velge	Sometimes there are different choices, or what we have to read is based on our English level, so then we get to choose

Fem, for da får vi velge de tekstene vi liker og som vi må lære mer om	Five, because then we get to choose the texts we like and what we need to learn more about
For noen er det sikkert veldig mye, så hvis du på en måte får sånn du kan velge mellom disse så tror jeg kanskje det hadde blitt enklere hvert fall for flere av oss	For some people it can be a lot [to choose from], so if you instead were presented with *you can choose from these* I think that would make it easier for some of us
Eller man kunne fått alternativer, men man kunne også ha valgt sjøl	Or, you can have some alternatives, but also choose freely if you prefer
Jeg synes det er fint å kunne bestemme litt selv, og påvirke det selv, men jeg er også litt dårlig på å ta valg så det kan være litt vanskelig og	I think it is nice to be able to decide and have some influence, but I am also somewhat bad at taking decisions so it might be a bit difficult too
Da er det jo kanskje fint også, hvis bøkene er litt forskjellig, sånn nivå da, for det er jo ikke alle som er på samme lesenivå og sånt. Og da hvis en kanskje er litt enklere så er det jo også fint at dem har et alternativ som passer til seg	Then it might be good if those books differ a bit, like for the level of the book, because not all of the students have the same reading proficiency, so if one of the books is a bit easier it is nice that they also have a text that fits them
Jeg tror at hvis vi leser det vi vil, lærer vi ikke mye, men hvis lærerne velger et par bøker for oss lærer vi mer. Da får vi illusjon av fritt valg, og vil lese på grunn av det	I think that if we read whatever we want, we won't learn much, but when they [the teachers] choose a few books for us we will learn more. We get the illusion of choosing freely and want to read because of it
Jeg ville valgt å kunne velge mellom 3-5 alternativer fra læreren for da limiterer man seg, slik at det blir enklere å velge. Om man kan fritt fram velge hva man vil lese vil det være vanskelig å velge og mange vil velge en dårlig tekst. Om man bare har et alternativ kan det være dårlig variasjon i tekster, som er dumt fordi folk er forskjellige og liker å lese ulike tekster	I would choose to be able to choose between 3-5 teacher-selected text alternatives, because then you will limit yourself so that it becomes easier to choose. If you can freely choose what you want to read, it will be difficult to choose and many will choose bad texts. If you only have one option there might be a poor variety of texts, which is not good because everyone is different and wants to read different texts
Det er et poeng at læreren har en slags kontroll. Mange vil på en måte ikke tilkjennegi at de ikke forstår noe. De vil ikke velge, eller gå inn på sider som ser ut som den er litt lett liksom... De velger ofte det venninna tar	It is a point that the teacher has some kind of control [Of the chosen texts]. A lot of the students do not want to admit that they do not understand something. They do not want to choose, or enter a site that looks like it is a little bit easy... Often they end up choosing whatever their friend chooses
Det kan ta tid, og hvis vi tar de med på biblioteket, også står de der også har de ikke peiling. Også tar de bare noe. Og så	It might take time, and if we bring them to the library and they stand there and have no idea. And then they just take

liker de ikke den boka, det er alt for vanskelig språk også videre også videre.. Så jeg tenker at sjølvalgt er veldig positivt for de som leser, og da tenker jeg nesten sånn at før man skal starte et sånt prosjekt at man må forhøre seg med ungene.	something. And they do not like the book, the language is way too difficult and so on, and so on… So I think that self-selection is very positive for those who like to read, and I think it is almost like you should check with the kids before starting such a project
Og de som da er der, de kan gjøre det. Og ulempene blir jo at hvis du da 7-8-9 stykker, og det er jo kjempebra om de hadde hatt sjølvalgt, men å da ha 10 ulike bøker å forholde seg til, det er mye. Men jeg tenker jo at det skal ikke være begrensningen for at de skal velge, man må heller se mulighetene da, at det er veldig positivt at det er så mange som klarer å velge seg en selvvalgt tekst og jobbe med det.	And those who can choose, they can do that. The disadvantages will be that if 7-8-9 students, and it is very good if they had had self-selection, but then having 10 different books to deal with, that is a lot. But, I think that that should not be the limitation for them to choose, you rather have to see the possibilities, that it is very positive that so many are able to choose a self-selected text and work with that
Kriterier er piss	Criteria sucks
Jeg synes det bør være ganske fritt med mindre teksten er en stor kødd	I think it should be pretty free unless the text is one big piece of shit
Kanskje at det er relevant for tema eller at det er en spesiell sjanger	Maybe that it should be relevant for the topic or that it is a specific genre
Jeg vil si at læreren burde ha som krev at man må velge en tekst som er så og så lang, en tekst av en publisert forfatter eller tekster som er klassikere	I would say the teacher should have a demand that you have to choose a text that is so-and-so long, a text of a published author or texts that are classics"
For mange så blir problemet det her med valget. De har ikke innsyn, kanskje, i egen utholdenhet. Tar for lange tekster.	For many, the problem will be the choice. They do not have enough insight, perhaps, into own endurance, and choose too long texts
Man kan, uten å røpe for mye, si noe om tematikken og sjanger også videre, bare for å opplyse dem. Og så kan de ta et valg basert på det	You can, without giving away too much, say something about the thematic and genre and so on, just to inform them. And they can take a choice based on that
Det går jo bra, men det krasjer på en måte med alle andre. Hu vil være ferdig når jeg er på side femti og da kan hu begynne på oppgavene	It would be okay, but it would kind of crash with everyone else. She will be done reading when I'm at page 50 and then she can start with the tasks
Når vi var på biblioteket før så lånte gutta barnebøker	when we've previously been to the library, the boys borrowed children's books
Det tar kanskje kortere tid å velge også. Man blir jo veldig usikker hvis man kan velge alt i verden	It might decrease the time it takes to choose too. You become very insecure when you can choose everything in the world

Det kommer an på eleven da. På det punktet så må man jo nesten bare stole på eleven selv. At de velger det som utfordrer dem	That depends on the student. At that point, you kind of just have to trust the student. That they will choose something that challenges them
Så dataspill er kanskje en form for multimodal tekst? Betyr det at jeg kan spille Ori the Fallen eller Hades for å lære engelsk?	So computer games might be a form of multimodal text? Does that mean that I can play something like *Ori the Fallen* or *Hades* to learn English?
Fortnite og fotball-tekster	Fortnite and football-texts
Jeg ville lest noen tekster med vanskelige ord fordi de tekstene vi leser er altfor lette	I would read some texts with difficult words, because the ones we do read are way too easy
Ikke veldig lang, da tror jeg mange mister konsentrasjonen	Not very long [texts], because I think a lot of people would then lose their concentration
Hvor skal man finne tekster? Er det sånn hvor som helst liksom?	Where are we supposed to find texts? Is it, like, anywhere
Jeg har en side der man kan få gratis bøker, men...	I have an internet site where you could get free books, but…"
Selv med oppakka skolebibliotek har vi ikke nok til en per elev	Also with an accessible school library, there are not enough books to give each student one book