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A Multimodal Classroom

A Study on Teachers' Use of Multimodal Ensembles in the Norwegian English as an Additional Language Classroom

Master's thesis in English with Teacher Education

Supervisor: Nicole Busby

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Faculty of Humanities
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Abstract

Multimodal literacy is described by researchers as a necessary skill to learn in the 21st century since a lot of the texts read and created use visual and verbal elements to convey their meanings. The aim of the study was to see how teachers for students with English as an additional language (EAL) used multimodal ensembles in the Norwegian EAL classroom.

The study was conducted on 26 EAL teachers from first grade to upper secondary school. These teachers worked in primary school, lower secondary school, and upper secondary school: vocational studies or general studies. This master's thesis uses a quantitative approach to investigate how multimodal ensembles are used as resource for language and reading comprehension in the English classroom by asking English teachers to fill out a questionnaire consisting of closed-ended and open-ended questions asking them about multimodal literacy and multimodal ensembles used in the EAL classroom.

Overall, the aim of the study was to investigate multimodal literacy and multimodal ensembles used in the EAL classroom. To be more specific it related around *what types of multimodal ensembles are used in the EAL classroom, teachers' motivation for using multimodal ensembles, and factors influencing the use of multimodal ensembles.*

The current study found that films and news reports are used by a majority of teachers at least twice a month or more, and it is fascinating that none of the participants reported to not use these multimodal ensembles in their EAL teaching. However, print-based multimodal ensembles like picture-books, illustrated novels, graphic novels, comics, and cartoons are used by a minority of teachers.

There were two possible factors that could potentially motivate teachers' use of multimodal ensembles like graphic novels and comics in the EAL classroom, these were *the curriculum renewal* and *teachers' own beliefs of using graphic novels and comics in the EAL classroom.* However, these motivations were not enough to ensure that every teacher used print-based multimodal ensembles in their EAL teaching.

Instead, the study found that there were three factors influencing teachers' use of multimodal ensembles like graphic novels and comics in the EAL classroom, *time, resources available, and teachers' own interest and knowledge of graphic novels and comics.*

Abstract in Norwegian

Tekstar ein finn i dagens samfunn tar ofte i bruk visuelle og verbale uttrykk for å kunne formidle innhaldet sitt til lesar verda over. Ein majoritet av desse tekstane brukar bilete, lyd, video og tekst for å formidle innhaldet sitt for eit publikum. Forsking i det 21. årshundre har observert at multimodal literacy er ein viktig ferdigheit som barn, unge og vaksne må kunne utvikle for å kunne skape meining frå visuelle og verbale uttrykk i digitale tekster og utskrivne tekstar.

Målet med dette master prosjektet har vore å undersøke multimodal literacy og om engelsk lærarar brukar multimodale tekstar, frå LK06 og LK20 betre kjent som samansette tekstar, i språkundervisning. 26 engelsk lærarar frå grunnskulen og den vidaregåande skulen deltok i denne undersøkinga. Ved å ta i bruk ein kvantitativt metode der deltakarane gjennomføre ei nettbasert spørjeundersøking, har desse lærarane blitt spurt om multimodal literacy og kva slags multimodale tekstar dei brukar i engelsk språkundervisning. Hovudfokuset har vore å undersøkje multimodal literacy og multimodale tekstar brukt i engelskundervisning. Der ein har arbeida med tre problemstillingar som prøvar å sjå på *kva slags multimodal tekstar brukar engelsklærarar i språkundervisning, kva er motivasjonen for å bruke multimodal tekstar som grafiske romanar og teikneseriar og kva føresetningar som må til for at lærarar skal bruke multimodal tekstar som grafiske romanar og teikneseriar i engelskundervisninga.*

Undersøkinga fann at videoar og nyheitsartiklar var dei mest dominerande multimodale tekstane som engelsklærarane brukte i undervisningsopplegg gjennom grunnskulen og den vidaregåande skulen. Majoriteten av deltakarane brukte desse tekstane to eller fleire gangar i månaden. Derimot var det utskriftsbaserte tekstar som bøker med bilete og illustrasjonar, grafiske romanar og teikneseriar som blei brukt minst av engelsklærarane som deltok i denne undersøkinga.

Undersøkinga fann også ut at det var to faktorar som kunne påverke i noko grad motivasjonen til lærarar for å bruke multimodale tekstar som grafiske romanar og teikneseriar. Dette er *læreplanen og deira haldning til å bruke grafiske romanar og teikneseriar.* Derimot fann undersøkinga at dette ikkje er nok for å få alle lærarar til å bruke grafiske romanar og teikneseriar. Det som må vere på plass for å gjennomføre undervisning med grafiske romanar og teikne seriar er *tid, ressursar og kunnskap om grafiske romanar og teikneseriar.*

Acknowledgement

This whole project has been a journey. From my first encounter with multimodal literacy and multimodal ensembles in my third year, to writing my own master's thesis focusing on multimodal literacy and the use of multimodal ensembles in the English classroom. It has been filled with frustration, tears, and laughter.

First of all, I would like to thank my supervisor Nicole Busby for her guidance and support. I know it could not have been easy to supervise a master student who thought it could be a good idea to combine writing a master's thesis and working fulltime as a teacher. Thank you so much for your guidance, and for tolerating too many questions that could range from how to structure a simple paragraph in my thesis to how I should present my findings.

Secondly, I would like to thank my boyfriend, Bjørn-Tore, who has been a huge supporter through the whole process, from listening to me ramble about my future master's thesis, to being a moral support while I tried to finish my thesis while working as a teacher.

Thirdly, this master's thesis could not have been possible if it was not for the wonderful 26 English teachers from primary school to upper secondary school who were willing to participate in my study that focused on multimodal literacy and the use of multimodal ensembles in the English classroom.

Lastly, I would like to thank my friends, family, and future family-in-law for being there for me through this incredible journey.

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1.0 Learning English in the 21st Century

An advantage young Norwegians have in the 21st century for learning English, is that they are more exposed to English than their parents' or grandparents' generations were when they grew up. The exposure of English in the Norwegian society has caused some scholars to consider English as Norwegians' second language rather than a foreign language (Maagerø & Tønnessen, 2022, 27). Norwegians surround themselves with English from a young age through the digital media they consume and through everyday communication (Maagerø & Tønnessen, 2022, 27). English is also a subject that is introduced to first graders, and a subject that Norwegian students will have throughout their education.

Diamantopoulou and Ørevik (2022, 5) specify that English as an additional language (EAL) is an umbrella term that is used to refer to the learning of English at any level of education. This term refers to language learners who regard another language as their first language. Thus, I will be using EAL as a term to talk about English language learners whose first language is not English.

Medietilsynet (2020) conducted a survey over children and adolescents' digital media habits. Through their survey they found out that almost every Norwegian student between the age of 9 to 18 had a phone or a TV at home (Medietilsynet, 2020, 15). The report showed that 90% of Norwegian children and adolescents between the age of 9 to 18 used one or several social media in their everyday life. YouTube (95%) and Snapchat (80%) were reported as the most dominant social media 9–18-year-olds consumed throughout the day (Mediatilsynet, 2020, 20). In 2022, Medietilsynet (2022, 3) conducted a new study into children and adolescents' social media usage, and they found that YouTube (91%) and Snapchat (78%) are still the most dominant used social media, however compared with the digital media habits in 2020, the usage of YouTube and Snapchat have declined a bit. Children and adolescents' TikTok usage have risen from 65% in 2020 to 73% in 2022.

These social media applications are just some examples of media children and adolescents can enjoy in their everyday life. However, the visual and verbal elements implemented in these social media applications require children and adolescents between the age of 9 to 18 to acquire skills to be able to decode and create meaning from the visual and verbal elements they encounter in English.

A great way to learn the necessary skills to decode and create meaning through texts that use visual and/or verbal elements is through school. A useful term to talk about the skills children

and adolescents need to acquire and develop to decode and create meaning from texts, is *literacy*.

The term literacy is traditionally regarded as cognitive skills individuals acquire to function in the society. These skills are mainly reading, writing, and counting (Serafini, 2014, 19; UNESCO, 2021). This traditional view shines through in some of the potential translations of the word literacy into Norwegian. *Skriftkompetanse*, *tekstkompetanse*, and *skriftskyndighet* are some possible, but inadequate translations of the term literacy, which roughly translates to text competence or text understanding (Blikstad-Balas, 2016, 15). However, literacy is not solely a cognitive phenomenon, it includes sociocultural practices through social, cultural, historical, and institutional contexts (Gee, 2010, 166). But how can one define the term literacy?

Literacy can be understood as the ability to generate meaning through identification, understanding, interpretation, creation, and communication in communities, and a global society that have become more digital and information-rich throughout the decades (UNESCO, 2021). How communities and the global society convey meaning varies as they use different materials to fulfil the function for meaning making. A simple way of understanding literacy is as the ability or skill to create meaning through signs and symbols through participating in society (Blikstad-Balas, 2016, 15).

As previously mentioned, Norwegian students encounter texts within school and outside of school that can use visual and verbal elements to create meaning, and for students to be able to decode and create meaning through texts, be it in their first, second or additional language, they will need to develop their literacy skills. The texts students encounter on social media like YouTube, Snapchat and TikTok, are often created using both visual and verbal elements, e.g., video and audio, or pictures and written language, these elements are all examples of what we can refer to as *modes* when we are talking about elements used to create meaning in a text.

A *mode* is defined as a sociocultural resource for making meaning. Visual objects like images, signs, symbols, and videos are just a few examples of modes readers can encounter in print-based and digital texts, some digital texts might even use audio to make meaning (Kress, 2009, 54; Serafini, 2014, 12). Kress (2009, 54) even goes as far as questioning whether food or furniture could be considered as modes if they are seen as product of social and cultural work that can be used to make meaning.

Every mode, e.g., pictures, illustration, audio, written language, has different potential to create meaning in a text, and the texts found in social media can combine modes like video and audio, or pictures and written language. When a text uses more than one mode to create meaning it is called a *multimodal text* or *multimodal ensembles*¹, and can be found in print-based and digital texts (Serafini, 2014, 12; Serafini, 2015, 412). An interesting thing about multimodal ensembles is that modes have different ways of creating meaning. Modes can create various meanings on their own, but the way they correspond to other modes around them can be a way of creating new meanings (Kress, 2010, 79; Serafini, 2014, 12; Serafini, 2015, 413). An example could be a short comic strip or a cartoon where artists combine illustrations with written language to tell their story through visual and verbal modes.

The ability or skill to decode visual and verbal modes is referred to as *multimodal literacy*, which is a subfield within literacy for developing skills to identify, interpret, understand, create, and communicate through the use multimodal ensembles (Serafini, 2015, 413). Based on the digital media habits of Norwegian children and adolescents, one can understand Rimmereide (2013, 131) when she specifies that the skill to decode and create meaning through multimodal ensembles is an increasingly important skill to develop in the 21st century and goes as far as highlighting that it is regarded as a necessary literacy skill in a globalized society where children, adolescents, and adults encounter a vast amount of multimodal expression.

Multimodal literacy can also be used as a gateway for connecting academic literacy practices students encounter through the school system with the literacy practices they engage with outside of school (Yi, 2014, 163-164). To describe how much English Norwegian students encounter outside of school, Maagerø and Tønnessen (2022, 27) first look at how Norwegian students use English word and expressions in conversations with peers outside of school, and that some of the texts they encounter in social media are written in a mix of English and Norwegian. Norwegian students might listen to popular music, play games, watch films, or consume other forms for entertainment where the language used is English. Norwegian students surround themselves with English, and through developing literacy and multimodal literacy, the school and teachers can help students decode and create meaning from the multimodal ensembles they enjoy.

¹ Serafini (2014, 12) prefers the term multimodal ensemble instead of multimodal text, because the term text is often associated with a print-based artifact while ensemble refers to entities composed of different elements or features. Throughout the text, I will refer to texts using more than one mode as multimodal ensembles.

Because of the necessity to develop the ability to decode and create meaning through multimodal ensembles, and that Norwegian children and adolescents encounter English while engaging with social media platforms like YouTube, Snapchat and TikTok outside of school, I have chosen to conduct a study on teachers' usage of multimodal ensembles in the English classroom, from primary school through lower and upper secondary school. The overall theme for this master's thesis is multimodal literacy, language acquisition, and reading comprehension, and there will be three research questions this study will investigate. The first research question is:

What types of multimodal ensembles are used in the EAL classroom?

Even though it would be interesting to see every possible multimodal ensemble used in the EAL classroom, this project will be looking at graphic novels and comics. Graphic novels and comics combine several modalities, e.g., illustrations, symbols, sign, and written language, to create meaning (Rimmereide, 2013, 131). And the two finale research questions will be:

What are the motives for teachers' use of graphic novels and comics in the EAL classroom?

What factors are influencing teachers' use of graphic novels and comics in the EAL classroom?

1.1 Structure of the Current Study

The current study is structured into *theory, method, results, discussion, and conclusion*. Chapter two provides an insight into literature on the national curriculum's core curriculum, and basic skills and core elements for the English subject, and research that focus on reading in an additional language and multimodal approach to language learning where graphic novels and comics can benefit language acquisition and reading comprehension in the EAL classroom. This chapter will also give a brief overview of the current study. Chapter three gives an overview of the quantitative approach to investigate the thesis' three research questions and it will look at the ethical consideration the study had to take. Chapter four presents the study's findings, where tables visualize the study's findings when it comes to the use of multimodal ensembles in the EAL classroom. In chapter five, I will discuss my findings in relation to relevant literature from the national curriculum, and research on reading in an additional language and the benefits of using graphic novels and comics in the EAL classroom. At the end of the discussion chapter, I will present limitations, and suggestions for

further research on multimodal ensembles in the EAL classroom. The concluding chapter will summarize the key findings of the study.

2.0 Theory

The 21st century has brought rapid changes to the world's societies, and this has resulted in a need for renewed knowledge and competence in the Norwegian school and society (NOU 2014:7, 112). “*Ludvigsen utvalget*”, a commission appointed by Royal Decree in 2013, was tasked with evaluating the subjects within the Norwegian school and how the subjects fulfil the requirements for competences in a future society (NOU 2015:8, 4). The committee's report, known as the curriculum renewal, created the foundation for the new national curriculum for primary school, and lower and upper secondary school, *Knowledge Promotion 2020*². The report assessed the competence Norwegian students would require in a perspective of 20-30 years (NOU 15:8, 17).

2.1 The Parallel Between the National Curriculum's Basic Skills and Literacy

From the previous national curriculum, *Knowledge Promotion 2006*³, Norwegian students from primary school through lower and upper secondary school would acquire and develop five basic skills. These basic skills were reading, writing, numeracy, oral skills, and digital skills. These were necessary prerequisites for learning and development in school, work, and society (NOU 2014:7, 60). The attitude that basic skills are necessary prerequisites for Norwegian students' learning and development can be found in the core curriculum to the new national curriculum. It specifies that the five basic skills are a part of the competence in the various school subjects and a vital tool for learning (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2017a). Thus, the old and the new curriculum see basic skills as prerequisites for students' learning and development. Although they share the same point of view, the core curriculum for *LK20* highlights the importance of basic skills when it comes to the development of students' identities and social relations.

The basic skills in the curriculum cover a wide area, and within the Norwegian educational context it is simpler to draw a parallel between basic skills and literacy or connect the terms with each other because of their importance on individuals, be it children, adolescents, or

² Knowledge Promotion 2020 is shortened to LK20, which is the name that will be used throughout the thesis to refer to the new national curriculum.

³ Knowledge Promotion 2006/2013 is shortened to LK06, which is the name that will be used throughout the thesis when the text will be referring to the old national curriculum.

adults, and how they can communicate and participate in society in societal and cultural contexts (NOU 2015: 8, 37).

How is literacy present in the school subjects? All five basic skills are incorporated in every subject, however LK20 states that it varies how the different subjects develop the students' basic skills. Some subjects have a greater responsibility when it comes to some of the basic skills than others, which is why each subject has its own description of how the basic skills should be present in the subject to help develop students' competence (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2017a).

2.1.1 Reading Within the EAL Classroom

Through the core curriculum, LK20 states that the basic skills must be considered in connection with each other and that they can be connected across the school's subjects (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2017a). However, the only basic skill which does not have its own description for the English subject is numeracy. English has a greater responsibility when it comes to the basic skills reading, writing, oral skills, and digital skills, and the subject curriculum describes how English can support students' development of their competence in the EAL classroom and their participation within the society (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2019a).

Previously mentioned, literacy can be categorised into two areas: cognitive skills and sociocultural practices. Both areas are present within the English subject, and through developing students' reading skill they will acquire and develop literacy. Sociocultural practices can be developed by letting students engage with content from different text types where students use reading as a skill to create meaning. Depending on the material students are given, these texts could be printed or digital (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2019a). Reading can also contribute to reading pleasure and language acquisition, it is within this area that literacy as cognitive skills is present (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2019a).

Besides being one of the basic skills within the English curriculum, reading also has a vital role within the core elements of English as a school subject. Two of the core elements within the subject are language learning and working with text (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2019b). When it comes to text as a concept, this thesis will use LK20's broad description of text. Text can be spoken, print-based, or digital. It can use visual and verbal elements to express meaning, and these elements can be combined to create new meanings (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2019b).

Language learning, or language acquisition, in LK20 is defined as developing language awareness and knowledge of the English language system. It also refers to students' abilities to use strategies for language learning (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2019b). Through language acquisition, students should learn pronunciation and develop vocabulary and grammar. These aspects of language are necessary for expanding students' choices and possibilities when interacting and communicating with people around them. Language acquisition also means to see how the language is structured and use this knowledge to identify connections between languages the students already know and English (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2019b).

A way to stimulate language acquisition is through reading and engaging with text. This is one of the arguments LK20 uses when referring to working with text as a core element for the English curriculum. Interacting with texts in English, could support students' knowledge and experiences of linguistic and cultural diversity. Texts can be associated with windows to look into another culture's tradition, and their way of living and thinking (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2019b).

“By reflecting on, interpreting and critically assessing different types of texts in English, the pupils shall acquire language and knowledge of culture and society.” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019b). Working with texts serves a cognitive function by developing necessary skills to understand and use language. The sociocultural function of working with texts examines how students learn about different culture and use language to communicate with others in a global and fast developing society, where globalization and technology have made it possible to communicate both across and within national borders.

2.2 Reading in an Additional Language

As previously mentioned, reading is one of five basic skills students will acquire and develop through the education system, and through the various subjects, students will encounter texts written in their native language (L1), second language (L2), or an additional language. However, reading in an additional language differs from L1 reading, this is simply because the reading process involves two languages, the readers' L1 and the additional language, instead of one language (Koda, 2007, 1). Reading in an additional language involves continual interaction between the reader's L1 and the additional language. Koda (2007, 1) explains that it is necessary to adjust to the demands each language imposes on the reader, which makes reading in an additional language crosslinguistic and more complex than L1 reading.

Ørevik (2018, 99) refers to a study conducted by Brevik, Olsen, and Hellekjær (2016, 161-162) which researched first year Norwegian students' reading proficiency in English in upper secondary school. The research reflected how languages interact with each other throughout the reading process. It suggested that important skills and strategies connected to reading might reach across languages and subjects, meaning the previously acquired skills and knowledge may be transferred from one language to another when the students were reading (Brevik, Olsen, & Hellekjær, 2016, 175-178).

Being able to read is much more than the ability to understand and decode written language. Let us return to the definition of literacy and the national curriculum's basic skills: reading is a resource to create meaning. By engaging with a text in an additional language, the text will reflect the context in which it is written, this is in the terms of structure and content (Ørevik, 2018, 100). Grabe (2009, 137) is more specific and describes how the complexity of reading in an additional language will differ because there are different expectations when engaging with a text.

The institutional and cultural expectations shape the literacy events of a society, e.g., what type of texts are produced and read, the reasons why people read, and how people create meaning through texts. These experiences differ from language to language, from society to society, which highlights how social and cultural origins affect meaning making in texts (Grabe, 2009, 137). It also exhibits the complexity of reading in an additional language since it means engaging with texts that reflect literacy events of another society.

2.2.1 Reading Activities in the EAL Classroom

There are two broad ways of using reading as a learning activity in school: intensive reading and extensive reading (Vicary, 2013, 77). Two very different approaches to reading, which serve their own function for reading and developing students' literacy.

Intensive reading often uses short text, e.g., poem, short stories, or shorter articles. The goal of the activity is to intensively study and discuss the written material to extract every possible meaning from the text. Intensive reading is about interpreting and understanding every word, every sentence, and every intention the author had (Vicary, 2013, 77-78).

Extensive reading can be found at the opposite end of the scale. Nation (2015, 140) describes extensive reading as learners engaging with books which are at the same level as them. Learners should be able to choose their own books, which makes an activity involving extensive reading quite diverse, as each learner has chosen a book of their liking. Compared

to intensive reading, the goal of extensive reading is to focus on the overall meaning found in the passages the learners are engaged with (Vicary, 2013, 78).

2.2.2 Extensive Reading and Language Acquisition

Learning to read in an additional language has often been regarded as a skill. Regardless of that, reading should also be enjoyed (Vicary, 2013, 77). Extensive reading as a learning activity in the EAL classroom will provide learners with the opportunity to read longer passages and books that interest them, which in return supports reading comprehension (Ørevik, 2018, 94). Research highlights how teachers and scholars regard extensive reading as an important aspect for language learning. If learners are provided with a lot of different reading materials which they can choose from, then these steps could influence the learners' motivation and pleasure for reading which could support language learning (Ørevik, 2018, 94). Research has also shown that extensive reading provides positive experiences for learners, and it develops learners' motivation to continue reading (Grabe, 2009, 322).

Vocabulary learning is important for language learners since it is necessary to be able to communicate in another language (Hestetræet, 2018, 163). Reading, both intensive and extensive, is a tool for developing a learner's vocabulary and vocabulary knowledge (Hestetræet, 2018, 171). For vocabulary learning to occur through extensive reading, it is essential to keep in mind that vocabulary learning depends on how many meetings the learner has had with each word, as well as the quality of attention to each word meeting (Nation, 2015, 136).

Research on vocabulary learning through extensive reading in an additional language, proposes a minimum of 10–12 word meetings for word learning to occur (Grabe, 2009, 323). Even so, research has observed that there are some amounts of vocabulary learning each time language learners are exposed to a word while reading (Grabe, 2009, 323). Since extensive reading revolves around using texts suited for the learners' level, it should not contain too many unfamiliar words, 5% or less running words seems to be ideal for extensive reading (Hestetræet, 2018, 173).

When learners are reading sentences, paragraphs, and passages in another language, they are exposed to the language they are learning. Through reading in an additional language, learners observe how the language is used. Thus, gaining knowledge of the language system. Through written language, the learners can take their time while getting acquainted with the additional language or studying it in the way they find most convenient for language acquisition (Ørevik, 2018, 93). Research on extensive reading in an additional language has also shown that

learners improve their writing skills through exposure of the language in printed and digital format (Grabe, 2009, 324).

By using extensive reading as a learning activity over a certain period, Grabe (2009, 324) comments on how learners improve their world knowledge and conceptual knowledge. LK20 highlights working with texts as one of the core elements in English. Engaging and working with texts should help develop the students' knowledge and experience of linguistic and cultural diversity. It is also a way for students to gain insight into indigenous peoples' ways of living, thinking, and tradition. Through engaging with texts in English, students should develop their language and knowledge of culture and society, which is important in a globalized society (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019b).

2.3 Multimodal Literacy – a Subfield within Literacy and Multiliteracies

In 1996, the New London Group published an article where they introduced a new approach to literacy pedagogy, *multiliteracies* (New London Group, 1996, 60; Serafini, 2014, 26). The term multiliteracies or multiple literacies is viewed as something more than creating meaning through a single mode, written language. Compared to traditional literacy, multiliteracies focused on modes of representations, e.g., pictures, illustrations, which are broader than written modes and these modes of representation will differ according to culture and context (New London Group, 1996, 64). New London Group's term, multiliteracies, were meant to approach the multidimensional set of competences and social practices in a response to the increasing complexity of emerging text, where more than one mode could be used to create meaning (Serafini, 2014, 26).

Literacy is a complex field of study. It is much more than the skill to read and write through the use of language. There are various subfields within literacy, e.g., visual literacy, critical literacy, digital literacy, however in a need for reconceptualization of the traditional definition of literacy, Serafini (2014, 26) defines multiliteracies as an umbrella term for expanding the understanding and use of literacy beyond reading and writing print-based texts.

The term multiliteracies highlights the importance of approaching the complexities of emerging text because they often combine the use of two or more modes to express meaning and by returning to LK20's definition of text, the texts Norwegian students encounter in today's society are increasingly complex, and these print-based and digital texts require different sets of literacy skills for students to be able to create meaning. New technology and globalization are phenomena that affect the definition of what it means to be literate because

print-based and digital texts in the 21st century use different visual objects, and oral and written language to create complex meanings to readers. These elements can appear in combinations with each other or alone (Serafini, 2014, 27).

2.3.1 Multimodal Approach to Language Learning

A multimodal approach to learning means that learners engage with visual modes rather than verbal modes through reading and writing (Skulstad, 2018, 258). However, Skulstad (2018, 258) specifies that it does not mean that verbal modes' important functions are disregarded. Instead, verbal modes are equally important in multimodal ensembles, but they are not the sole focus for creating meaning by working with multimodal ensembles.

Why should teachers take a multimodal approach to language learning, especially in the EAL classroom? Bland (2013, 31) explains that visual modalities used in multimodal ensembles are effective ways to scaffold language and reading comprehension in the EAL classroom. The uses of multimodal ensembles give EAL learners multidimensional ways to gather information, meaning and knowledge since these do not solely rely on written English.

EAL learners can create meaning through combination and integration of written English and visual modes, e.g., layout, images, illustrations, graphics, and other visual cues found in multimodal ensembles (Ajayi, 2009, 594). Research within multimodal ensembles and language learning also states that it is valuable for students to be given ample opportunities to explore multimodal ensembles. Using multimodal ensembles in language learning might motivate and engage students, which can facilitate language and reading comprehension (Ajayi, 2009, 594; Bland, 2013, 31).

The core curriculum specifies that the Norwegian school shall facilitate learning for every student, as well as stimulating each student's motivation, their willingness to learn, and their faith in themselves (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017b). It does not only describe how the school should approach learning. It also highlights that each student is different and they arrive at school with different experiences, knowledge, attitude, and needs. As mentioned previously, English is present in children's everyday life, and it is beneficial for EAL teachers to relate their teaching material to the lives of their students (Ajayi, 2009, 594).

Through a multimodal approach to language learning, it might be possible to create lessons where the social interest and multimodal habits of EAL students are integrated into multimodal learning activities. The core curriculum mentions *"To create motivation and the joy of learning in the teaching situation, a broad repertoire of learning activities and*

resources within a predictable framework is needed.” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017b). Chun (2009, 150) mentions that students are increasingly oriented towards information they have received through digital media, and by integrating multimodal ensembles that students engage with outside of school, the students can be more involved in the learning process. Even students who might be reluctant to traditional learning activities, might feel more engaged with an activity they find familiar (Chun, 2009, 150).

The visual modes found in multimodal ensembles can operate as windows to observe and learn about cultures unfamiliar to the students, and the contexts of these cultures (Bland, 2013, 35). Learning about linguistic and cultural diversity through working with texts is a core element, and multimodal ensembles makes it possible for students to learn about unfamiliar cultures through visual and verbal modes. Regardless of how visual modes can be used to give insight into other cultures, visual modes are neither transparent nor universal (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, 4). If students are to understand the visual modes used in multimodal ensembles, they must understand that visual modes represent the culture it originates from, and that visual modes are culture specific. For further information about how multimodal ensembles can help learners get an insight into another culture, I recommend reading Botzakis (2009).

2.4 Graphic Novels and Comics in the EAL Classroom

2.4.1 Distinguishing Graphic Novels and Comics from Other Multimodal Ensembles

There are two key features that both Rimmereide (2013, 135) and Serafini (2014, 136) mention can be found in graphic novels and comics that can be used to distinguish these multimodal ensembles from other multimodal ensembles: *panels* and *gutter*.

The story of graphic novels and comics are told within “image boxes” which contain visual and verbal modes that tell and show individual pieces that make up the story. These “boxes” are known as panels (Rimmereide, 2013, 135; Serafini, 2014, 136). There are two distinctive ways of framing panels. Often, a panel is framed by a clear border, defining one of the many scenes which make up the story of graphic novels and comics. Panels may also have blurred frames, which allow one scene to move smoothly to the next, creating connection and links between these scenes (Rimmereide, 2013, 135).

Graphic novels and comics readers will through the reading process encounter gaps or spaces between the panels as they move from one panel to another. This space is called the gutter (Rimmereide, 2013, 135; Serafini, 2014, 136). Within every type of texts there might be some

form of gaps or blanks left by the author, which allows the reader to try and fill in these gaps through interpreting and engaging with the text (Rimmereide, 2013, 135). The difference between graphic novels or comics, and written texts are that the former multimodal ensembles have their gap visualised.

2.4.2 Benefits of Using Graphic Novels and Comics in the EAL Classroom

2.4.2.1 Motivating and Engaging Readers at Every Level

Graphic novels and comics are versatile multimodal ensembles, they can be read and enjoyed by children, adolescents, and adults of every gender (Bland, 2013, 75; Botzakis, 2009, 50; Skulstad, 2018, 265). A reason why graphic novels and comics are versatile is because of the different genres that readers can engage with, e.g., fantasy, romance, horror, adventures, etc. Depending on what genre, topic or theme a reader prefer, graphic novels and comics might have something for every reader at every level, within and outside of school. (Bland, 2013, 75; Botzakis, 2009, 50).

Because of the multimodal ensembles Norwegian children and adolescents encounter outside of school, research on the use of multimodal ensembles has emphasised the importance of creating a bridge between the multimodal literacy practices students engage within and outside of school. Bland (2013, 77) and Chun (2009, 150) suggest introducing graphic novels and comics into the EAL classroom to create a connection between multimodal ensembles and the digital media students access in their free time. If English teachers are able to create this connection, it might encourage reluctant readers (those who can read but try to avoid it) to be more present and involved in the different learning activities they take part in at school. Researchers, teachers, and librarians promote the use of graphic novels and comics since they can engage readers at every level (Rimmereide, 2013, 131).

If English teachers have the opportunity to use multimodal ensembles in the EAL classroom, it can motivate struggling and reluctant readers to continue to engage with graphic novel and comics (Bland, 2013, 76). If these readers are presented with themes or topics that piques their interest, or they are allowed to complete an activity focusing on extensive reading, McTaggart (2008, 32) emphasises that these students can complete a learning activity. Botzaki (2009, 58) and Krashen (2004, 97) underline that by engage and sparking students' interest at any level, the use of graphic novels and comics can lead to reading and language comprehension.

2.4.2.2 Reading Comprehension

Texts, be it multimodal ensembles or other text types, have their own requirements for competences and skills needed for readers to be able to identify interpret, understand, create, and communicate (Ajayi, 2008, 210; Gee, 2015, 57). This means that graphic novels and comics will require readers to be involved in the reading process in a different way since the visual and verbal modes are equally important to convey the story.

When readers engage with graphic novels and comics, they will through the reading process move their eyes between the visual and verbal modes to create links and connections between the various modes present within, outside, and between the panels, e.g., speech, illustrations, symbols, gutter (Rimmereide, 2013, 134). It is important to underline that readers engage with multimodal ensembles in different ways. It varies from individual to individual. Some readers might read the verbal modes, and briefly glance at the visual modes. Other readers focus on the visual modes, then the verbal modes and back to the visual modes again (Rimmereide, 2013, 134).

McTaggart (2008, 32) explains how many readers below grade level are unable to visualize what they are reading in their mind. They cannot picture what is happening in the text, which consequently lead to these readers misunderstanding or not comprehending the messages in the text. For these readers, reading means decoding letters lacking meaning and pleasure, which unfortunately makes them avoid reading altogether because of the requirement and lack of engagement.

Researchers have observed that the visual modes found in graphic novels and comics could be used to scaffold reading and language comprehension in an additional language (Krashen, 2004, 109; McTaggart, 2008, 32; Ranker, 2007, 304). Ranker (2007, 304) emphasises that nonverbal cues are crucial to additional language learners since they might not have the relevant target language available for comprehension. Through visual modes found in graphic novels and comics, these language learners are allowed to access the multimodal ensembles' meaning. Visual modes support EAL students and struggling readers to infer, predict, and reflect on what they are reading (McTaggart, 2008, 33).

To further stress the value visual modes have for reading comprehension, Rimmereide (2013, 131-134) specifies how visual modes can be used by readers and EAL learners at various levels. For some EAL students, visual modes could enhance comprehension, or it could be used to support reading comprehension. In terms of language acquisition, visual modes may

be used to help the reader make meaning of the story, and visual modes may support readers in filling in gaps that are not accessible through the verbal modes.

2.4.2.3 Language Learning

Language learning is a core element for English, and through learning English as an additional language, students should develop language awareness and knowledge of English as a language system. Speech bubbles and thought balloons found in graphic novels and comics are two verbal modes that contextualizes English in ways that aid EAL students in developing language awareness and knowledge of English as a system. If EAL teachers can implement the use of these verbal modes in the EAL classroom, students could experience and learn more about how the language is used (Chun, 2009, 146).

If EAL teachers want to incorporate graphic novels and comics to improve EAL students' language comprehension and motivation, it is crucial that the graphic novels and comics used in the EAL classroom are at the right level in terms of language, have content that the EAL students find interesting and the genre needs to be suited for them as readers (Rimmereide, 2013, 134). Krashen (2004, 99-100) stresses that even if graphic novels and comics are less verbal than prose, they could still be considered as complex text that can be difficult and challenging because of the language main characters and side characters uses in the story.

Thus, for EAL teachers to incorporate graphic novels and comics into the EAL classroom as resource for language learning, an essential criterion is that teachers need to have knowledge about students' preferences regarding genre and content, and they have assessed their students' language and reading level prior to introducing graphic novels and comics to the EAL classroom.

2.5 Requirements for Using Extensive Reading and Graphic Novels and Comics in the EAL Classroom

For extensive reading to be a successful reading activity, this activity requires teachers to put in an effort to motivate their students. The reading material teacher should provide to their students needs to be interesting, attractive and accessible for students (Grabe, 2009, 326).

However, research emphasises that schools need to be able to provide a lot of different reading materials, which can be found in a school library (Grabe, 2009, 327). Vicary (2013, 85) talks about how teachers who work in a school with a library or enough books to complete an extensive reading activity as lucky, while there are teachers who have to persuade their school to borrow or buy reading material.

If a school is able to gather a lot of single copies of reading material, it will be an advantage for teachers who plan on using extensive reading in their EAL classroom. EAL students will have plenty of choices to choose a text that piques their interest (Vicary, 2013, 85). If, however, a school has been able to borrow or buy a class set with a certain number of copies, it will be harder to run an extensive reading activity. A class set might let the class complete a reading activity together, where students participate in peer discussion. Vicary (2013, 86) points out that the knowledge and competence between EAL students varies, some might be struggling readers, reluctant readers, or proficient readers. It is a disadvantage if the reading level is too low because there might be students who finish the reading activity and then look for other texts to engage with, or if the reading level is too high then reluctant and struggling readers might not complete the reading activity because it is too challenging.

For extensive reading to be successful with developing EAL students' language and reading comprehension, Nation (2015, 143) argues that a principle should be to let EAL learners spend 3/16 of the lesson's time or be given enough time where they meet words that they need to learn often enough to support language acquisition. However, time is a scarce resource in school, and research specifies that it is often the reason to why extensive reading is not used as learning activities in the curriculum (Grabe, 2009, 326).

A huge advantage of graphic novels and comics is that they are available online (Rimmereide, 2013, 155) and they can be free, which means schools do not have to invest a lot of money to get access to a library with a wide range for interesting reading materials for EAL students. Through using graphic novels and comics that can be easily accessed online, EAL students can complete reading activities both in school and at home (Rimmereide, 2013, 155).⁴

2.6 The Current Study

Research emphasises the importance of taking a multimodal approach to language learning. If EAL teachers have the opportunity to connect the multimodal literacy practices students engage with in their everyday life with literacy practices found in school, this multimodal approach can encourage language learning and reading comprehension. Graphic novels and comics have been found to motivate and engage students at every level, reading comprehension, and language learning. Through these multimodal ensembles' visual and verbal modes, meaning is available to struggling, reluctant, and proficient readers. Struggling

⁴ For graphic novels that are free and easily available for EAL teachers and learners, Rimmereide (2013, 155-156) mention the app *Suee and the Shadow*, the online graphic novels; *The Prisoner*, *The Dreamer Comic* (a webcomic consisting of 15 volumes), and *Earth Song Saga*.

and reluctant readers can use the visual modes to fill in the gaps left by the verbal modes in English.

Let's return to the national curriculum. LK20 draws a parallel between its basic skills (reading, writing, oral skills, numeracy, and digital skills) to the term literacy, cognitive skills and sociocultural practices, people will develop to create meaning from texts. These skills are vital to learn and be able to participate in the Norwegian society.

Underneath the English subject curriculum, LK20 stresses the importance of reading in an additional language as a basic skill is to help students create meaning from various text types, printed or digital, which should contribute to language acquisition and reading pleasure. Language learning and working with texts are also parts of the core elements for the subject, since students will through reading acquire awareness and knowledge of English as a language system and by interacting with texts in English, students will acquire knowledge and experiences of linguistic and cultural diversity.

Reading is a skill that will help Norwegian students develop their literacy skills, both as cognitive skill and as a sociocultural practice, and the national curriculum promotes the use of different text types to support its students' development and learning. However, we do not yet know how multimodal ensembles are used by teachers in the EAL classroom.

The aim of the current study is to look at EAL teachers' use of multimodal ensembles. More specifically, the study will investigate these three research questions:

What types of multimodal ensembles are used in the EAL classroom?

What are the motives for teachers' use of graphic novels and comics in the EAL classroom?

What factors are influencing teachers' use of graphic novels and comics in the EAL classroom?

3.0 Quantitative Method

The overall theme of the study has been multimodal literacy and the use of multimodal ensembles in the Norwegian EAL classroom. The aims are to look at *what types of multimodal ensembles are used in the EAL classroom, what are the motives for teachers' use of multimodal ensembles like graphic novel and comics, and what factors are influencing teachers' use of graphic novels and comics in the EAL classroom.*

To gather information about multimodal literacy and teachers' use of multimodal ensembles in the project used a quantitative approach, where Norwegian EAL teachers from primary school to upper secondary school could participate in my study through an online questionnaire. An advantage by using a quantitative approach through a questionnaire is that I could gather a lot of data from EAL teachers without it needing too many resources (Thrane, 2018, 146). Another reason for using a questionnaire was to collect self-reported data from EAL teachers about multimodal literacy and their use of multimodal ensembles in the EAL classroom (Dörnyei & Csizér, 2012, 74).

This chapter is structured into four sections, an overview of the participants for the current study, the procedure/instruments for the study, the study's credibility and reliability, and ethical considerations for the study.

3.1 Participants

Participants were recruited through direct contact with schools, social media, and personal contacts. The target sample were teachers from Norwegian primary school to upper secondary school who were teaching English, in urban and rural areas.

The current study had 26 participants. It was 27 participants who completed the questionnaire, but one was considered as invalid based on their answer to the factual questions which lead to them being excluded from the study, see **appendix II** for further details about the background questions the participants were asked. **Table 1** below visualize the different EAL teachers who participated in the current study.

Table 1 – How many participated in the study, and where do they teach English.

Workplace	Year 1-7	Year 8-10	Vocational studies	General studies
Numbers of participants	4	7	3	12

There were some challenges with gathering a large enough sampling for the project. First of all, the first emails were sent in April-May which are two hectic months for teachers since year 8-10 and upper secondary school require teachers to assess and grade their students before summer. Secondly, the last emails were sent in August-September while the teacher's strike action was taking place in Norway.

3.2 Procedure/Instruments

To gather data, the project used the online questionnaire from UiO, nettskjema.no. Most of the questions were closed-ended with multiple scaled options, where teachers were asked about multimodal literacy, multimodal ensembles, and factual questions about their background. The teachers would be asked what type of multimodal ensembles they used in their EAL classroom, how to they work with creating meaning from multimodal ensembles, and they would also be asked about their view on graphic novels and comics, if they use these multimodal ensembles or not, and if the curriculum renewal had changed their way of teaching using multimodal ensembles. These questions were important for the study to investigate what type of multimodal ensembles were used in the EAL classroom, what were the motives for using graphic novels and comics in the EAL classroom, and what factors are influencing the use of graphic novels and comics in the EAL classroom.

Even though, most questions were closed-ended with multiple scaled option, the questionnaire included open-ended questions, these were divided into obligatory and optional to avoid the completion time to be too long. See **appendix II** for further details about which questions participants were asked and which were obligatory, and which were optional.

The study completed two piloting to determine which questions needed to be edited or removed for the study to gather enough data to answer the research questions. There were some questions that were removed since they did not contribute to gather data on teachers' use of multimodal ensembles in the EAL classroom. It could also be observed that most participants in the piloting finished the questionnaire within a timeframe of 20-30 minutes.

3.3 Research Credibility

Because of the nature of the study, and its limited resources, the project cannot generalize what types of multimodal ensembles EAL teachers use, what motives teachers have for using multimodal ensembles like graphic novels and comics, and what factors are influencing teachers' use of multimodal ensembles like graphic novels and comics.

Instead, it could look at what the participants have reported and talk about the findings as it might or could indicate which multimodal ensembles EAL teachers might use in the EAL classroom, what could potentially motivate teachers' use of graphic novels and comics, and if there could be any potential factors influencing the use of multimodal ensembles. However, the findings need to be viewed with caution as it cannot be generalized since 26 participants

to not represent the majority of English teacher from Norwegian primary school to upper secondary school.

A positive note to this study's validity is that the participants work at schools in rural and urban areas, which is a strength since it might provide a variation in what types of multimodal ensembles EAL teachers use, what their motives are for using graphic novels and comics, and potential factors influencing their use of multimodal ensembles. It is a step in the right direction to be able to generalize, but the number of participants still affect the validity since it cannot generalize the findings to every possible English teacher in Norway.

Through open-ended questions, the participants were asked to describe lessons and learning activities where they used multimodal ensembles in the EAL classroom. These questions ask the participants to recall lessons and learning activities from the past. There could be parts of lessons or learning activities that these participants had forgot or could not recall how they had done so, which could make them skip the question or make them describe a lesson or learning activity they think they had used in their EAL classroom.

Another thing was that the questionnaire could affect the reliability of the study. One participant reported that the questionnaire had made them realise that news reports could be used for lessons and learning activities in the EAL classroom. The questionnaire and the project could have affected how this participant view multimodal literacy and reflected around their use of multimodal ensembles in the EAL classroom.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

The ethical considerations were taken seriously throughout the study. Firstly, the master's project was submitted to NSD for assessment to collect information about multimodal ensembles and teachers' use of multimodal ensembles, but they determined that no personal data would be collected, and an assessment would not be required to begin collecting data. Secondly, the participants were informed about the aim of the study, that participating in the current study were voluntary, and the data gather from the questionnaire were anonymous. Lastly, the participants were informed that if they wanted to withdraw from the study throughout the study, all they needed to do was to close the application and not complete the survey.

4.0 Results

The results chapter is structured into three sub-chapters based on the research questions: multimodal ensembles used in the EAL classroom, motivation for using graphic novels and comics, and factors influencing the use of graphic novels and comics in the EAL classroom.

4.1 Multimodal Ensembles Used in the EAL Classroom

In this section I will presenting my findings of what type of multimodal ensembles are present in the Norwegian EAL classroom across different year levels, and how often EAL students can encounter multimodal ensembles as a part of the EAL teaching. As can be seen in **Table 2**, the frequency of usage of different types of multimodal ensembles varies between teachers, with some types of multimodal ensembles being used more often than others.

Table 2 – EAL teachers' usage of multimodal ensembles in the EAL classroom.

	Never	Once a month or less	Twice a month	Once a week	More than once a week	I don't know/ Not applicable
Picture-books	8	9	4	3	1	1
Illustrated novels	4	14	5	1	1	1
Graphic novels	7	12	4	2	0	1
Comics	6	14	4	1	0	1
Cartoons	4	12	6	3	0	1
Advertisements	4	14	7	0	0	1
News reports	0	5	10	7	4	0
Film (Videos, YouTube clips, Tik Tok etc.)	0	2	5	7	12	0
Digital media (Blog, social media posts like Instagram)	5	5	8	5	3	1

As shown in **Table 2**, there are great variations of the use of digital multimodal ensembles like news reports, films, and digital media in the EAL classroom. As much as 92% of EAL teachers from primary school to upper secondary school reported that they used films in their EAL teaching at least twice a month or more. News reports follow right behind with 80% of

teachers using these twice a month or more. While a slight majority of teachers, 62%, use digital media in their teaching.

The interesting thing about films and news reports is that no participants reported that they never use these types of multimodal ensembles, indicating that these are the text types students are most likely to encounter in EAL learning. Films are used by 73% of the teachers at least once a week, while news reports are used by 81% of the teachers at least twice a month.

The usages of the other multimodal ensembles, e.g., picture-books, illustrated novels, graphic novels, comics, and cartoons, are on the other hand scattered or low. 31% of EAL teachers specified that they do not use picture-books at all in the EAL classroom. As much as 46-53% of teachers, seldomly use illustrated novels, graphic novels, comics, cartoons, including advertisements in learning activities in the EAL classroom.

4.2 Motivation for Using Graphic Novels and Comics

This section presents findings from multiple choice questions and open-ended questions about motivations for teachers using graphic novels and comics in the EAL classroom, both in terms of following the curriculum and belief in benefits to their students

4.2.1 Curriculum Renewal

4.2.1.1 What do the teachers themselves feel?

The national curriculum, LK20 emphasised the need for developing students' multimodal literacy and digital skills. Therefore, I asked teachers through my questionnaire whether LK20 had affected their EAL teaching. **Table 3** shows the extent to which teachers themselves felt that LK20 affected their EAL teaching.

Table 3 – *Has the curriculum renewal affected the development of multimodal literacy in the EAL classroom?*

After the implementation of LK20, are multimodal literacy a more prominent part of your teaching in second language acquisition?		
Unsure/ Not considered it	2	8 %
Less prominent than before	0	0%
No changes	7	27%
More prominent than before	12	46%
Significantly more prominent than before	3	12%
No experience prior to LK20	2	8%

Two of the participants had no experience with the previous national curriculum, LK06. Of those who did have previous experience, 63% reported that multimodal literacy had become a more prominent part in the EAL classroom, while 29% said that it did not change. Only 8.3% of the participants were unsure or had not considered how LK20 could impact how multimodal literacy was taught in the EAL classroom.

4.2.1.2 LK20 Influencing Teachers' Use of Multimodal Ensembles

The curriculum renewal concluded that the Norwegian society and education needed to renew its knowledge and competence to better prepare Norwegian students for the future, and I wanted to see how this need for renewal could affected EAL teachers' usage of multimodal ensembles in the EAL classroom. **Table 4** shows how the participants, who had teaching experience prior to the implementation of LK20, thought LK20 might have affected their use of various multimodal ensembles in the EAL classroom?

Table 4 – How has LK20 affected teachers’ usage of multimodal ensembles in the EAL classroom?

	Less than before	Unchanged	More than before	I don’t know/ Not applicable
Picture-books	0	15	6	3
Illustrated novels	0	14	7	3
Graphic novels	0	15	6	3
Comics	0	16	5	3
Cartoons	0	16	6	2
Advertisements	0	15	6	3
News reports	0	14	9	1
Film (Videos, YouTube clips, Tik Tok etc.)	0	12	11	1
Digital media (Blog, social media posts like Instagram)	0	13	9	2

As shown in **Table 4** none of the participants reported that they were planning to use any of the multimodal ensembles less after the implementation of LK20, and the majority of participants do not plan on changing how often they use multimodal ensemble in EAL teaching. Many of the participants said they planned to use certain multimodal ensembles more after the implementation of LK20. However, it is intriguing that multimodal ensembles which can be accessed digitally, e.g., new reports, films, and digital media, have a higher percentage of teachers (between 38- and 46%) who plan on using these multimodal ensembles more in their teaching practices after LK20. In comparison, between 21- and 29%, of participants plan on using picture-books, illustrated novels, graphic novels, comics, cartoons, and advertisements in their teaching.

4.2.2 Teachers’ Beliefs

To investigate whether teachers considered multimodal ensembles, like graphic novels and comics, to be beneficial for EAL students’ language acquisition and EAL reading comprehension, participants were asked to indicate their agreement with four statements about this topic. The results can be seen in **Table 5**.

Table 5 – Teachers’ beliefs towards graphic novels and comics regarding language acquisition and reading comprehension.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Graphic novels and comics support language comprehension through its visual mode.	0	0	2	15	9
Graphic novels and comics support language acquisition at various learning levels.	0	0	2	17	7
Graphic novels and comics can influence students’ enthusiasm for reading.	0	1	2	10	13
Reading of graphic novels and comics can serve as a conduit for book reading.	0	0	5	8	13

The majority of teachers either agreed or strongly agreed with the given statements relating to the benefits to students’ language learning and reading comprehension. Almost everyone reported believing that graphic novels and comics were beneficial for students’ language acquisition and that these multimodal ensembles could be motivating for their students, which could be a conduit for reading pleasure.

4.2.3 Reasons for Using Graphic Novels and Comics

To acquire information about how teachers use graphic novels and comics in their EAL teaching, they were asked, through an open-ended and optional question, to describe how they used graphic novels and comics in learning activities. Through the participants’ answers, one can find four common themes for why these teachers chose to include graphic novels and comics in the EAL classroom: *engaging students*, *meaning is accessible to readers*, *developing students’ multimodal literacy*, and *variation*.

Underneath the theme *engaging students*, one can find three different reasons that reflects this common theme. Some of the teachers answered that their students and themselves find graphic novels and comics fun to read. Others reported the potential of using graphic novels and comics as a gate way to learning activities to get every student engaged in discussion with each other about the multimodal ensembles as a whole or by focusing on the visual

modalities. Finally, some teachers reported that reluctant or struggling readers prefer these types of text over traditional texts where illustrations are rare.

A benefit some of the teachers mentioned as a reason for using graphic novels and comics is that the meaning is accessible for readers at every level. Students who might struggle with English could access the meaning through visual modes, and through using visual modes to fill in the gap it could support language learning. While those readers who are at another language level could use both visual and verbal modes to access the meaning of the story.

Teachers also reported developing students' multimodal literacy. Some specified that using graphic novels and comics, is a great way to illustrate how different modes, both visual and verbal, can be used to create meaning on their own or by complementing each other. Through using graphic novels and comics students can develop their multimodal literacy to understand and interpret visual modalities alongside verbal modalities.

The last reason is to create variation in EAL teaching methods. Those who use graphic novels and comics in EAL teaching specified that they chose to use these multimodal ensembles to vary students' learning activities.

4.3 What Are Factors Influencing Teachers' Use of Graphic Novels and Comics in the EAL Classroom

7 out of 26 participants reported that they do not use graphic novels and comics in EAL teaching. However, one of the participants who answered they use graphic novels and comics, also answered why they did not use it all the time. Through an open-ended question that asked participants to explain why they did not use graphic novels and comics in the EAL classroom, there are three common themes to why they do not use graphic novels and comics in their EAL teaching: *resources*, *time*, and *lack of knowledge*.

EAL teachers reported that one of the reasons for not using graphic novels and comics was because of the resources their school had available. Most of them stressed that the school did not have any graphic novels or comics, or if they had the graphic novels or comics, these did not suit the subject's theme or topic.

Others reported time as a challenge to introduce and use graphic novels or comics in the EAL classroom. A participant who saw time as a challenge specified that they did not have time to read and find graphic novels or comics that would fit the theme or topic covered by their lesson plan.

The last hurdle to using graphic novels or comics in the EAL classroom, was teachers' own lack of knowledge or reading interest regarding these multimodal ensembles. Some were humble and admitted that they themselves either lack knowledge on what type of graphic novels or comics that would suit the topics covered in their subject, or that they do not read graphic novels or comics.

5.0 Discussion

The current study had three research questions it investigated when it comes to multimodal literacy and multimodal ensembles used in the EAL classroom, *what types of multimodal ensembles are used in the EAL classroom, teachers' motivation for using multimodal ensembles, and factors influencing the use of multimodal ensembles.*

Table 2 visualizes what types of multimodal ensembles teachers use in the EAL classroom and how often these are included in lessons and learning activities. The study found that none of the participants reported that they did not use films or news reports in their EAL teaching. However, it found that the use of picture-books, illustrated novels, graphic novels, comics, and cartoons in the EAL classroom were low compared to films and news reports.

The inclusion of multimodal ensembles in the new curriculum and teachers' beliefs about the benefits to EAL students reading and engaging with multimodal ensembles were both found to be factors motivating teachers' use of these resources in the EAL classroom. By asking teachers why they did not use graphic novels and comics in the EAL classroom, the study found that the factors influencing teachers' use of multimodal ensembles like graphic novels and comics are *time and resource available* and *teachers' own interest and knowledge of graphic novels and comics.*

5.1 Multimodal Ensembles Used in the EAL Classroom

The first research questions the study tried to investigate is *what types of multimodal ensembles are used in the EAL classroom.* The results showed that almost all participants reported that they used films as resource at least twice a month or more, while news reports followed right behind. These participants' EAL students would encounter lessons and learning activities using films and news reports a lot more frequently than lessons and learning activities that used multimodal ensembles, e.g., picture-books, illustrated novels, graphic novels, comics, and cartoons, which a minority of participants reported that they used twice a month or more.

Medietilsynet (2020; 2022) and the researchers, Maagerø and Tønnessen (2022), emphasize that Norwegian children and adolescents surround themselves with technology and digital media applications, e.g., YouTube, TikTok, Snapchat, etc. Through these digital media children and adolescents consume, they are exposed to a lot of English outside of school (Maagerø & Tønnessen, 2022). These texts use both visual and verbal modes to create meaning, which means that Norwegian students need to acquire multimodal literacy skills to be able to decode and create meaning from the visual and verbal elements they encounter on their digital media applications.

A possible explanation to why films and news reports are dominant within EAL lessons and learning activities might be because they can be accessed digitally, either free or through a subscription, which might make it easier for EAL teachers to use these multimodal ensembles in their EAL classroom since they are more available than printed multimodal ensembles e.g., picture-books, illustrated novels, graphic novels, comics, and cartoons. A majority of Norwegian EAL students have access to these multimodal ensembles from a young age, and it can indicate that films like YouTube videos, TikTok videos, movies, etc., are easily available if one has a device that can connect to the internet.

Chun (2009) suggested that teachers should integrate the multimodal practices students engage with outside of school into lessons and learning activities in class. He mentioned that EAL students are increasingly oriented towards information they receive through digital media, and through connecting students' multimodal practices with the literacy practices in school, students who are reluctant to traditional learning activities might be encouraged to be more involved and engaged in activities they find familiar.

It might also be possible that EAL teachers would integrate the multimodal practices students engage with outside of school into their lessons and learning activities to make these more familiar to EAL students. The category film included videos, YouTube clips, TikTok videos. These multimodal ensembles used visual modes, e.g., videos, pictures, symbols, illustrations, and verbal modes, e.g., audio and written language in English.

Creating a bridge between multimodal literacy practices students engage with outside of school with literacy practices in school is important for supporting students to develop their multimodal literacy skill. Researchers like Bland (2013) and Chun (2009) stress the benefits of creating lessons and learning activities that are familiar to the EAL students, since it might encourage reluctant students to participate and engage in peer discussion or learning activities where the resources used are familiar and can be more connected with their everyday life.

However, if EAL students would consume multimodal ensembles like picture-books, illustrated novels, graphic novels, comics, and cartoons in their own spare time, then it would be a lower probability for these students to engage with multimodal literacy practices they engaged with outside of school since a minority of the EAL teachers used these types of printed multimodal ensembles in their lessons and learning activities. I will return to some of the possible factors influencing teachers' use of multimodal ensembles like graphic novels and comics further down in my discussion.

5.2 Motivation for Using Graphic Novels and Comics

5.2.1 Curriculum Renewal

Both Rimmereide (2013) and Ludvigsen Utvalget (2014), stress that the need to develop students' multimodal literacy skill is necessary for the future, as a lot of the material students encounter through digital media are multimodal ensembles. Therefore, it is vital that EAL teachers use multimodal ensembles in their EAL teaching to help develop students' multimodal literacy skill to be able to decode and create meaning from texts that use more than one mode to convey their meaning and inform the readers. In 2020 the new national curriculum, LK20, was implemented to renew the knowledge and competence students required to function in a future society.

I wanted to see if the curriculum renewal could motivate teachers to use multimodal ensembles in their EAL teaching. The participants were asked to report if the development of students' multimodal literacy had become a more prominent part of the EAL teaching after the implementation of LK20 compared to their experience teaching and assessing English during LK06. The study found that the majority of participants had experience that LK20 had emphasised a need for developing students' multimodal literacy skill. Even if the majority felt that LK20 had placed more emphasis on students' multimodal literacy development, there were a minority who felt it had not changed or they had not considered if there were a difference between LK06 and LK20's emphasis on multimodal literacy, and how the school and teachers should help students develop the necessary skill to decode and create meaning for visual and verbal modes.

It seems like for most of the participants who had experience with LK06, had noticed that Ludvigsen Utvalget's recommendation to renew the competence and knowledge students should have when they have finished school. It could act as a motivation, but simply looking at how the teachers have noticed the more prominent need to develop multimodal literacy does not explain how it could motivate them.

Through a closed-ended question, the participants, with prior experience, were asked to report if they were planning on using multimodal ensembles less or more after the implementation of LK20. A majority reported that they did not plan on changing their use of multimodal ensembles after the implementation and the curriculum renewal, some possible reasons could be that they already felt that they were using multimodal ensembles enough in the EAL classroom to develop students' multimodal literacy or some multimodal ensembles were not suitable for the classroom based on the learning activities' themes and topics. Since a majority did not plan on changing their usage, it might indicate that the implementation and the need for competence and knowledge renewal cannot be seen as a major motivational factor for using multimodal ensembles more than during LK06.

Sine LK20 has a broad definition for the text as a concept, this brings a lot of possibility for the reading material teachers can include in EAL lessons and learning activities, be it traditional text and multimodal ensembles. However, it does not ensure that everyone is using multimodal ensembles more after the curriculum renewal, but it gives teachers a lot of possibilities when it comes to creating learning activities that can be used to motivate and engage students to scaffold language and reading comprehension. For some LK20 and the curriculum renewal can be a motivational factor for using multimodal ensembles and vary which type of multimodal ensemble is present in lessons and learning activities. However, the majority had reported that they were not planning on change how often the used multimodal ensembles after the implementation and curriculum renewal. Instead, there might be other factors that can motivate and influence teachers' use of multimodal ensembles.

Most multimodal ensembles can be access digitally, how available they are will differ, and this might be a reason to why digitally available multimodal ensembles, e.g., films, news reports, and digital media, are favoured over multimodal ensembles like picture-books, illustrated novels, graphic novels, comics, and cartoons. I will return to factors influencing the use of multimodal ensembles like graphic novels and comics further down, there I will discuss factors like availability of multimodal ensembles.

5.2.2 Teachers' Beliefs

As mentioned, teachers were asked to rate how they agreed or disagreed with four statements about the use of graphic novels and comics to scaffold language learning and reading comprehension. Almost everyone agreed or strongly agreed with the statements, and the study found that these participants reported that they agreed with some of the benefits that graphic

novels and comics can show if teachers introduce reading and learning activities that use these print-based multimodal ensembles in the EAL classroom.

However, it is fascinating to observe how the majority of teachers reported that they used graphic novels and comics in the EAL classroom, while there were other who chose to not use graphic novels and comics, even if they agreed with the benefits of using graphic novels and comics to scaffold EAL students' language learning and reading comprehension. What could potentially influence and be the reason to those who used graphic novels and comics to introduce lessons and learning activities using these multimodal ensembles? The study found four common themes for why EAL teachers chose to include graphic novels and comics in the EAL classroom: *engaging students*, *meaning is accessible to readers*, *developing students' multimodal literacy*, and *variation*.

This study's participants agreed that graphic novels and comics could spark the EAL learners' reading pleasure, which could be a conduit for participating in peer discussion, or for reluctant or struggling readers to complete a reading activity. Some teachers emphasised that graphic novels and comics could engage struggling and reluctant readers to complete a learning activity where they participated in peer discussions about theme, topics, story, etc. from the reading material.

Researchers like Bland (2013), Botzakis (2009) and Skulstad (2018) have emphasised how graphic novels and comics can be used to motivate and engage EAL learners, which could encourage language learning and reading comprehension. This benefit correlates with how the participants saw graphic novels and comics as ways to engage and motivate reluctant or struggling readers, first of all to participate in learning activities that could scaffold language learning and reading comprehension by reading graphic novels and comics, and then engage in peer discussions about the material they have read.

Bland (2013) and Chun (2009) suggest EAL teachers to introduce graphic novels and comics into the EAL classroom to create a connection between EAL students' digital media habits and multimodal ensembles. The majority of Norwegian students between the age of 9-18 will be exposed to at least one social media platform, e.g., YouTube, Snapchat, TikTok, Instagram, and in the previous chapter, I discussed how Norwegian EAL teachers could be using films and news reports to connect students' multimodal literacy practices with academic literacy practices found in school, and it seems like using the visual and verbal modes found in multimodal ensembles are great tools to engage and motivate EAL students.

This study's participants underline how interesting and attractive multimodal ensembles could be used to encourage reluctant or struggling readers to participate in learning activities they find familiar, compared to traditional learning activities that can be too far away from students' everyday life and interest. Even if there are less EAL teachers who use graphic novels and comics compared to films and news reports, these teachers tried to connect learning activities with students' interest to encourage reluctant and struggling readers to participate in peer discussion about their multimodal ensembles' theme, topic, etc.

Rimmereide (2013) stresses that using multimodal ensembles in the EAL classroom could motivate and engage students at every level. In addition, Ajayi (2009), Bland (2013), Botzakis (2009), Krashen (2004), and McTaggart (2008) emphasize how reluctant and struggling readers can benefit from using multimodal ensembles in the EAL classroom to scaffold language learning and reading comprehension in English. By returning to Mediatilsynet (2020; 2022), we know that Norwegian children and adolescents between the age of 9 to 18 consume a lot of multimodal ensembles through digital media platforms like YouTube, Snapchat, TikTok, etc. Ajayi (2009) comments on how it is relevant for EAL teachers to relate the academic literacy practices in school with the multimodal practices EAL students engage with outside of school to create bridges between their multimodal habits and academic literacy practices. Since a reason for using multimodal ensembles like graphic novels and comics in the EAL classroom is to engage and motivate reluctant and struggling readers, it might indicate that EAL teachers try to create bridges between their students' digital media habits and the multimodal ensembles use for lessons and learning activities in the EAL classroom. This could possibly be a reason for teachers who use other multimodal ensembles like films, news reports, etc.

Bland (2013), Chun (2009), and Yi (2014) mention that if EAL teachers can create this bridge between students' digital media practices and literacy practices in school, reluctant or struggling readers might be engaged and motivated to participate in EAL learning activities alongside their peers, which is one of the reasons emphasised by EAL teachers in this study. Engaging and motivating students are also highly relevant within LK20 as it can scaffold language and reading comprehension, which means that it can spark students' joy and motivation for learning.

Another reason teachers described for using graphic novels and comics was that through these multimodal ensembles meaning was available to every reader. Graphic novels and comics use visual and verbal modes to tell their story to readers. The reading process through engaging

with graphic novels and comics vary from reader to reader, but they will move their eyes between the visual and verbal modes. Krashen (2004), Ranker (2007), and McTaggart (2008) highlight that visual modes found in graphic novels and comics can be used to scaffold language learning and reading comprehension in an additional language. While McTaggart (2008) and Ranker (2007) explain that readers below grade level might be unable to visualize the written language they are reading. They emphasise that for these EAL learners visual and nonverbal cues are crucial to additional language learners since they might not have the target language available.

Graphic novels and comics require readers to decode and create meaning from visual and verbal modes, alone or in complementing each other. EAL learners need to be able to decode visual and verbal modes to create meaning, and it is vital since learners are exposed to English and multimodal ensembles through their digital media habits and communication. Through the study, almost half of the teachers who use graphic novels and comics in their EAL teaching reported that developing students' multimodal literacy skill was a reason. Graphic novels and comics use both visual and verbal modes to create meaning, and focusing on developing their multimodal literacy skill, these teachers reasoned that these multimodal ensembles were great to illustrate how different modes, visual and verbal, could be used to create meaning on their own or by complementing each other.

5.3 Factors Influencing the Use of Graphic Novels and Comics in the EAL Classroom

Although the study found that even though EAL teachers agreed with the benefits to language and reading comprehension for EAL learners, graphic novels and comics are not used by a minority of teachers in the EAL classroom. This makes it seem like attitudes towards the benefits of using graphic novels and comics in the EAL classroom do not influence a minority of the participants to use graphic novels and comics in their EAL teaching. EAL teachers who reported that they do not use graphic novels and comics in the EAL classroom did so because of two factors: *time and resources available* and *their own interest and knowledge of graphic novels and comics*.

Reading multimodal ensembles in the EAL classroom could be used to engage and motivate EAL students. Vicary (2013) emphasizes that extensive reading could be a reading activity where students choose a text that piques their interest. The study found that some of the teachers reported that multimodal ensembles like graphic novels and comics are used as alternative reading material for struggling and reluctant readers when the class is going to complete an extensive reading. If EAL teachers want to complete an extensive reading

activity to motivate and engage their EAL students, Grabe (2009) highlights the requirement for teachers to know who their students are to be able to provide a long range of reading materials that are intriguing and accessible for their students. EAL teachers need to know their students' interest, language level, and reading skill. For extensive reading to be successful, researchers highlight that it is necessary that there is enough time and that the school has enough reading material where students can choose a text that piques their interest.

A lack of graphic novels and comics available at the school was reported by the majority of teachers who did not introduce graphic novels and comics to the EAL classroom. Either the school did not have any graphic novels and comics for students to read, or if they did, they did not suit the theme or topic covered in the subject.

As a counter to the lack of reading material available at the various schools, today's digital technologies have made it possible to access various texts through the internet. Rimmereide (2013) included a list of free and digital available graphic novels that teachers can use in the EAL classroom, and it does not cost the school anything. EAL teachers do not have to persuade their school to buy or borrow graphic novels and comics, instead teachers can access graphic novels and comics online.

When it comes to time, a participant had reported that they themselves did not have enough time to read and find graphic novels or comics that would fit the theme or topic. Time is a scarce resource, and necessary to complete an extensive reading since it means that students will engage with longer texts and not an excerpt.

However, if teachers are planning on completing a reading activity where they themselves find graphic novels and comics to suit the topic or theme of the subject, it would not be considered as an extensive reading material since it is supposed to focus on EAL students, where texts suit their level and interest to motivate and support reading pleasure (Nation, 2015; Vicary, 2013). Intensive reading would instead require teachers to find excerpt from texts and multimodal ensembles.

5.4 Limitations

There were limitations with this quantitative approach to investigating teachers' use of multimodal ensembles in the EAL classroom, their motives for using graphic novels and comics, and factors influencing the use of graphic novel and comics. With further research, the limitations to this project could be improved. However, the limitations to this project were

due to the nature of the study, a master's thesis, with less resources available to look deeper into the use of multimodal ensembles in the Norwegian EAL classroom.

Firstly, there were 26 teachers ranging from first grade to 13th grade who completed the online questionnaire. Since the study have such a small number of participants, the findings from the study should be interpreted with cautions as it cannot generalize based on the number of participants.

Secondly, I included teachers from first grade to 13th grade, meaning I could get a lot of different approaches to using multimodal ensembles in the EAL classroom. A limit with this was that I did not acquire an equal number of participants from the various education levels, e.g., primary school, lower secondary school, vocational studies, and general studies. This meant that I could get a group of teachers that would be overrepresented, while I could end up with one level barely present in the study, which unfortunately happened.

The findings from the current study cannot generalize how EAL teachers utilize multimodal ensembles as resource for language learning and reading comprehension as each education level have their own set of competence aims. The core curriculum, basic skills, and core elements of the English subjects are the same for every level, but they might prioritize differently because of their EAL students' literacy skills, theme and topics covered in class, and the competence aims at the various education levels.

Let us look at how teachers might prioritize differently based on competence aims for the various education levels. After year 4, LK20 describes that pupils should be able to “*read and talk about the content of various types of texts, including picture-books*” (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020a), while pupils, after year 10, should be able to “*read, discuss and present content from various types of texts, including self-chosen texts*” (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020b).

The competence aim for year 4 specifies that EAL teachers should include learning activities that use picture-books to engage their pupils, while the competence aim for year 10 does not mention a specific text type. LK20's definition of texts gives teachers a lot of possibility when it comes to using multimodal ensembles in the EAL classroom, however as seen in the examples of competence aims for year 4 and year 10 it might give EAL teachers at year 8-10 more possibilities when it comes to creating learning activities and lessons for the EAL classroom using multimodal ensembles, while teachers for year 4 need to prioritize using

picture-books based on how LK20 explicit mentions picture-books as a text pupils after year 4 should be able to read and talk about.

5.5 Suggestion for Further Research

There are two possible suggestions for further research I think of to improve the limitations or the scope of the current study: *classroom observation with interviews* or *an experimental study*.

Through classroom observation, a researcher can observe EAL lessons where teachers use graphic novels and comics in learning activities to develop students' language and reading comprehension. Observations make it possible to study how teachers complete lessons and learning activities, and one can observe how students engage with multimodal ensembles like graphic novels and comics to create meaning from visual and verbal modes. It might provide researchers with a wonderful opportunity to see how the class responds to multimodal ensembles, if it motivates and engage struggling and reluctant readers.

Classroom observations can be followed by interviewing teachers and students about the learning activities where they used graphic novels and comics to support language and reading comprehension. Through interviews researchers can ask follow-up questions to get more information and could therefore give more detailed information than could be collected in a questionnaire.

The second possible way to conduct a study on graphic novels and comics in the EAL classroom to support EAL students' language and reading comprehension would be to complete an experimental study. An experimental study makes it possible to have one or two control groups and an experimental group that completes tests on language and reading comprehension. Then the experimental group would complete lessons and reading activities using graphic novels and comics over a certain time-period. Before the experimental group and the control group(s) will complete a new test on language and reading comprehension. This study might give researchers an insight into how lessons and learning activities could be used to support language and reading comprehension in EAL students.

6.0 Conclusion

The study has investigated research questions about multimodal literacy and multimodal ensembles used in the EAL classroom. These were: *what types of multimodal ensembles are used in the EAL classroom, teachers' motivation for using multimodal ensembles, and factors influencing the use of multimodal ensembles.*

The current study looked at what types of multimodal ensembles the participating teachers used in the EAL classroom. Films and news reports were used by every participant, and the only distinction between these multimodal ensembles was how often the participants reported that they used these multimodal ensembles in the EAL classroom. Throughout the discussion, I looked at two possible reasons for why films, news reports, and digital media were more present in the EAL classroom compared to print-based multimodal ensembles, e.g., picture-books, illustrated novels, graphic novels, comics, and cartoons. These were *availability* and *creating a bridge between EAL students' digital media practices and literacy practices in school*.

The technological advances of the 21st century enable access to a lot of types of texts, both traditional and multimodal, through various devices. The only requirement is that these devices can connect to the internet. Films, news reports, and digital media are all multimodal ensembles EAL teachers and EAL students can access digitally. These text types are either free or require subscriptions. It is more reasonable for EAL teachers to use digital multimodal ensembles for learning activities in the EAL classroom since these require a lot less resources and are easily available.

Films were reported as the most dominant multimodal ensembles used by the participants in this study. The category covered YouTube and TikTok videos, which are two social media platforms the majority of Norwegian children and adolescents (9–18-year-olds) engage with outside of school. Researchers stress the importance of creating a bridge between students' everyday multimodal literacy practices with literacy practices they engage with at school. EAL teachers' use of films, news reports, and digital media indicates that these teachers tried to create bridges between the multimodal ensembles their EAL students enjoyed outside of school, with multimodal ensembles used for lessons and learning activities within school. This approach could motivate and possibly engage every student to scaffold language acquisitions and reading comprehension in the EAL classroom.

The study found that *LK20* and *teachers' own beliefs* could influence teachers' usage of graphic novels and comics in their lessons and learning activities in the EAL classroom. LK20 emphasizes a more prominent need to develop students' multimodal literacy for them to be able to participate in the society. For the majority of participants, multimodal literacy had become a more prominent part of their language teaching after the implementation of LK20. When the participants were asked if they would change their use of multimodal ensembles after the implementation, the majority of teachers reported that they would not change how

often they used various multimodal ensembles. LK20 could motivate teachers to use multimodal ensembles like graphic novels and comics, but not everyone. Researchers highlights how graphic novels and comics could benefit EAL students' language acquisition and reading comprehension. The participants either agreed or strongly agreed with the statements about benefits to language acquisition and reading comprehension. Regardless of the benefits, a minority of teachers had reported that they did not use graphic novels and comics in their teaching. There was a tendency for these teachers to avoid using graphic novels and comics in their lessons and learning activities because of factors like *time*, *resources available*, and *their own knowledge of these types of multimodal ensembles*.

Learning activities, like extensive reading, where students encounter multimodal ensembles can be used to motivate and potentially engage them to complete learning activities, that scaffold language acquisition and reading comprehension in an additional language. If teachers should include and complete extensive readings in the EAL classroom, teachers would need more time, easily accessible resources, and the reading materials need to be available for every possible EAL students. This means that struggling, reluctant, and proficient readers should be able to find a multimodal ensemble that piques their interest and is suitable to their comprehension level.

The study has contributed to research on Norwegian EAL teachers' usage of multimodal ensembles in the EAL classroom. Multimodal literacy and multimodal ensembles are important in the 21st century, and EAL teachers use various multimodal ensembles ranging from films and news reports to graphic novels and comics. These teachers acknowledge the various benefits to having a multimodal approach to language learning. However, there are multimodal ensembles that are used less by teachers in the EAL classroom because of time, resources available, and their own knowledge of multimodal ensembles. To facilitate more prominent use of multimodal ensembles like graphic novels and comics in the EAL classroom, schools and politicians should provide teachers with more easily accessible reading materials, and more time to complete learning activities, and expand their knowledge.

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8.0 Appendices

Appendix I: Information about participating in the master's project.

Welcome. This is an inquiry about participation in a research project where the main purpose is to look at multimodal literacy and the use of multimodal texts in Norwegian schools. Here you will be given information about the purpose of the project and what your participation involve.

The study on Multimodal literacy and how multimodal texts are used in second language are part of my master's thesis at Norwegian University for Science and Technology (NTNU). More specific my research project will be looking into how English teachers use multimodal texts as resource for second language acquisition.

The Department of Language and Literature is the institution responsible for the project, and the supervisor for my project is Nicole Busby.

I am asking you, as an English teacher, to participate since my master's thesis follows the MLSPRÅK program and I would like to conduct a study within the area I would like to work. The question to participate in my master's thesis and the link to this online questionnaire has been sent out to various Norwegian lower and upper school, where I have asked the schools to send out this information and questionnaire to their English teachers on my behalf.

If you would like to participate in the project, this will involve completing this online questionnaire. The questionnaire should take approximately 20 to 30 minutes. Where you answer questions about how you use texts in second language teaching, especially how multimodal texts are used as resources for your students English learning.

Answers to the questionnaire are completely anonymous, and all data will be treated with confidentiality. However, Nettskjema stores you IP-address in its system log, the IP-address is not tied to your answer, and you would still be anonymous. Nettskjema also uses cookies, which is meant to improve the user experience of the application.

It is completely voluntary to participate in the questionnaire, and by clicking 'next' you are indicating that you would like to participate. If you throughout the questionnaire would like to withdraw your consent; close the application and do not complete the questionnaire. Your answers will only count if you complete it. By completing the questionnaire, you give your consent to participate in the project.

The data gathered from the questionnaire will only be available to me and my supervisor, and it will be used in my research on how English teachers use multimodal texts in second language acquisition. If you in your answer provide any information that can be used to identify you or others, that information will be processed with confidentiality and in accordance with data protection legislation (the General Data Protection Regulation and Personal Data Act).

My master's thesis is due to be completed in May 2023. After that the research data will no longer be stored.

If you have any question about the research or you want to exercise your rights, please contact Marita Veiesund (maritave@ntnu.no), project supervisor Nicole Busby (nicole.busby@ntnu.no), or the Data protection officer at NTNU Thomas Helgesen (thomas.helgesen@ntnu.no).

Appendix II: Questionnaire

Literacy

*⁵How would you define the term literacy?

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UNESCO defines literacy as: the ability to generate meaning through identification, interpretation, creation, and communication in a community and global society that has become more digital and information-rich throughout the decades. Society uses different materials to convey meaning, printed or digital, but how meaning is conveyed can vary from material to material. **In short terms,** Literacy is seen as a skill to create meaning.

How often do you have the following texts in your English lessons?

Description:

Here, traditional text refers to texts that are more text dominated, but it can include pictures or other visual objects. E.g., English course book, novel, article, etc.

Non-traditional text refers to texts that are not text dominated. They can include text, but these texts use different visual objects, where these objects play an equal part in creating meaning. E.g., Picture-books, graphic novels, advertisement (video ad or poster), videos, etc.

Traditional texts:

Never	Seldom	Occasionally	Often	Very often	I don't know/ Not applicable
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Non-Traditional Texts:

Never	Seldom	Occasionally	Often	Very often	I don't know/ Not applicable
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What do you focus on when working with texts in the English classroom?

Identification	Interpretation	Creation	Communication	I don't know/ Not applicable
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⁵ Star symbol indicates that the question is optional, and if the participants want to they can skip the question.

*Describe how you use texts in second language acquisition

Description:

Do you use different types of texts, e.g., short stories, to develop different aspects of language, e.g., vocabulary, grammar, etc.?

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Multimodal literacy

Have you heard about the term multimodal literacy?

No	Heard of it, but unsure of its meaning	Yes	Yes, and I use the term	I don't know/ Not applicable
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If “Yes” and “Yes, and I use the term”:

How would you define the term?

*If “Yes, and I use the term”:

In what context do you use the term?

Multimodal literacy means creating meaning through texts that uses two or more modes.

Modes represent visual or verbal entities, like pictures, symbols, audio, text etc. These types of text are referred to as multimodal texts.

How often do you use multimodal texts in second language teaching?

Description:

The answer is meant as a rough estimate of how often various types of multimodal texts are used as resource in your English lessons.

Picture-books	Never	Once a month or less	Twice a month	Once a week	More than once a week	I don't know/ Not applicable
Illustrated novels	Never	Once a month or less	Twice a month	Once a week	More than once a week	I don't know/

						Not applicable
Graphic novels	Never	Once a month or less	Twice a month	Once a week	More than once a week	I don't know/ Not applicable
Comics	Never	Once a month or less	Twice a month	Once a week	More than once a week	I don't know/ Not applicable
Cartoons	Never	Once a month or less	Twice a month	Once a week	More than once a week	I don't know/ Not applicable
Advertisements	Never	Once a month or less	Twice a month	Once a week	More than once a week	I don't know/ Not applicable
News reports	Never	Once a month or less	Twice a month	Once a week	More than once a week	I don't know/ Not applicable
Film (Videos, YouTube clips, Tik Tok etc.)	Never	Once a month or less	Twice a month	Once a week	More than once a week	I don't know/ Not applicable
Digital media (Blog, social media posts like Instagram)	Never	Once a month or less	Twice a month	Once a week	More than once a week	I don't know/ Not applicable

When students are required to work with self-chosen texts, are they allowed to choose multimodal texts?

Yes	No	I don't know/ Not applicable
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If yes: Do your students choose multimodal texts?

Yes, very often	Occasionally	Seldom	No	I don't know/ Not applicable
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How do your class work with creating meaning through multimodal text?

Are students exposed to different types of multimodal texts?

Never	Seldom	Occasionally	Often	Very often	I don't know/ Not applicable
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Are students exploring other types of multimodal texts of their own choice?

Never	Seldom	Occasionally	Often	Very often	I don't know/ Not applicable
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Are students creating multimodal text in lessons?

Never	Seldom	Occasionally	Often	Very often	I don't know/ Not applicable
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Are students creating multimodal texts as assignments in English?

Never	Seldom	Occasionally	Often	Very often	I don't know/ Not applicable
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Do you use graphic novels and/or comics in your teaching?

Yes	No	I don't know/ Not applicable
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If yes: Why do you use graphic novels and/or comics?

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*If yes: Describe how you use graphic novels and/or comics.

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If no: Why do you not use graphic novels and/or comics?

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How would you rate the following statements?

Graphic novels and comics support language comprehension through its visual mode.

Graphic novels and comics support language acquisition at various learning levels.

Graphic novels and comics can influence students' enthusiasm for reading.

Reading of graphic novels and comics can serve as a conduit for book reading.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree
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Do you have lessons where you give an instructional approach to working with multimodal text?

Description: Example of instructional approaches:

- Do you have lessons on how to identify and interpret visual objects in multimodal texts?
- Do you have lessons on how different modes create meaning by themselves (where are they placed, which modes is it close to, etc.), and how do they interact with each other?

Never	Once a month or less	Twice a month	Once a week	More than once a week	I don't know/ Not applicable
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When do you give your students an instructional approach?

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What do you focus on when giving an instructional approach?

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*Describe a lesson where you have given an instructional approach to reading multimodal texts.

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*Describe how you would give an instructional approach to creating multimodal texts.

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After the implementation of LK20, are multimodal literacy a more prominent part of your teaching in second language acquisition?

Unsure/ Not considered it	Less prominent than before	No changes	More prominent than before	Significantly more prominent than before	No experience prior to LK20
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For the participants who have worked with other curriculums: Are there multimodal texts you plan to use more/less because of the implementation of LK20?

Picture-books	Less than before	Unchanged	More than before	I don't know/ Not applicable
Illustrated novels	Less than before	Unchanged	More than before	I don't know/ Not applicable
Graphic novels	Less than before	Unchanged	More than before	I don't know/ Not applicable
Comics	Less than before	Unchanged	More than before	I don't know/ Not applicable
Cartoons	Less than before	Unchanged	More than before	I don't know/ Not applicable
Advertisements	Less than before	Unchanged	More than before	I don't know/ Not applicable

News reports	Less than before	Unchanged	More than before	I don't know/ Not applicable
Film (Videos, YouTube clips, Tik Tok etc.)	Less than before	Unchanged	More than before	I don't know/ Not applicable
Digital media (Blog, social media posts like Instagram)	Less than before	Unchanged	More than before	I don't know/ Not applicable

Factual questions

How old are you?

Under 25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65	Over 65
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At what level are you teaching English?

Year 1-7	Year 8-10	General studies	Vocational studies
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How many years have you worked as an English teacher?

0-5	6-10	11-15	+15
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What are your educational levels?

Grunnskulelærer/ Allmennlærer (4 år)	Adjunkt (Bachelor + PPU)	Adjunkt m/opprykk (300 study points + PPU)	Lektor (Master + PPU)	Lektor m/opprykk (Master + 60 study points + PPU)	Other
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What are your educational levels in English?

Fewer than 60 study points	One year program (60)	Bachelor (120)	Master (180 or more)	Ph.D	Other
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*Is there anything else you would like to add?

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Appendix III: The Project's Relevance for Work as a Secondary Teacher with a Master's Degree.

This master's thesis has been my final assignment for the teacher training program at NTNU. How is this master's thesis relevant for me? My master's thesis has looked at multimodal literacy and the use of multimodal ensembles in the English as an additional language classroom. After finishing my master's degree, I will be eligible to work as an EAL teacher from 5th grade (primary school) till upper secondary school, which makes the theme of my master's thesis highly relevant to pursue a career as an EAL teacher in the 21st century, where Norwegian children and adolescents are exposed to English through their digital media habits, and multimodal literacy is a necessary skill to develop for people to be able to decode and create meaning from texts using at least two modes, visual and/or verbal modes.

Through working with my master's thesis, I have gained knowledge on how a multimodal approach to learning an additional language can benefit students at every level. By using multimodal ensembles, students will be able to use visual and verbal modes to decode and create meaning from texts they engage with outside of school and within school.

I have gained a lot of insight into how graphic novels and comics can be used to engage and motivate EAL learners at every level. By engaging and motivating readers, reluctant and struggling readers can be encouraged to complete and participate in learning activities using multimodal ensembles. Engaging and motivating readers can also be a conduit for reading pleasure, and they can also scaffold language learning and reading comprehension.

The knowledge of how visual and nonverbal cues found in graphic novels and comics can be used to fill in the gap if the target language is not available for the reader is important, as these multimodal ensembles can be used as alternative in an extensive reading activity for reluctant and struggling readers.

Therefore, I would say my thesis is highly relevant for me to be able to adapt my lessons and learning activities to try to engage and motivate every student, no matter which language and reading level they are at.



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