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Pupils' perspectives on the use of literature in the Norwegian lower-secondary EFL classroom

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Abstract

This thesis is based on research conducted in three EFL classes in a Norwegian lower secondary school. Fifty-four 10th grade pupils have been involved in a project investigating their perspectives on the use of literature. The research questions were: What do the pupils think they learn when using literature in the EFL classroom? How do the pupils evaluate the literary texts they use in English classes?

The English subject curriculum was examined and discussed in relation to the concept of literature. The literature component in the curriculum does not specify which materials and approaches are to be used, thus it gives great freedom of choice and responsibility to the teacher to engage pupils in literature. Research in the field (Lazar, 1993) shows that the use of literature can be ascribed to three main purposes: the language based approach, literature as content and literature for personal enrichment. The results show that the pupils acknowledge all three approaches, where the literature as content is regarded as more important than the others. However, the personal enrichment approach was regarded as most important by the teachers in the pilot research carried out in 2018. Thus, the pupils' thoughts are not in accordance with the teachers' opinions on this point. The findings also reveal that the pupils disagree that the literary texts they meet in the EFL classroom are interesting and entertaining. The teachers claimed to choose literary texts on the basis of the pupils' preferences, thus there is incoherence between the pupils' and the teachers' thoughts on this aspect.

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1. Introduction

Two years ago I carried out a survey among five colleagues in lower secondary school for my Method and Project paper in the Master's Programme on Teaching Foreign Languages in School (Krogstad 2018). The purpose of the study was to identify the teachers' attitudes towards the use of literature in the Norwegian lower-secondary EFL¹ classroom. When I analyzed the answers I found that there was little difference in opinions among the participants as to why literature should be taught. Most of the teachers acknowledged the benefits of reading to get an understanding of other cultures. The data in the analysis also showed that the five participants had similar views on the use of literature. They all recognized three main reasons for teaching it in the EFL classroom: literature as content, literature for language acquisition and literature as personal enrichment, where the latter was regarded as more important than the others. According to Lazar, this is the use of literary texts that are meaningful to the pupils (1993, 43). All the teachers regarded motivation as important and said that they adapted to the pupils' needs and interests. When choosing literary texts which encourage response from the pupils, the participants claimed to choose on the basis of the pupils' preferences. They all appeared to favour the textbook when teaching literature. The results I received through the survey gave me insight into what opinions teachers have of the teaching of literature in the EFL classroom. The teachers' thoughts and reflections motivated me to go on and work more with this topic, so I decided to do research on what pupils think about literature in the EFL classroom.

1.1. Research questions

I wanted to find out what attitudes pupils have towards the use of literature in the EFL classroom. It might provide an understanding of the potential impact the use of literature in lower secondary school may have.

My research questions are as follows:

- 1) What do the pupils think they learn when using literature in the EFL classroom?

¹ English as a foreign language

² According to Lazar, the different approaches (literature as content, literature for language acquisition and literature as personal enrichment) must be combined. To which extent they must be combined was not examined₂

Four of the teachers in the pilot study acknowledged the benefits of reading literature to get an understanding of other cultures, whereas for the fifth participant reading was seen as an opportunity to broaden horizons. As already explained, the teachers all recognized three main reasons for teaching literature in the EFL classroom.² The teachers considered the personal enrichment approach as the most important one. It is interesting to examine to which extent these views and approaches will be confirmed in the pupils' answers.

2) How do the pupils evaluate the literary texts they use in EFL classes?

I wanted to find out and understand how pupils relate to the English literary texts they meet in the classroom. When choosing literary texts which encourage response from the pupils, the participants in the pilot study said that they adapted to the pupils' needs and interests and claimed to choose texts on the basis of the pupils' preferences. Consequently, it is interesting to investigate if the teachers' statements will be confirmed in the pupils' responses.

This research presents tentative answers to these questions based on 54 lower secondary school pupils' answers concerning the use of literature in the classroom as they had experienced it.

1.2. Overview of the study

In chapter 2 there will be an overview of the theoretical framework of the thesis. First, the English subject curriculum will be examined. The competence aims that are relevant for the research will be introduced. Furthermore, there will be theory on the use of literature in the EFL classroom. The third chapter will present the research methods and materials that were used in gathering and analyzing the data. In chapter four the results will be shown and discussed. The link between the theory and the results will be made clear. The thesis will end in a conclusion in which the results of this research will be summarized in an attempt to answer the research questions.

² According to Lazar, the different approaches (literature as content, literature for language acquisition and literature as personal enrichment) must be combined. To which extent they must be combined was not examined in the pilot project and will not be examined in this thesis.

2. Theoretical background and LK06

This section outlines a theoretical framework of using literature in foreign language teaching, providing a basis for the research carried out. First, the role of literature as it appears in the curriculum will be introduced and examined. How teaching literature covers aims in the curriculum and how my study is tied to it will be shown. Next, I will address research on the use of literature in the EFL classroom to support my study. Focus will be on approaches to using literature among English learners and theory on how to select and evaluate texts for classroom use. Particularly, I wish to account for theory and research showing that the pupils' motivation and engagement are important components that the teacher should consider in planning lessons. First, it is necessary to consider some definitions of the term 'literature'.

2.1. Definitions

Although most people have an idea of what 'literature' means, the concept often continues to be vague. There is no set definition of 'literature' that has general acceptance, but Edmondson defines literature as "written texts which have a certain aesthetic value and some perceived status in the culture of which they are artefacts" (1995/1996, 45). However, Edmondson's definition does not involve cartoons or song lyrics, but he does not reject definitions that do include these types of literature either (45). Lazar describes literature as "those novels, short stories, plays and poems which are fictional and convey their message by paying considerable attention to language which is rich and multi-layered" (5). Furthermore, to make literature relevant to modern day classroom the definition consists of "contemporary works which recognize that the English language is no longer the preserve of a few nations, but is now used globally" (5). Thus, literature is more than traditional canonical works from the Anglo-American sphere, but includes texts by writers from a diverse range of countries and cultures using different varieties and forms of English. Teachers therefore have the possibility to explore a wide range of texts when teaching literature. For the purpose of this thesis, both Edmondson's and Lazar's definitions of 'literature' is the focus. They both reflect on the traditional view of what literature is, namely all types of written texts that have value and status in the culture of which they can be found. That is to mean any works of fiction, for example novel, short story, drama and poetry. In this thesis the main focus will be on print-based fiction, hence some benefits of printed fictional texts will be shown in part 2.3. It is not my intention to do a comparative analysis of the benefits of print-based fiction and digital fiction texts.

2.2. The Knowledge Promotion

The Knowledge Promotion (LK06) is the curriculum for the subjects of English. In this section I examine how literature appears in the English subject curriculum, in addition to relevant competence aims in the English subject.

2.2.1. Literature in the *Purpose of the English subject*

The stated purpose of the subject claims that English aims to “provide insight into the way people live and different cultures where English is the primary or the official language” (1). In addition, it shall give the pupils possibilities to learn how English is used as “an international means of communication” (1). Here English is seen as a part of gaining understanding of the English-speaking world and how people live. It is a way to introduce pupils to different people, cultural differences and different parts of the world, thus giving the pupils new perspectives. In the EFL classroom pupils must also receive knowledge about how English has developed into a world language. These ideas are illuminated by Hall, who claims that the culture of the English language is seen as a way to develop participation in a wider global community of young people (2015, 19).

Moreover, the purpose explains that “language learning occurs while encountering a diversity of texts, where the concept of text is used in the broadest sense of the word”. It is stated that it “involves oral and written representations in different combinations and a range of oral and written texts from digital media” (1). As can be seen, literature is not explicitly mentioned here. This shows that the curriculum does not emphasize the difference between texts from digital media, fiction and factual texts, but refers to them as ‘texts’ or ‘literary texts’ and thus puts them on an equal footing. Hence, to understand the value of literature in the curriculum, it must be understood as embedded in the broad text concept. However, as explained above, this thesis will primarily be based on pupils’ experiences with written fictional texts.

It is emphasized that “literary texts in English can instill a lifelong joy of reading...” and “inspire personal expressions and creativity” (1). Here literature is mentioned in its own right. These aims can be linked to the importance of the pupils’ own motivation and personal interests when using literary texts. If the pupils find reading to be fun and enjoyable, it is likely that they will read more. If they read a lot, they may be inspired to develop their own

creativity when using literature. The purpose of the subject also states that “literary texts in English can instill a deeper understanding of others and of oneself” (1). This means that reading literature in itself is an activity which carries values desirable for English learners. Literary texts are seen as a way of building up the personal and social development of the pupils. The curriculum’s purpose is concluded by a statement of the importance of cultural competence, to which the use of literature is supposed to assist.

2.2.2. Main subject areas

The subject of English is divided into these main areas: *Language learning*, *Oral communication*, *Written communication* and *Culture, society and literature*. Within each subject area, there is a list of competence aims and these are meant to complement each other.

The main subject area *Culture, society and literature* focuses on cultural understanding in a broad sense. It is stated that literary texts are important to “develop knowledge about, understanding of and respect for the lives and cultures of other people” (3). Again, literature can be seen as a possible approach to enhanced knowledge of culture and society. Furthermore, the area of *Written communication* expresses the necessity of “creating structure, coherence and concise meaning in texts” (3). As a consequence, the teacher must supply the pupils with tools in order to develop this competence. Elements like genre of texts and background information of texts are essential in this connection.

2.2.3. Literature in the competence aims

In the list of competence aims after year 10, in the section called *Written communication*, two aims are listed which can be connected to reading and working with literature. One aim is to “understand the main content and details of texts one has chosen” (8), whereas the other aim is to “read, understand and evaluate different types of texts of varying length about different topics” (8). These aims are fairly open and focus is on what pupils should be able to do in the meeting with a text. For example, they must develop their comprehension skills. It is also claimed that pupils must be given the opportunity to choose texts themselves when working on literature in the English classroom.

Another aim of the studies after year 10 is to enable pupils to “discuss and elaborate on different types of English literature from English-speaking countries”. Through fictional texts, pupils are to be familiarized with the English-speaking world. They are expected to

understand, reflect on and communicate about different kinds of English texts. This goal is also rather open and shows that it is entirely up to the individual teacher or the pupils to decide what types of texts to use. For example, it is possible for the teacher to select both newly released literature and classics. One more aim is to “create, communicate and converse about own texts inspired by English literature, films and cultural forms of expression”. Here the pupils are expected to be able to read and discuss their own written texts and to use literature in different ways. All of these competence aims can be found in the section called *Culture, society and literature*.

The fact that literature is specifically mentioned in two out of six competence aims means that teachers are required to teach literature in their classrooms. The pupils are expected to discuss, elaborate, understand and evaluate when working on literary texts.³ In spite of this, the literature component does not specify which materials and approaches are to be used, therefore it gives great freedom of choice and responsibility to the teacher to engage pupils in literature.

2.3. Benefits of print-based fictional texts

As stated in part 2.1., this thesis will focus on print-based fictional texts. Reading a paper-based text is in many ways different from reading a digital text. Mangen and Säljö highlight how different types of texts have different conditions for reading (2016, 121). Reasons for the specific focus on print-based texts are many, one being that paper-based texts will facilitate a deeper understanding of texts and further reflection about content (120). It is argued that in reading print-based texts memory and ability performance improve. When reading print-based texts, the pupils avoid navigation and scrolling which is mentioned as possible factors that take energy from reading and affect reading comprehension (121). These factors are also highlighted by Evans et al. It is claimed that print readers tend to read the text line by line, as opposed to digital readers who tend to ‘jump’ from place to place in the text (Evans et al., cited in Oku 2015, 132). Morineau et al. state that reading digital texts involve lower comprehension and memorization levels compared with reading printed texts (cited in Oku 132). All these factors suggest that reading print texts involve higher comprehension and

³ These skills are part of the Basic skills of the curriculum (*Oral skills, being able to express oneself in writing, being able to read, numeracy and digital skills*) which are integrated in the competence aims.

memorization levels, which is essential when the purpose is to understand and reflect on content in texts. This research also suits the guidelines in the curriculum where one aim of the studies after year 10 is to enable pupils to “understand the main content and details of texts one has chosen” (8).

2.4. Why use literature in the EFL classroom?

The first research question in this thesis aims to investigate what the pupils think they learn when using literature. As several EFL literature researchers have noted, literature is a very flexible tool for any language teacher. It is claimed that the main aim of using literature is to develop the pupils’ “knowledge, and proficiency in, English” (Langer 2011, 27). Moreover, reading books plays a crucial part in the process of expanding our understanding of the world around us (Nodelmann and Reimer 2003, 152). Lazar presents eleven reasons for using literature among learners:

- it is very motivating
- it is authentic material
- it has general educational value
- it is found in many syllabuses
- it helps students to understand another culture
- it is a stimulus for language acquisition
- it develops students’ interpretative abilities
- students enjoy it and it is fun
- it is highly valued and has high status
- it expands students’ language awareness
- it encourages students to talk about their opinions and feelings

(Lazar 14)

Many of these reasons listed here are also mentioned by the pupils who participated in the questionnaire and the interviews on which this thesis is based, and will be investigated in more detail later. Likewise, four of the participants in the pilot study acknowledged the benefits of reading to get an understanding of other cultures, whereas for the fifth participant reading was seen as a possibility to broaden horizons.

Other researchers who emphasize the use of literary texts are Collie and Slater. They give many reasons why a language teacher should use literary texts with his or her pupils, and one of the main reasons is that literature provides valuable authentic material because the texts are written with native speakers in mind (Collie and Slater 1987, 5). Similarly, Drew and Sørheim suggest that the use of authentic texts, i.e. texts that are not written specifically for teaching purposes, gives pupils the possibility to read longer texts, and makes it possible to combine reading with other classroom activities, such as for example discussion and grammar exercises (2009, 124).

2.4.1. Approaches to using literature

Additionally, there are many useful approaches to draw on when using literature in the EFL classroom. In the pilot study the teachers recognized Lazar's approaches to using literature with the language learner. These are the language-based approach, literature as content and literature for personal enrichment. As explained in the introduction, the personal enrichment approach was regarded as more important than the others. One of the questions in the survey on which this thesis is built, examines if the teachers' views will be confirmed in the pupils' answers.

The language-based approach involves studying and focusing on the language in the literary texts in order to understand them. The literary texts are chosen based on the style of language and how it can help the pupils understand the text and help the pupils' language acquisition (Lazar 23). This approach exposes pupils to language structure and vocabulary, and aims to improve pupils' knowledge and proficiency in English (25).

Lazar's second approach is called literature as content. This approach is often regarded as the traditional approach to the study of literature. It focuses on the author or the content and form of the work and includes elements like context, genre, and literary movement, which are the most important aspects of this approach. This way of working with a text offers an excellent way to provide the historical and cultural context in which the text is written (Lazar 24). Focus is more on literature than on language; the acquisition of English is usually related to the topics and themes of the texts. Here

the pupils gain the contextual information they need in order to fully understand a text's message. This approach suits the guidelines in the curriculum which frequently stresses the

importance of understanding other cultures, especially the English-speaking world. Wolf notes that key forms of literary criticism are tools we can use to define, classify, analyze, interpret and evaluate works of literature and thus “enhance the pupils’ uptake of literature”. They contain systematic approaches to texts and provide methods for studying and evaluating things we read (Wolf 2004, 24). In lower secondary school students must be ready to explore literary genres as genre knowledge is something that pupils need in order to develop the kind of metacognition required to evaluate fiction. The curriculum emphasizes pupils’ ability to create structure, coherence and concise meaning in texts, which was shown in part 2.2.

The third approach, literature for personal enrichment, is the use of literary texts that are meaningful to the pupils. This approach gives the pupils the chance to become actively involved, both emotionally and intellectually, in the reading process. The material is chosen on the basis of whether it is appropriate to pupils’ interests and will stimulate a high level of personal involvement. Reading about certain themes, situations and characters can make one think about one’s own personal situation and come to a better understanding of oneself, hence involving the pupils as a “whole person” (Lazar 25). This suggests that reading is a way of gaining an understanding of life through deep involvement in stories. Consequently, themes that make pupils reflect are essential.

2.5. Choosing materials

The second research question in this thesis seeks to examine how the pupils evaluate the literary texts they read in the classroom. When it comes to literature, one of the major aspects is definitely selecting which texts to give the pupils to read. The selection in young adult literature is abundant and rich, and there is an array of titles to choose from (Williams, in Birketveit and Williams 2013, 163).

As shown in part 2.2, the curriculum does not give any clues on what literary works the teacher should use, so as teachers, we are required to choose literary texts that are suitable for our pupils. How these decisions are made, may say something about what the teachers want their pupils to experience and learn from working with literature. The results in my pilot research indicated that there are very different practices as to how the material is chosen. All the teachers used the textbook for literature lessons and all of them read classics. Four used fan fiction and/or found literature themselves, three used free voluntary reading and had pupils suggest books, only one used sets of books available at school and one used book lists.

The fact that the teachers use free voluntary reading may be seen in line with Krashen's theory of Free Voluntary Reading. As maintained by Krashen, the power of freely choosing one's own reading material should not be underestimated. It is claimed that when we read books that we choose ourselves, it is usually a very pleasant experience. It is one of the most powerful tools in language education as it can "bridge the gap from the beginning level to advanced levels of second language proficiency" (Krashen 2004, 5). This might indicate that the pupils will feel a stronger personal relation to the literary texts if they can select freely, which in turn may enhance their engagement and motivation when using literary texts. This research is in accordance with the principles in the curriculum where it is stated that pupils must be enabled to "understand the main content and details of texts *one has chosen*" (8, my italics).

When choosing and working with literature in the EFL classroom, there are many useful theories to help us choose materials and plan tasks for classroom use. Lazar underlines the importance of carefully selecting literature to be introduced to the learners. According to Lazar, many teachers choose texts on an intuitive basis. She says that this works well if you are able to establish a good rapport with the pupils you are teaching. However, teachers can ask a series of questions to assess the suitability of texts for any particular group of learners (41). These are possible questions that might be useful:

- How can the theme or topic of the text be made relevant to the student's own experience?
- How does the use of a text mesh with the requirements of the syllabus and the students' perceptions of their own needs?
- What activities will most suit the learning styles of the students? (128)

When selecting or rejecting texts which are suitable for use with pupils, Lazar argues that you should think about three main areas. These are: the type of course you are teaching, the type of students who are doing the course and certain factors connected with the text itself (48). More specifically, teachers should consider the age of the pupils, their emotional and intellectual maturity and their interests and hobbies when selecting literary texts. It is recommended to spend some time with the learners to evaluate their interests, thus choose motivating material. In order to make pupils respond to a literary text, they need to be able to draw on their own experiences. Then the pupils will feel that what they do in the classroom is relevant and meaningful to their own lives (15). It is emphasized that the texts should suit the

majority of learners in the class (52). In addition, teachers should consider the learners' cultural background. The theme of the texts must relate to some extent to the culture of the readers. Teachers need to consider how much background they will need to provide for the pupils to have a basic understanding of the text (53). Other text-related factors are availability of texts, length of texts, exploitability and how the texts fit with the syllabus (55).

Two other researchers who have been engaged in how to select materials for classroom use are Koss and Teale. They claim that many young adult novels focus on teens struggling to find themselves and dealing with typical teenage life (2009, 567). A large number of the books in their analysis focused on teenagers finding themselves or trying to fit in. It is important for pupils to read about persons struggling to deal with events of everyday life like many teens normally do. Moreover, it is stated in their analysis that humour was frequent in one third of the books, most often used as a means of dealing with difficult-to-discuss topics (568). Authors use humour to make it easier to talk about topics like for example homosexuality. Humour has a tendency to be a lighter form of literature, therefore making it easier to read and understand. These findings indicate that it should be relatively easy to select books that suit pupils' needs and reflect their lives.

2.6. Literary engagement

However, any literary text or approach does not necessarily lead to the various learning aims. The most important aspect, and maybe the most difficult part, is a way of raising students' expectations so that reading becomes a positive experience. The value of literary engagement is demonstrated by Wolf. It is argued that teachers must give the pupils something to think about and something to respond to in order to engage them in literature and thinking about what they read (14). In this part I wish to account for theory and research showing that the pupils' motivation and engagement are important components that the teacher should consider in planning lessons. I will be able to say something about the factors associated with text selection that may affect pupils' motivation for reading literature. Additionally, different types of motivation are discussed.

The teachers in the pilot study emphasized that the ability to motivate pupils is of great importance to the learning outcome and said that they adapted to the pupils' needs and interests. They said that no matter how literature is included in the EFL classroom, it does not make a difference in the language learning process unless the pupils are motivated and

respond to the text and activities related to it. The teachers were asked how they motivate the pupils to read and engage in literature work. Example of answers were: “pre-reading activities, talking nicely about books, to use films, have a positive attitude, try to meet the pupils’ interests when we give them a topic”.

According to Edmonson, the teacher’s ability to motivate pupils is of great importance to the learning outcome. Motivating the pupils to read is a key aspect for good teaching. Some pupils are not used to reading and are less motivated, therefore it is important for the teacher to point out the benefits of reading. The pupils are in the end those who have to read the texts and engage in literature work. Edmonson presents the ‘*Look at this!*’ argument in which engaging and entertaining lesson plans and activities related to literary texts are used as reasons for introducing literature to the language classroom. This is related to *the motivational argument* where the fact that being allowed, and even encouraged, to read literature can be motivational for some pupils (48-49). Moreover, it is stated by Birketveit and Williams that “learners who encounter a variety of texts which engage and enthuse them are much more likely to be motivated to continue as active independent lifelong readers” (7).

In recent years, there has been an increase of interest in motivation research in the field of second language learning. According to Gass et al., a lot of studies have indicated that motivation is a predictor of language-learning success (2013, 453). The exact nature of motivation is not so clear and definitions differ. Theory on motivation in second language learning often distinguishes between two long-term explanations, namely integrative and instrumental motivation. Integrative motivation means learning the language in order to take part in the culture of its people. Instrumental motivation means learning the language for a career goal or other practical reason (526). The two types of motivation mentioned above should be seen as connected to each other, rather than oppositional, since pupils can be both instrumentally and integratively motivated at the same time (Ellis 1997, 76).

Cook claims that motivation is “the interest that something generates in the pupils” (2016, 153). Motivation is not something that pupils have, or do not have, but rather something that varies from one moment to the next depending on the learning context or task. Motivation in this sense is a short-term affair from moment to moment in class (153). It is argued that the teacher has to activate the motivational factors in the pupils. It may be easier for a teacher to influence the short-term factors than the more deep-seated ones. Pupils often do not have a clear idea of whether the language will be useful for their future or not, thus that is not a very

strong motivator. Applied to the use of literary texts in the EFL classroom, the purpose in using them is important to communicate to the pupils. Likewise, using texts the pupils can understand. Above all, the choice of teaching materials and the content of lessons should correspond to the motivation of the pupils (156).

Guthrie and Wigfield present several reasons why learners' motivation should be an important factor in the teacher's planning of reading activities in the classroom. First and foremost, they write that motivation is critical to engagement because motivation is what activates behaviour. A less motivated reader spends less time reading, exerting less cognitive efforts and is less dedicated to a full-fledged understanding of the text and work on it than a more motivated reader (2000, 406-408).

It is maintained by Nodelman and Reimer that for young readers to be able to engage in literature, they need to be educated in strategies used for communicating their reading (33). As a consequence, teachers must communicate the purpose behind reading a novel and convince the pupils of the value of reading. One possibility is to focus attention on the texts themselves. Here it is recommended to devise exercises encouraging development of the knowledge background of a text (45). This correlates to Lazar's literature as content-approach which was presented in part 2.4.1. Lazar claims that the full understanding of what one is doing and why is an important element to consider (13). Many times pupils are not fully aware of the importance of reading literature, it is therefore helpful to examine the reasons for using literature (15-19). This shows that it is essential to set clear goals when studying a literary text.

This part has provided the reader with some ideas for reflection on the subject of teaching literature in the EFL classroom. It was shown how the Norwegian syllabus for the subject English is not extensive when it comes to literature, although the curriculum mentions literature in two competence aims after Year 10. This allows teachers great freedom of choice among multiple texts and approaches. Moreover, three main reasons for teaching literature in the English classroom were presented: literature as content, literature for language acquisition and literature as personal enrichment. Then I introduced theories to help us choose materials to use among learners. Lazar, Krashen, and Koss and Teale were consulted. If teachers choose materials carefully, pupils will feel that what they do in the English classroom is relevant and meaningful. From that, the section moved on to motivational factors in the field of second

language learning. Finally, theories on how to create literary engagement in the classroom were introduced, amongst them Edmonson's research.

3. Research methods and materials

As explained earlier, I have a strong interest in discovering what the pupils' views are on the use of literature in the English classroom. My research aims to investigate the following questions: What do the pupils think they learn when using literature in the EFL classroom? How do the pupils evaluate the literary texts they use in EFL classes? In this section I will present my methodology and research design used in collecting and analyzing the data for this study. The pupils that took part in the research will be introduced.

3.1. Survey research

For this thesis I have chosen to use the survey research method. Survey research allows you to reach a large number of people easily and it is relatively quick to collect a large amount of very specific information (McKay 2006, 17). According to Brown (cited in McKay) survey research can provide information about the views of learners about language learning through the use of oral interviews or written questionnaires (35). Therefore, I have chosen this method for the purpose of investigating my research questions. The data collected was gathered from both questionnaires and oral interviews. The questionnaire made up the first part of the study, whereas in the second part of the study, the interviews were carried out.

This research was conducted one year after the study among the teachers at my school. The pupils participating in the research were taught by the teachers who conducted the survey one year earlier. This was important because I wanted to see if the teachers' answers from the method and project paper reflected the pupils' answers. After having asked permission from the administration at my school the research was carried out in the spring of 2019.

3.2. Participants

54 pupils from lower secondary school answered the questionnaire, whereas 10 of these were called back for an interview. They were all 10th graders and there were 23 girls and 31 boys.

3.3. Materials

The research method employed is mainly quantitative, comprising a survey in the form of a print-based questionnaire and a structured focus group interview. According to McKay,

interviews are often used together with a quantitative project to broaden the researcher's understanding (51).

3.3.1. Questionnaire

For the survey I created a set of questions inspired by the pilot study. At the same time I tried to formulate questions in the questionnaire that would reflect the general aims of the study in an attempt to find some tendencies regarding the main issues. Different types of questions were used in the questionnaire: alternative-answer questions ("yes or no"), checklist format ("underline the different texts"), Likert-scale ("how strongly do you agree?") and ranking answers ("place in order of preference") (McKay 38). These are all close-ended questions. Some of the questions in the questionnaire were open-ended (such as "why"-questions) so that the interviewees were allowed a great deal of freedom in responding. This was important, because I wanted to know the pupils' thoughts on these questions. As described by McKay, open-ended questions can also provide detailed and rich information (39).

The questionnaire consisted of 4 pages with 13 questions related to the learners' opinion of the use of literature in the EFL classroom. The first two questions concerned information regarding the participants themselves that might influence their answers. The next three questions examined which type of texts they had read in lower secondary school and which texts they favoured. As explained in the theory part, the curriculum gives no guidelines for what texts to use in the classroom. Thus, the third question asked the pupils to underline the different texts they had read and in question 4 they were asked to choose the type of texts that they liked most. Question 5 asked about titles of favourite texts and why they liked them. Question 6 asked for opinions in regard to why literature is used in English classes and question 7 was included to examine different approaches to using literature in the classroom. The next four questions focused on the pupils' opinions of the literary texts they had met. Question 12 and 13, which dealt with pupils' reading preferences in their spare time, were included here because they might say something about what is important when they read. Although reading preferences in the spare time are not directly transferable to the classroom, these variables may tell something about pupils' interests regarding fictional texts. Here I chose to include all kinds of texts, both on paper and on the screen, as different websites and digital communication tools play an important part in the daily life of our pupils.

The questionnaire was written in Norwegian to make sure that all the pupils would understand, regardless of their proficiency in English. Consequently, the replies were in Norwegian. I have translated both the questions and answers into English. Exact copies of the two versions can be found in Appendix I and Appendix II.

The usability of the questionnaire was tested through a pilot study of 24 pupils. They seemed to have no trouble understanding and responding to the questions. However, I noticed that I had asked for titles of texts in one of the questions, instead of what comprises an interesting literary text. At least the pupils understood the question that way. Therefore I changed the question and added another one in which the pupils were asked more specifically about titles of favourite texts they had been reading in class, since that is one of my main concerns in this project.

3.3.2. The interviews

To supplement the data that were collected in the survey, I included a focus group interview. A focus group interview can provide a good deal of information in a short time (McKay 52). 10 pupils were chosen as interviewees. It was important that both boys and girls participated in the interviews. I selected pupils I knew would have something to say on the topic and that would be comfortable talking to me and each other. As stated by Bryman, some restriction is required on who might be an appropriate interviewee. Some people are likely to have more to say of the chosen topic (2012, 510). The themes which were included in the interviews were taken from the questionnaire. It was important that the interviewees were given the chance to explain more closely their answers to the questionnaire, in order to get a better understanding of their attitudes and beliefs. It is claimed that “often the goal of qualitative research is to understand what the experiences are of specific language learners or teachers”, rather than including statistical measures to achieve validity and reliability (McKay 14). A series of open-ended questions were designed to secure both relevant results for the study and effective interviews. According to McKay, the pupils in a focus group interview are encouraged to discuss thoughts freely with other participants (52). I wished to allow the pupils to be interviewed in their first language to avoid problems that could arise from their lack of English proficiency.

3.4. Procedures

The survey was conducted on the same day in three different lessons. Before the pupils carried out the survey, I described the purpose of the research. I told them that I would like to find out more about their opinions of the use of literature in the EFL classroom so that I could use this information in my thesis and later use it to design appropriate classroom activities. In addition, they were told that there were no right or wrong answers and that their responses were anonymous. It was also important to talk to them about the term 'literature'. Most pupils in lower secondary school have an idea of what literature means, but it was important to make sure that all pupils participating in the survey used the same definition. They were explained that in this research literature includes any works of written fiction, for example novel, short story, drama and poetry.

The interviews were conducted one week after the completion of the survey. I contacted the pupils in advance, explained my research and asked for their cooperation in the project. Before I carried out the interviews, I had gone through the results from the questionnaires and briefly summarized the results. That was important, because I wanted to present the main tendency to the pupils. Before the interviews started, I informed them of what we were to talk about, what the data would be used for, what they had to do and that it was anonymous. It was important to try to create a non-threatening environment that encouraged group interaction. I divided the pupils in mini-focus groups (3, 3 and 4 pupils) to give them adequate opportunities to talk and interact as the group was young. I handed out the questionnaire again, just as a reminder of the questions they were asked in the survey. That said, I did not introduce the specific questions that I would ask in the interview. Then the results from the questionnaires were briefly presented and the interviews followed. I asked the planned questions to keep discussions on track. However, the pupils were reminded that these questions were not to restrict the discussion. They were free to add any comment they liked. It was important to encourage everyone to contribute to the discussion, so I tried to ensure appropriate sharing of time between the group members as much as possible. I took notes during the interviews. Three focus-group meetings were carried out and each interview lasted about an hour. The whole research spanned one week. The interviews were, like the questionnaire, conducted in Norwegian (Appendix III), thus a translation was required afterwards (Appendix IV).

4. Research results and discussion

The purpose of this study was to find out the pupils' views on the use of literature in the EFL classroom. I wanted to examine what they think they learn when reading literature and how they evaluate the texts they read in English classes. In this section I will present the analysis and research results. I take the theory presented in chapter 2 as a starting point, together with results from my own research. The questionnaires will be discussed first, followed by an analysis of the interviews.

I counted the data in the questionnaire. I used tables and graphs to summarize the answers given in the survey. In addition, I have included examples from the data to illustrate the issues that are discussed. The interview data was reviewed several times looking for patterns. The questions and answers, in both the questionnaire and the interviews, follow one another in order and are not divided into separate sections.

4.1. Questionnaire results

The first question on the questionnaire asked the pupils to circle the appropriate gender (male/female). Of 54 pupils, 23 were girls and 31 were boys, all pupils in class 10.

Question 2 – Interest in the subject

As a base for the study I asked the question “How interested are you in the English subject?” Basically, this question tells as much about the pupils' attitudes towards all parts of the English subject. The question is included here because the distribution is interesting to see in the context of other questions that say something about the attitudes towards the use of literature, especially the questions of whether or not the pupils are experiencing the literary work as interesting, entertaining and motivational (see analysis of questions 8 – 10 below). Any difference will be able to uncover whether or not the pupils' opinions on the use of literature single out in a positive or negative direction.

	Very interested	Interested	Indifferent	Not interested
How interested are you in the English subject?	3	18	25	7

Figure 1: Interest in the subject

(One student put a cross between very interested and interested).

As can be seen in Figure 1, 18 pupils are “Interested” in English as a subject, however, the majority of them are “Indifferent” to the subject. 25 pupils have no particular interest in the English subject. The results show a low frequency of pupils who are “Very interested” and “Not interested”. For the purpose of differentiating answers to see if there are differences in gender when relating to this question, I chose to show the results in the graph below.

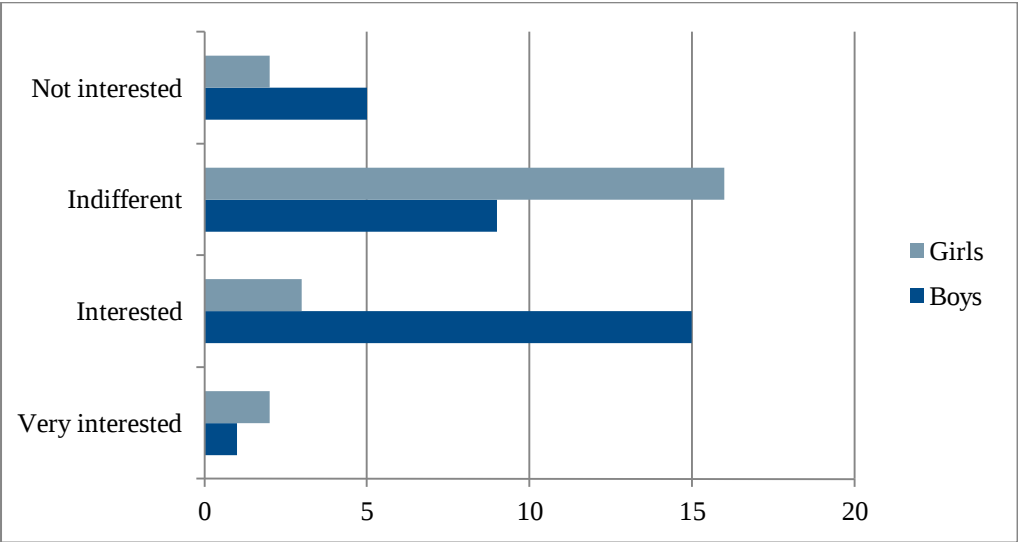


Figure 2: Interest in the subject (by gender)

As already stated, the majority of the pupils are “Indifferent” to the subject. Figure 2 shows that most of them are girls. 16 girls say they are “Indifferent”, whereas 9 boys answer the same. There are clear differences in terms of “Interested”. The gap between boys and girls is great. 15 of the boys say they are “Interested” in the subject; 3 of the girls. At both ends of the graph, there is no significant variability in gender. 5 boys and 2 girls say that English as a subject is not very interesting. For 2 girls and 1 boy, the subject is very interesting. Interestingly, a few of the students commented on this result during the interview. One student said that boys are more relaxed as an explanation of why they are more interested in the subject. Another student thought that boys want to make a good impression and therefore answered positively. On the other hand, it was suggested that girls are more honest and take things more seriously. Summing up, a majority of the pupils have no particular interest in the English subject, and most of them are girls.

Question 3 – Types of texts

The next question asked what kinds of texts the written texts included. This question also served as a base for the study and a warm-up for the rest of the questions. In addition, the teachers in the pilot study were asked almost the same question. The pupils were asked to underline all relevant answers from a list of 10 suggestions illustrated in figure 3 below. Each learner had the opportunity to underline more than one alternative and the 54 responses from the three classes resulted in 286 underlined answers. The results are presented in percentages below to show the relative amount of different types of texts which the pupils have met through the years in lower secondary school.

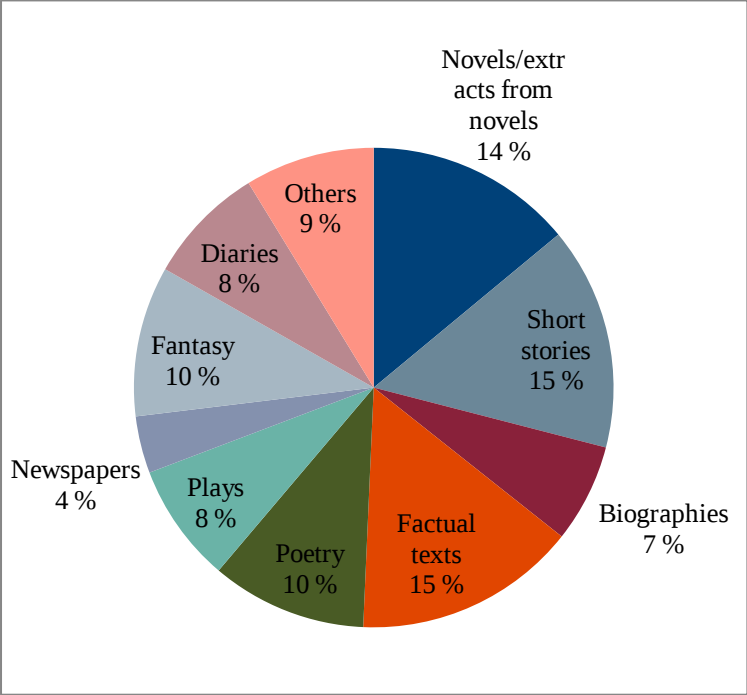


Figure 3: Written texts

Novels/extracts from novels (14%), short stories (15%) and factual texts (15%) are the three most common types of literature that the pupils have met in school. This is compatible with the results found in the pilot study where all the participants answered that they use the textbook for literature lessons. Textbooks typically include many short stories, extracts from novels and factual texts and this explains why learners are frequently exposed to this kind of literature. Newspaper articles are rarely found in textbooks. As can be seen from the chart, only a few of the pupils have worked on newspapers. It indicates that the pupils work with other types of texts in addition to the textbooks and that the teachers use additional material in the language classroom.

The results show that novels/extracts from novels, short stories and factual texts are the most common types of texts that the pupils have met in EFL lessons.

Question 4 – Favourite kind of literature

Since the previous question asked for what kinds of texts the written texts included, the next question was more precise. The pupils were asked to list their favourite kind of literature and choose the types of texts (from question 3) that they liked most. Below are the four most common types of favourite literature listed:

- a) Factual texts/poetry (11 mentions each)
- b) Fantasy (9 mentions)
- c) Plays (7 mentions)

3 pupils answered that they had no favourite.

Factual texts and poetry are the most preferred types of literature, followed by fantasy and plays. The results reveal that 11 pupils prefer factual texts, 11 prefer poetry, 9 prefer fantasy, whereas plays are preferred by 7 pupils. None of the pupils listed newspapers and biographies as favourites.

For the purpose of identifying differences in gender when relating to this question, I chose to divide the answers in terms of boys and girls.

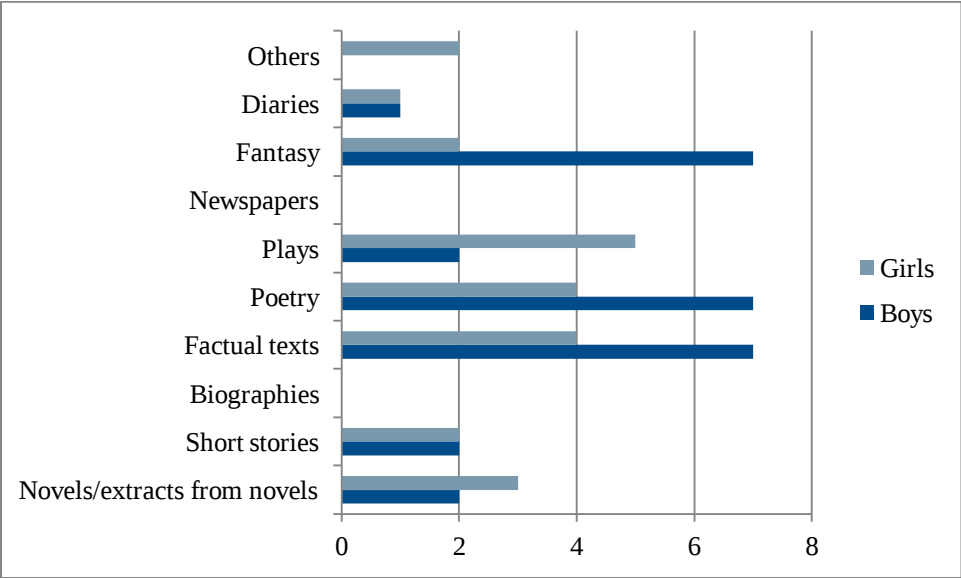


Figure 4: Favourite kind of literature (by gender)

This graph shows that the majority of the pupils who prefer factual texts, poetry and fantasy are boys, whereas the girls prefer plays. 7 boys choose factual texts as their favourite, while 4 girls prefer these texts. 7 boys prefer poetry, whereas 4 girls answer the same. 9 boys rank fantasy as a favourite, whereas 2 girls. There are 5 girls who rank plays as their favourite kind of literature, while only 2 boys prefer plays.

The fact that pupils rate factual texts⁴, poetry, fantasy and plays as favourite texts, and that they are frequently exposed to such texts, indicates that the teachers adapt their teaching to what the pupils think is important. This corresponds to Lazar's research where it is claimed that teachers should assess the suitability of texts to be introduced to the pupils (41). It also indicates that pupils respond to and benefit from these types of texts. Moreover, the results may be seen in line with Koss and Teale's theory which was put forward in part 2.5. It is claimed that poetry and stories, including fantasy, usually deal with different social, cultural and scientific issues relevant to pupils' lives (567). For pupils to become engaged in a literary text, they need to be influenced emotionally by the text they are dealing with. It is important for pupils to read about persons struggling to deal with events of everyday life like many teens normally do.

Using texts pupils can respond to and benefit from may influence the short-term motivation explained in part 2.6. It may be easier to motivate pupils to read a short story or poetry than a novel. An advantage in reading a poem is that it does not necessarily take up too much time to read. For instance, pupils can read through a short poem within a minute. This may be the simple reason why the pupils enjoy working on poems. Although pupils must take into consideration literary devices like for example symbols and rhythm when responding to a poem, this point does not seem to put pupils off. Thus, the pupils' ranking fantasy and poetry as favourite kind of literature compares to the claims of researchers in the field.

In question 8 in the questionnaire, some pupils mention "something I like, for example plays, fantasy" when explaining what an interesting literary text is. "Fantasy" was also mentioned in question 9. This question examines the pupils' opinion on what an entertaining literary text is (see further discussion of questions 8 and 9 below). Likewise, question 13 examines what the pupils prefer to read in their spare time. Many pupils are exposed to text messages, memes

⁴ As stated in part 2.1, this thesis will focus mainly on print-based fictional texts.

and creepypasta. These types of texts are very condensed forms of texts like many poems and may also be the reason why the pupils prefer to read poems in the classroom.

The most interesting result is that plays are rated third among the pupils. It is safe to say that most pupils are not familiar with reading plays, thus it may be even harder to motivate a learner to read a play than a fantasy book or a poem. In addition, plays are rarely found in textbooks. On the other hand, William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* is often included in textbooks distributed in Norway, also in *Connect 10* (Heagi 159), which is the textbook the pupils use. According to Koss and Teale (568), it is important for teenagers to read texts that focus on typical teenage life. *Romeo and Juliet* deals with events of everyday life, for example love, like many teens normally face. This might be the reason why the pupils favour plays.

To sum up, the data shows that factual texts and poetry are the most preferred types of literature, followed by fantasy and plays. This suggests that pupils favour texts they are frequently exposed to.

Question 5 – Favourite texts

Question 5 asked the pupils to specify what texts they liked most among the literary texts they had been reading in class and explain why they liked it. This is linked to the second research question. Many interesting answers were apparent when the pupils answered question number five.

The majority of the pupils wrote *Of mice and men*. Many of the pupils who chose this novel written by John Steinbeck said it was fun, exciting, interesting and had a surprising ending. One learner answered that the book was not so long, whereas another learner said that he liked the book because they watched the movie afterwards. Another one wrote that "It was an exciting story about life as a ranch-worker". *I have a dream* was another much preferred text. This text can be found in the textbook *Connect 10*. The pupils answered: "The text is about our history." "The text deals with important matters." "Because Martin Luther King gave a voice to those less heard, he sacrificed and risked a lot for other people." This result can be seen in relation to the ranking in the previous question where factual texts⁵ were at the highest place. Many pupils mentioned *You'll never walk alone*, which is another text in the course book. This is a song originally written to a musical on Broadway, but it has become the

⁵ As the distinction between fiction and non-fiction is sometimes blurred, it could be debated whether a speech is a factual text since its purpose is to persuade, elicit emotions etc.

official chant for Liverpool FC. This is in agreement with the results in question 4 where poetry tops the list of the pupils' favourite kind of literature. One student wrote that he liked the text because it is about football. Another student wrote that he liked the text because "A lot of things are not explicitly stated in the text; you have to read between the lines." Six pupils said that they did not like any of the texts in the course book, mainly because they found the texts uninteresting, whereas four left the question blank. This is quite a high number and it might indicate that the teachers fail to adapt their teaching to all the pupils. It is argued that the texts should suit the majority of pupils (Lazar 52). As Lazar claims, in order to make pupils respond to a literary text, they need to be able to draw on their own experiences. Then the pupils will feel that what they do in the classroom is relevant and meaningful to their own lives (15).

The result of this question shows that the pupils liked the texts *Of mice and men*, *I have a dream* and *You'll never walk alone*. This result corresponds to a high degree to the answers in question 4 where the pupils favoured factual texts and poetry.

Question 6 – Why literature?

This question examined what the pupils think is the purpose of working with literature and is linked to the first research question. The same question was asked among the teachers in the pilot project.

There is some difference in opinions among the pupils in this survey as to why they have to read literature. Nine pupils say it is to become better in the English subject, whereas for six participants, using literature is seen as a possibility to become better English readers. As was shown in the theory chapter (2.4), literature develops the pupils' knowledge, and proficiency in English (Langer 27). When fourteen pupils say that they have to read literature in the classroom to learn more about English literature, it is not obvious what they mean. English literature is a very broad term. Depending on the context it can mean for example literature written in English or the literature of England. Three pupils answered "I don't know", whereas three left the question blank. This result is in accordance with the findings in the pilot study where the teachers agreed that their pupils do not necessarily know why they are taught literature in the EFL classroom.

Some phrases that were repeated in a majority of the answers were:

- To learn more about English literature (14 mentions)
- To do better in English (9 mentions)
- To improve reading skills (6 mentions)

A difference between the pilot project and the project for this master's thesis is that when the teachers in the pilot study mention culture as a reason to why literature is taught, none of the pupils acknowledge the benefits of reading to get an understanding of other cultures. However, when the pupils use the term English literature in their answers, it may include a cultural aspect. It might be suggested that they mean fiction produced by writers from the English-speaking countries. In addition, three of them write "to learn about history" as a reason to why they have to read literature. The pupils might think about culture here as history is very much about how society and culture has changed.

This is an interesting result as it indicates a discrepancy between what the teachers say and what the pupils experience in the classroom. It could be that the teachers have not been clear enough. It is claimed by Lazar that the full understanding of what one is doing and why is an important element to consider (13). Many times pupils are not fully aware of the importance of reading literature, thus it is useful to examine the reasons for using it (15-19). Consequently, teachers must communicate the purpose behind using literature. Then the pupils become more aware of why literature is taught in the classroom.

I have shown that there is some difference in opinions among the pupils as to why they have to read literature in the EFL classroom. Most of the pupils acknowledge the benefits of reading to enhance their knowledge about English literature, whereas for 9 pupils reading is seen as a possibility to increase their proficiency in English. On the contrary, the teachers' answers cover the cultural aspect of the teaching of literature.

Question 7 – Approaches to using literature with the language learner

This question was vital to the entire thesis since it examined what the pupils think they learn when using literature in the EFL classroom. It described three different roles literature can take in education and as explained in the theory chapter (2.4), these are the language-based approach, literature as content and literature for personal enrichment. As already stated, the personal enrichment approach was regarded as more important than the others by the teachers.

It is interesting to examine what the pupils themselves see as beneficial when using literary texts. In the following sections I will analyze to what extent the pupils dealt with these aspects.

The question asked the pupils to evaluate the importance of the different approaches ranging from “Strongly agree” to “Strongly disagree”. The results show that the pupils in the study acknowledge the above-mentioned approaches, in different degrees, where one aspect is perceived as more important than the others. See figure 5 below.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The texts have a content/a message I can learn from	6	39	9	2
Reading literary texts help med to increase knowledge of different cultures	9	34	8	1
The texts help me to improve my vocabulary	15	26	11	2
The texts make my English better	15	25	11	4
The texts we read at school make me reflect upon personal experiences, feelings and opinions	4	27	17	5

Figure 5: What do you think you learn when you read English literature?

26 pupils agree and 15 pupils strongly agree that the texts used in English classes help them improve their vocabulary, whereas 25 pupils agree and 15 strongly agree that the texts make their English better. 11 disagree and 2 strongly disagree that the texts improve their vocabulary, whereas 11 disagree and 4 strongly disagree that the texts make their English better. Hence, a large number of the pupils acknowledge the benefits of using literature on their language acquisition and vocabulary building. These findings indicate that pupils are exposed to language structure and vocabulary in the literary texts in order to understand them.

39 pupils agree that the texts have a content/message they can learn from, whereas 6 pupils strongly agree. 34 pupils say that the cultural aspect is important and agree that reading literary texts help them to increase knowledge of different cultures, whereas 9 pupils strongly agree. 11 pupils disagree or strongly disagree to the fact that the texts have a content they can learn from, whereas 9 pupils disagree or strongly disagree when considering increased knowledge of different cultures. When a majority of the pupils say that content learning is important, it indicates that they gain an understanding of other cultures when using literature.

It also indicates that focus is on for example genre of texts and background knowledge of texts. As stated in part 2.4.1, the content-based approach in working with literature offers a way of gaining knowledge of the historical and cultural context in which a text is written (Lazar 24). This result is also compatible with the goals in the English subject curriculum where it is expressed that literary texts can enhance pupils' knowledge about and understanding of lives and cultures of other people (3). Moreover, the findings correlate with the answers in question 5 where many pupils favoured the text *I have a dream* because it is about history.

The third approach, literature for personal enrichment, is the use of literary texts that are meaningful to the pupils. Reading is a way of gaining an understanding of life and one's own personal situation through deep involvement in stories. The focus is on the reader's own experiences and feelings (Lazar 25). The personal enrichment-approach was regarded as very important by three of the teachers in the pilot study, whereas two of the teachers said it was important. Among the pupils, 27 of them agree and 4 of them strongly agree that the texts they read at school make them reflect upon personal experiences, feelings and opinions. However, 17 disagree and 5 strongly disagree on this statement.

The findings reveal that there is some difference among the pupils as to how they rate the importance of the different approaches. As shown, the literature as content-approach is the one that has been acknowledged the most by the pupils. The majority agreed that literature helps them understand different cultures. In addition, a high number of pupils said that literature helps them improve their language. The personal enrichment-approach is the one that has been acknowledged the least by the pupils. Then the pupils' thoughts are not in accordance with the teachers' opinions on this point. There might be several reasons for this. First of all, the teachers' demands might have been unclear. Nodelman and Reimer argue that for young readers to be able to engage with literature, they need to be educated in strategies used for communicating their reading (33). This means that teachers must communicate the purpose behind reading literature and convince the pupils of the value of reading. Teachers must think about the implications of their approaches and text selection. Setting clear goals is essential when studying a literary text. Thus, the pupils become clearer about what is expected from them. Second, the pupils may disagree on the fact that literary texts make them "come to a better understanding" of themselves" (Lazar 25). This suggests that pupils gain an

understanding of life through other channels than literature. Pupils might consider literary texts more as a way of acquiring knowledge about something, rather than as something that makes them reflect upon life.

The next questions are directly related to the second research question: How do the pupils evaluate the literary texts they meet at school?

Question 8 – Literary texts we read at school are mostly interesting

This question asked the pupils to consider if the texts they read at school are mostly interesting. Additionally, they were told to give their opinions on what an interesting literary text is. The results are as follows:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Literary texts we read at school are mostly interesting		14	33	6

Figure 6

14 pupils agree that literary texts they read at school are mostly interesting, whereas 33 disagree. 6 pupils strongly disagree on the same matter. None of them strongly agree. 1 of the pupils answered “I don’t know”. This list includes three of the most common answers to what an interesting literary text is:

- Something of interest to young people; about today’s society (e.g. climate); something that is important (21 mentions)
- Building of suspense, action, it must be exciting (16 mentions)
- Texts that we can recognize ourselves in (6 mentions)

As can be seen, the majority of the pupils disagrees or strongly disagrees that texts they read at school are mostly interesting. These findings reflect Lazar’s research which was discussed in part 2.5. It is argued that teachers should consider the pupils’ interests and hobbies when selecting literary texts for classroom use (15). It is worth noticing that a majority of the pupils emphasize that an interesting literary text is about today’s society. This point of view is supported by Nodelman and Reimer, who claim that literature promotes our understanding of the world around us (152). These findings correspond to the requirements in the *Purpose of the English subject* which stresses that English shall provide “insight into the way people live

and different cultures where English is the primary or the official language” (1). Moreover, the results support the findings in the previous question where a majority of the pupils regard the literature as content-approach as most important when working with literary texts. In addition, the findings are in agreement with the results in question 5 where six students say that they do not like any of the texts in the course book, mainly because they find the texts uninteresting.

Question 9 - *Literary texts we read at school are mostly entertaining*

Similarly, question 9 wanted to examine if the pupils find the texts they read at school entertaining. As can be seen from figure 7, 1 learner strongly agrees that the texts are mostly entertaining, whereas 16 agree. However, 31 pupils disagree when considering this statement. 5 pupils strongly disagree. Apparently, the value of entertainment is a factor that is not much considered when literary texts are chosen.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Literary texts we read at school are mostly entertaining	1	16	31	5

Figure 7 (1 blank)

In addition, the pupils were asked to give their opinions on what an entertaining literary text is. Here are the three most common answers:

- An exciting story (10 mentions)
- Fun, humorous (19 mentions)
- Something of interest to young people (10 mentions)

Here 19 pupils say that an entertaining text is fun and humorous. This is in accordance with Koss and Teale who state that humour has a tendency to be a lighter form of literature, therefore making it easier to read and understand (568). Interestingly, one of the teachers in the pilot research said that literature offers the possibility to learn English while being entertained. Yet, the results do not correlate with the answers in the pilot study as a whole where the teachers claimed to choose texts on the pupils’ preferences. As was shown in the theory part (2.6), the necessity of being engaged and involved in a text is emphasized by Guthrie and Wigfield (406 – 408). By selecting texts the teachers believe pupils find interesting and respond to, the engagement pupils need to read literary texts may be aroused.

When the pupils in this research disagree that the literary texts they meet in the classroom are mostly interesting and entertaining and the teachers all use the textbook, as explained in part 2.5, it can be presumed that teachers should use other material than the textbook when teaching literature. Langer claims that literature introduces pupils to complex themes and fresh, unexpected uses of language. It may be more interesting for learners than the “pseudo-narratives” often found in course books (Langer 15).

The results of questions 8 and 9 are also interesting to see in connection with the results of question 2 in the questionnaire. This question examined the pupils’ interest in the English subject and the majority of the pupils said they have no particular interest in the subject. This result tells as much about the pupils’ attitudes to all parts of the English subject and may explain the negative attitude towards the literary texts they meet.

Question 10 – About ‘Of mice and men’ and motivation

When working on pupils’ opinions about the use of literature in the EFL classroom, it is interesting to examine the connection between the texts that are used and pupils’ motivation for the subject. As already explained, the teachers in the pilot study emphasized that the ability to motivate pupils is of great importance to the learning outcome and said that they adapted to the pupils’ needs and interests. It might be interesting to see motivation in relation to a broader range of text selection. However, this question seeks to examine the pupils’ motivation in relation to the last literary text they read, which was the novel *Of mice and men*. There are several reasons why I chose to include this text in the questionnaire. First, the pupils had just finished the book which they had been working on for a 4-week period, thus they were familiar with the story. Second, after reading the novel, the pupils watched the film *Of mice and men* from 1992. The reason for watching the film was mainly to have something to look forward to, especially for those who felt that reading a whole book seemed overwhelming, but also to have the opportunity to compare the novel to the film. I wanted to see if watching the film played a role in their opinions of the novel. This view is also supported by Lazar, who claims that pupils often enjoy working on a difficult text if there is a film based on it which they also enjoyed (54). Third, this is a novel that we often read in class, therefore it is interesting to have the pupils’ opinions of the text.

In this question the pupils were asked to think of the last literary English text they read at school (*Of mice and men*) and state if the text kept them motivated for the English subject. The answers are shown in figure 8 below.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Did the text keep you motivated for the English subject?	6	28	13	6

Figure 8 (1 blank)

Here, the results differ. Over half of the pupils reply “Agree”. Fewer pupils strongly agree. 13 of 54 pupils disagree that the text kept them motivated for the English subject, while 6 students strongly disagree. Summing up, most pupils answer that the text kept them motivated for the English subject.⁶

In addition, the pupils were asked to give reasons for their answers. The answers were very varied. Among the pupils who disagreed, 4 of them answered:

- It was mostly uninteresting (4 mentions)
- The book was hard to understand in the beginning, so I lost motivation. But when everything started to hang together, it was “funnier”.
- Some difficult words because of the dialect. Difficult to get what the book was about.
- It was a bit complicated because there were so many persons to keep track of

Since the novel is long, some of the pupils perceived length of the novel as one of the factors sometimes losing interest in the reading. Likewise, the text was provided with details and sometimes it was problematic for learners to keep track of the sequence of the events before and after.

Among the pupils who agreed or strongly agreed, examples of comments are:

- There was suspense (8 mentions)
- Because we watched the movie afterwards (6 mentions)
- It was something else than the textbook (2 mentions)

⁶ The result of question 5 showed that the novel *Of mice and men* was one of the texts the pupils liked most among the literary texts they had been reading in class.

- It was relaxing and comfortable to sit down and read instead of doing tasks (2 mentions)
- The text was very exciting and full of funny incidents (2 mentions)

Other comments were: “It was entertaining, good story, liked the drama, liked the varied language.” I see literature in a different light after reading this book. “It kept me a bit motivated because I managed to read a whole English book, but there were some difficult words.” This point was also emphasized by one of the teachers in the pilot study. Here one of the teachers answered: “In my opinion it’s motivating just to finish a book”. This correlates with Edmonson’s *motivational argument* which was examined in part 2.6. According to this theory, the fact that being allowed and even encouraged to read literature can be motivational for some pupils (48-49). 2 pupils say that reading the novel was something else than using the textbook. I have earlier discussed the role of the textbook and the fact that the teachers in the pilot study all use the textbook when teaching literature. This result indicates that using other materials than the textbook may motivate pupils.

As can be seen, some of the pupils mention the combination of novel and film. Three of the teachers in the pilot study emphasized the combination of text and film as a way of motivating the pupils to read literature in English. As explained above, this view is also supported by Lazar. Even if many of the pupils found the language of the novel difficult, they were motivated by the film based on the book. This may explain the fact that a majority of the pupils say that reading this novel kept them motivated for the English subject.

To sum up, a majority of the pupils said that the novel *Of mice and men* kept them motivated for the English subject.

Question 11- Motivation as a result of pupils’ freedom to choose texts

The next question examined whether the pupils see a connection between increased influence in the selection of texts and increased motivation for the subject. The students were asked to tick to what extent they agree or disagree with the claim “It would keep me more motivated for the English lessons if I could choose what texts to read”. Before commenting on the results, I must say that I should have included a question about how often the pupils can select texts to read in class, since three of the teachers in the pilot research use free voluntary

reading and have pupils suggest books. Thus, it would have been interesting to examine if there is agreement between what the teachers say and what the pupils experience in the classroom. However, in one of the questions in the focus group interview, which will be discussed in the next part, I elaborated on the results from figure 9 below and the pupils were given the opportunity to explain further their opinions.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
It would keep me more motivated for the English lessons if I could choose what texts to read	14	30	7	2

Figure 9 1 blank

A clear majority state that it would keep them more motivated for the English lessons if they could choose what texts to read. 14 pupils “Strongly agree”, whereas over half of the pupils answer “Agree”. 7 disagree and 2 strongly disagree with the statement. As a result, there is a relatively large proportion of pupils who see a connection between freely choosing their own texts and increased motivation. In the theory part, it was expressed that the power of freely choosing one’s own reading material is an aspect to consider when using literary texts in English classes. It is claimed that when we read books that we choose ourselves, it is usually a very pleasant experience (Krashen 5).

To conclude, 44 pupils say that increased influence in text selection would make them more motivated for the English subject.

Question 12 – Do you read in your spare time?

Question 12 asked if the pupils read in their spare time (either in Norwegian or in other languages). They were asked to consider all types of texts and underline the appropriate choice. The result is as follows:

- a) No, never (5 mentions)
- b) Yes, once/twice a month (7 mentions)
- c) Yes, every week (6 mentions)
- d) Yes, every day (35 mentions)

1 blank

The majority of pupils report that they read every day in their spare time. 6 students say that they read every week, 7 say they read once or twice a month, whereas 5 pupils say that they never read.

Question 13 - If you answered yes above: What do you prefer to read?

This question was included to keep the pupils engaged in what they were reading, and to make them respond and reflect upon their own reading habits. The question is not directly relevant to the research questions in the thesis, because it presents reading habits at home and not at school. Nevertheless, the answers may say something about what the pupils prefer when they read for pleasure, which may be interesting to see in connection with the results of other answers. Many different answers were collected here. Altogether it was an impressive list of what the pupils read. Here are examples of what they answered:

- social media, messages etc; only in Norwegian.
- books about the life of famous people.
- update about bitcoin, technology, phones and data, mostly in English.

As can be seen, the teenagers meet a wide range of texts. Not very surprising, many pupils mention that they read on the screen: news, blogs, what people write/comment on social media. The answers for both boys and girls are quite similar apart from a few details: the boys mention that they like to read about funny things (jokes/memes), football and gaming. The girls mention: blogs and stuff about famous people. Noteworthy, 6 girls and 1 boy mention fiction. This suggests that the majority of the pupils only read fiction at school. It can be assumed that this can influence the results as it may say something about the pupils' attitudes towards and understanding of fictional texts.

4.2. Focus group interview results

In this part the findings of the focus group interviews are presented. The data was collected by means of structured interviews with a group of 10 pupils from 10th grade, 5 boys and 5 girls.

Three focus-group meetings were carried out. The pupils were asked to reflect on and explain more closely their answers to most of the questions in the questionnaire.

Additional question no. 1: *What is your opinion of the textbook 'Connect'?*

When investigating the pupils' thoughts on the use of literature in the EFL classroom, it is relevant to include a question about the textbook in use. Especially when the pilot study showed that the teachers use the textbook when teaching literature. As already explained, the pupils use the textbook *Connect 10*. The students' comments (written here without corrections) illustrate their opinions of the textbook.

The boys' comments:

- Good, new, relevant texts
- Fine texts
- Ok, various content
- Easy and fine to read
- Easy texts, good explanations of words on each page

The girls' comments:

- Good, layout counts, the pictures count
- Good, relevant texts
- Liked the layout, easy to navigate, various content
- Fine, tasks online, mostly easy texts
- Variation in texts; want to mention the grammar part at the end of the book, also the writing frame where we can practise writing different texts

The list for both boys and girls is quite similar apart from a few details: two of the girls mention the layout of the book and one mentions the writing frame online. On the whole, the pupils are satisfied with *Connect 10*. This corresponds to the result of the case study in the pilot project where the teachers are very satisfied with the literary texts included in the textbook. In retrospect, it is clear that I should have asked the pupils about their opinions on the literary texts in the course book and not the textbook as a whole. That would be even more beneficial to this study and more in line with question 5 in the questionnaire. Here six pupils said that they did not like any of the literary texts in the course book, mainly because they

found the texts uninteresting. Nonetheless, the pupils' general opinion on the course book is useful.

Additional question no. 2A: *What are the advantages of using literary texts in English classes?*

Here the answers varied slightly. Three of the participants said that using literary texts in English classes develops vocabulary, whereas one of them mentioned the content aspect.

Other comments were:

- More understanding for the subject
- Learn how to create texts
- Easier to achieve knowledge about different things
- Texts that describe reality (2 mentions)
- Gain knowledge about English-speaking countries, learn to communicate

The answers match the findings in the questionnaire where a high number of pupils said that literature helps them improve their language. The literature as content-approach is the one that has been acknowledged the most by the pupils who answered the questionnaire. Likewise, the cultural aspect was emphasized in question 6. As can be seen, this aspect is also highlighted by the pupils in the interview, as knowledge about the English-speaking countries is directly expressed. A new point here is “learn how to create texts.”

Additional question no. 2B: *Are there any disadvantages?*

As the previous question asked about advantages of using literary texts in English classes, this question sought to reveal possible disadvantages. The answers showed a positive attitude, as 5 of the pupils answered “no” to this question. They provided only a few disadvantages.

One boy said: “New texts all the time, rather long texts, mix up different genres”.

One girl answered: “New texts all the time, rather long texts”.

Three of the pupils said: Uninteresting texts, not good to read one text each lesson just to get through it, better to work on a text for a longer period of time.

When we look at the answers, the pupils consider it a disadvantage to read new texts all the time. In addition, they say that the texts are uninteresting. This result compares to the findings in question 8 in the questionnaire, where a majority of the pupils disagrees or strongly disagrees that texts they meet at school are mostly interesting. For me, these findings stand

out, because the pupils reveal important information regarding the use of literary texts in their answers.

Additional question no. 3: Do you have any further comments on how you experience to reading literary texts in the English classroom?

Again, the pupils agreed that the texts are uninteresting, although two of the girls answered with positive remarks. They said that they learn new words and that reading literary texts increase vocabulary. It was also claimed that “you get better in English the more you read”.

When talking more to the pupils about how they experience to read literary texts, they gave additional explanations:

- We should have read more plays, song texts, texts about sports, various dilemmas.
- The texts should have been about ourselves.
- The texts should be about feelings, make you think.

The last two answers are interesting to see in relation to the findings in the pilot study where the literature as personal enrichment-approach was regarded as most important by the teachers. Here literary texts which can make pupils think about their own personal situation and come to a better understanding of themselves are essential (Lazar 25). These answers compare to the findings in questions 8 and 9 in the questionnaire where some of the pupils stated that an interesting literary is a text that they can recognize themselves in. However, most of the pupils agreed on the fact that a majority of the texts used in class is about society. This result corresponds to the answers given to question 7 in the questionnaire, where the majority agreed that literature helps them understand different cultures.

Additional question no. 4: Have you ever read an excerpt from a novel at school that made you want to read on/read the whole book?

A) What was the title/the theme of the book? B) What made you want to read on?

As previously shown, novels/extracts from novels are one of the most common types of literature that the pupils have read in English classes, it is therefore interesting to examine their opinion of those texts. Most of the pupils were able to provide examples illustrating their reading experiences at school.

Three of the boys did not answer this question at all, whereas one boy said he did not remember a text that made him want to read on. One boy mentioned the excerpt from *The true diary of a part-time Indian*. He said he wanted to read the book, because the content interested him a bit. Two of the girls answered *Romeo and Juliet*. They added that they first and foremost did not want to read the text, but wanted to watch the film. Three girls mentioned the extract from *A handmaid's tale*. They explained that it was an unusual text and wanted to find out more about it. One girl said that the book “creates thoughts” and concluded that the text shows “how a society can become”. Wolf argues that teachers must give the pupils something to think about and something to respond to in order to engage them in literature and thinking about what they read (14).

Additional question no. 5A: What was your experience of reading the novel *Of mice and men*? Did you like/did you not like to read and work with the book?

In the questionnaire the pupils were asked to state if the novel *Of mice and men* kept them motivated for the English subject and explain why. Most pupils answered that the text kept them motivated. Here the pupils were able to initiate and give insightful remarks to these questions. On the whole, four out of ten pupils answered that they liked the book, but one of the boys said that the written tasks were not ok. Here are the boys' answers:

- Not so difficult
- Ok, interesting book, ok to understand.
- A bit confusing in the beginning, understood more and more as I read on.

The girls' answers:

- A bit difficult to get all the points.
- Difficult in the beginning. As I got to know all the persons, it was better.
- A very good story, but difficult in the beginning.

These findings are more or less in agreement with the results in the questionnaire. Some phrases that were repeated both in the questionnaire and in the interviews were: “A bit difficult, a bit confusing”.

The following questions supply additional information of question 5A.

Additional question no. 5B: Was it too difficult to read? OK? Too easy?

Most of the pupils answered that the book was ok to read, but that the language was difficult now and then. One of the pupils said:

“I read the easyreader, otherwise I would not have been able to finish the book”.

Additional question no. 5C: *What did you learn?*

The pupils’ responses were:

- Another way to write
- Learnt about the US society at that time; it was not easy to find work (2 mentions)
- Oral language, slang, shortening of words
- Not very much (2 mentions)

Additional question no. 5D: *What did the book teach you about life and human experience?*

The pupils were able to provide different examples, implying that they might have found it interesting to be asked such a question. They had arguments like:

- You would not have done this today; society is different
- Friendship; you protect your friends
- A different type of protagonist
- To take care of people who are different
- That people are different, that we are not suited for the same tasks
- Draw parallels between today’s society and US at that time: many lonely people today as well; racism today, too
- Loneliness; different people, still do things together
- Closeness, difficult when other people do not understand

Additional question no. 5E: *What is the main message of the book?*

The answers here seem to indicate that the pupils are able to reflect on content while reading.

Here are the answers:

- Dreams; work together to achieve something; do not give up; motivation
- Take care of people who are different, not so lucky
- Also important to take care of oneself
- Solidarity, diversity
- Inequality, equality in society earlier/today

- You cannot have what you want all the time
- You have to make a decision sometimes
- There are ups and downs in life

As can be seen, many interesting attitudes were apparent when the pupils answered these questions. The discussion was more detailed. This might lead to the assumption that the pupils are familiar with being able to extract meaning from what they read and that they are able to think about their own learning process. The findings show that reading the novel contributed to content learning as the pupils use examples like diversity and equality in their answers. Thus, the results correlate to the answers given to question 7 in the questionnaire where the literature as content-approach is the one that has been acknowledged the most by the pupils. In sum, the pupils were able to provide many examples from their reading experiences to explain the points.

Additional question no. 6A: *Why is it important to choose your own texts to read?*

As shown in the discussion of question 11 in the questionnaire, a clear majority of the pupils agreed/strongly agreed that it would keep them more motivated for the English lessons if they could select what texts to read. I chose to elaborate on this result and the students were given the opportunity to explain further the answers in the questionnaire. The pupils talked about matters that seemed to be important to them. One of the boys said: “You pay more attention, e.g. football, instead of having to struggle through uninteresting texts”. Another boy said: “Something that interests you”. The girls’ answers were:

- Choose texts that we are interested in, then you learn more
- If the text deals with something you like, you pay more attention, makes it more fun to work on the text
- Then you cannot complain; we know best what we learn from

One of the boys came up with an interesting point which I had not initially considered, saying: “a starting-point might be genre or content; then let the pupils choose a suitable text”. This answer uncovered important and unexpected insights. Actually, this boy is describing one important approach to teaching and learning fiction. The answer he gave is very interesting in connection with the findings in question 7 in the questionnaire where the literature as content-approach is the one that has been recognized the most by the pupils. Genre knowledge is part

of this approach. The boy's answer also reveals motivation and interest for the subject. In addition, the answers compare with the findings in question 11 in the questionnaire where a clear majority claimed that it would keep them more motivated for the English lessons if they could choose what texts to read.

Additional question no. 6B: *Why is motivation important to you when reading English texts?*

I chose to elaborate further on the aspect of motivation. The pupils reflected to some extent about why motivation is important. They had arguments like:

- Motivation is the trigger for successful learning, it is hard without it.
- You give up easily without it
- You become more interested, easier to pay attention if you are interested
- You bother reading
- If you are not interested, you do not learn anything; you do not see the point
- You do not do so well
- Become more interested
- You try to understand the texts
- I learn and keep going if I am motivated
- If many pupils are motivated, it improves the learning atmosphere

The pupils talked about matters that seemed to be important to them. Apparently, pupils' interest is a key when talking about motivation. The answers suggest that motivation determines how much energy they devote to a task and how long they persevere. These findings are in line with research in the field. According to Cook, motivation is "the interest that something generates in the pupils" (153). Guthrie and Wigfield state that motivation is critical to engagement because motivation is what activates behaviour (406-408).

Additional question no. 7: *Do you think young people read less today than earlier? Why?*

In the questionnaire the pupils were asked about reading habits in their spare time. The majority of the pupils reported that they read every day in their spare time. As a final question I chose to let the interviewees reflect on their reading habits. Here are the pupils' answers:

- Yes
- Quite the same, books earlier, more digital reading today (2 mentions)
- Yes and no, fewer books, more digital reading (2 mentions)

- Quite the same. I read paper books and newspapers

5. Conclusion

This study has addressed lower secondary school pupils' perspectives on the use of literature in EFL classes at my school. Part 2 presented the theoretical background for the thesis, part 3 the research methods and materials, whereas part 4 contained research results and discussion. This final part will attempt to answer the research questions.

The first research question aimed to investigate what the pupils think they learn when using literary texts in the EFL classroom. There is some difference in opinions among the pupils as to why they have to read literature. The analysis of the questionnaires and interviews show that most of the pupils acknowledge the benefits of reading to enhance their knowledge about English literature, whereas for other pupils reading is seen as a possibility to increase their proficiency in English. On the contrary, the teachers' answers cover the cultural aspect of the teaching of literature. As a consequence, the teachers must communicate the purpose behind using literature. Then the pupils become more aware of why literature is taught in the classroom.

Among Lazar's approaches to using literature with the language learner, the literature as content-approach is the one that has been acknowledged the most by the pupils. The findings of the data reveal that most of the pupils perceive literary texts important to enhance their understanding of culture and society. In the interviews most of the pupils emphasize that a majority of the texts used in class are about society. This suggests that literature in EFL contexts has the potential to promote cultural competence, which is emphasized in the curriculum. The pupils are frequently exposed to novels/extracts from novels, short stories and factual texts, thus these kinds of texts are most beneficial for developing their cultural competence. In addition, a high number of pupils say that literature helps them improve their language. The personal enrichment-approach is the one that has been acknowledged the least by the pupils. Thus, the pupils' thoughts are not in accordance with the teachers' opinions on this point. However, from both the questionnaire and the interviews it is obvious that some of the pupils would prefer to read texts that they can recognize themselves in and make them think about their own personal situation. Consequently, teachers must think about the implications of their approaches when teaching literature in the EFL classroom as the literature component of the curriculum does not specify which approaches are to be used.

The second research question examined how the pupils evaluate the literary texts they read in EFL classes. As has been shown, teachers in Norway are free to select which texts they think

their pupils should read as there are no guidelines in the curriculum. The pupils evaluate the most preferred types of literature to be factual texts and poetry, followed by fantasy and plays. Their favourite texts are *Of mice and men*, *I have a dream* and *You'll never walk alone*. It is made clear that a majority of the pupils do not perceive the written literary texts they meet in the EFL classroom as interesting. Likewise, a great number of the pupils report that they do not find the literary texts entertaining. It might indicate that the teachers fail to adapt their teaching to all the pupils, although the teachers in the pilot study claimed to choose texts on the basis of the pupils' preferences.

The overall majority of the pupils report that the novel *Of mice and men* kept them motivated for the English subject. In the final answers regarding the novel, they state that it contributed to content learning. Thus, using other materials than the textbook may enhance pupils' motivation and interest in literary texts. A larger part of the pupils claim that increased influence in text selection will make them more motivated for the English subject. An interesting finding in the interviews regarding possible disadvantages of using literary texts is that some of the pupils consider it a disadvantage to read new texts all the time. The findings stress the importance of carefully selecting literature to be used among learners in the EFL context, likewise involving the pupils when selecting literary texts.

Since this was a survey carried out with a limited number of participants, findings should be understood in its specific time and setting. Consequently, findings are not definite results, and further research needs to be conducted with a greater number of participants and in other contexts. Also, time restriction (one semester) was a limitation, since research on the implementation of literature in EFL education requires more time. Nevertheless, the study was of interest within the specific context and with the research methodology of this thesis. It provides useful insights into the pupils' perspectives on the use of literature in the EFL classroom. The thesis can contribute to a better understanding of the possibilities inherent in the use of literature in EFL classes. This was also the aim of my research. The study strengthened my own awareness of the importance of involving pupils in decisions about literature matters so that the use of literature can become more responsive to their needs. I hope that I can draw on this feedback to make improvements in my practice. As shown, the study was not without limitations. Therefore more research may still be required to investigate pupils' perspectives on the use of literary texts in the EFL classroom. It would be beneficial to carry out research into how pupils view the use of factual texts and/or digital literary texts. In

addition, future studies need to focus on what and how literature is being taught in lower secondary EFL education.

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Appendices

Appendix I

Questionnaire for pupils

1. Gender (circle the appropriate letter).

A: Female B: Male

2. Tick the appropriate choice

	Very interested	Interested	Indifferent	Not interested
How interested are you in the English subject?				

3. In secondary school you have read different types of written texts in English. Underline the different texts that you have read.

- a) Novels/extracts from novels
 - b) Short stories
 - c) Biographies,
 - d) Factual texts
 - e) Poetry
 - f) Plays
 - g) Newspapers
 - h) Fantasy
 - i) Diaries
 - j) Others? (for example songs)?
-

4. What is your favourite kind of literature? Choose the types of texts (from question 3) that you like most.

d) _____

e) _____

f) _____

5. Among the literary texts you have been reading in class, what text (s) did you like most? Write the title (s) and explain briefly why you liked it.

6. Why do you think we have to read literature in the English classroom?

7. What do you think you learn when you read English literature?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The texts have a content/a message I can learn from				
Reading literary texts help me to increase knowledge of different cultures				
The texts help me to improve my vocabulary				
The texts make my English better				
The texts we read at school make me reflect upon personal experiences, feelings and opinions				

8. Tick the appropriate choice

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Literary texts we read at school are mostly interesting				

What do you think is an interesting literary text? Please fill in.

9. Tick the appropriate choice

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Literary texts we read at school are mostly entertaining				

What do you think is an entertaining literary text? Please fill in.

10. Think of the last literary English text you read at school (*Of mice and men*)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Did the text keep you motivated for the English subject?				

Give reasons for your answer.

11. Tick the appropriate choice

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
It would keep me more motivated for the English lessons if I could choose what texts to read				

12. Do you read in your spare time (either in Norwegian or in other languages)?

Think of all types of texts, both on paper and on the screen. Underline the appropriate choice.

- e) No, never
- f) Yes, once – twice a month
- g) Yes, every week
- h) Yes, every day

13. If you answered *yes* above: What do you prefer to read?

Appendix II

Spørreskjema for elever

1. Kjønn. Ring rundt.

A: Jente

B: Gutt

2. Sett kryss:

	Veldig interessert	Interessert	Nøytral	Ikke interessert
Hvor interessert er du i engelsk som fag?				

3. På ungdomsskolen har du lest ulike typer tekster på engelsk. Sett strek under det som passer.

- a) Romaner/utdrag fra romaner
 - b) Noveller
 - c) Biografier
 - d) Faktatekster
 - e) Dikt
 - f) Skuespill
 - g) Aviser
 - h) Fantasy
 - i) Dagbok
 - j) Andre (for eksempel sangtekster)?
-

4. Hva er din favoritt? Velg tre av teksttypene (i oppgave 3) som du liker best. Skriv i prioritert rekkefølge:

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

5. Blant de litterære tekster vi har arbeidet med i engelsktimene frem til nå, hvilken/hvilke likte du best? Skriv tittel på teksten(e) og forklar kort hvorfor du likte den.

6. Hvorfor tror du vi leser litteratur i engelskfaget?

7. Hva synes du at du lærer når du leser litteratur på engelsk? Sett kryss.

	Helt enig	Enig	Delvis uenig	Helt uenig
Tekstene har et budskap/innhold jeg kan lære noe av.				
Jeg kan lære mer om ulike kulturer ved å lese engelske tekster.				
Tekstene hjelper meg til å forbedre ordforrådet mitt.				
Tekstene bidrar til at jeg blir flinkere i engelsk				
Tekstene vi leser på skolen får meg til å reflektere rundt egne opplevelser, følelser og meninger.				

8. Sett kryss.

	Helt enig	Enig	Delvis uenig	Helt uenig
Litterære tekster vi leser på skolen er for det meste interessante.				

Hva må en litterær tekst inneholde/handle om for at den skal være interessant? Forklar kort.

9. Sett kryss.

	Helt enig	Enig	Delvis uenig	Helt uenig
Litterære tekster vi leser på skolen er for det meste underholdende.				

Hva må en litterær tekst inneholde/handle om for at den skal være underholdende? Forklar kort hva du synes.

10. Tenk på den siste skjønnlitterære engelske teksten du leste på skolen (*Of mice and men*).

	Helt enig	Enig	Delvis uenig	Helt uenig
Var teksten med på å gjøre deg motivert for engelskfaget? Sett kryss.				

Grunngi svaret ditt.

11. Sett kryss.

	Helt enig	Enig	Delvis uenig	Helt uenig
Jeg ville blitt mer motivert for engelskfaget hvis jeg fikk være med på å velge tekster jeg skal lese på skolen.				

12. Leser du på fritiden (enten på morsmålet ditt eller andre språk)?

Tenk på alle typer tekster, både på papir og skjerm. Sett strek under det som passer.

- a) Nei, aldri
- b) Ja, 1-2 ganger pr. mnd
- c) Ja, hver uke
- d) Ja, hver dag

13. Dersom du svarte ja på spørsmål 12: Hva foretrekker du å lese?

Appendix III

Interview questions

Additional question no. 1: *What is your opinion of the textbook 'Connect'?*

Additional question no. 2A: *What are the advantages of using literary texts in English classes?*

Additional question no. 2B: *Are there any disadvantages?*

Additional question no. 3: *Do you have any further comments on how you experience to reading literary texts in the English classroom?*

Additional question no. 4: *Have you ever read an excerpt from a novel at school that made you want to read on/read the whole book?*

A) *What was the title/the theme of the book?* B) *What made you want to read on?*

Additional question no. 5A: *What was your experience of reading the novel *Of mice and men*? Did you like/did you not like to read and work with the book?*

Additional question no. 5B: *Was it too difficult to read? OK? Too easy?*

Additional question no. 5C: *What did you learn?*

Additional question no. 5D: *What did the book teach you about life and human experience?*

Additional question no. 5E: *What is the main message of the book?*

Additional question no. 6A: *Why is it important to choose your own texts to read?*

Additional question no. 6B: *Why is motivation important to you when reading English texts?*

Additional question no. 7: *Do you think young people read less today than earlier? Why?*

Sp. 1: *Hva synes du om tekstboka Connect?*

Sp. 2A: *Hva synes du er fordelene med å bruke litterære tekster i engelskundervisningen?*

Sp. 2B: *Kan du finne ulemper med å bruke litterære tekster i engelskundervisningen?*

Sp. 3: *Kan du kommentere ytterligere hvordan du opplever å lese litterære tekster i engelskundervisningen?*

Sp. 4: *Hvis du noen gang har lest et romanutdrag på skolen som ga deg lyst til å lese mer/hele boka?*

A) Presiser tittel eller tema. B) Hva var det som ga deg lyst til å lese mer?

Sp. 5A: *Hvordan var din leseopplevelse med 'Of mice and men'? Likte du å lese og arbeide med boka, eller ikke?*

Sp. 5B: *Var den for vanskelig å lese? Ok å lese? Altfor lett?*

Sp. 5C: *Hva lærte du?*

Sp. 5D: *Hva lærte romanen deg om livet og menneskelig erfaring?*

Sp. 5E: *Hva er det viktigste budskapet i boka?*

Sp. 6A: *Hvorfor er viktig å være med å bestemme hvilke tekster du skal lese?*

Sp. 6B: *Hvorfor er motivasjon viktig for deg når du skal lese engelske tekster?*

Sp. 7: *Tror du ungdom leser mindre nå enn tidligere? Hvorfor?*

Being a student at the Master's Programme on Teaching Foreign Languages in School has been demanding and has taken a lot of my time, but it has also been very rewarding. The stressful experience of studying for, and sitting through exams are dropped as you are instead given the task of writing essays for submissions. I have worked closely with very enthusiastic tutors who have given valuable feedback. This has taught me a lot about writing. Moreover, the study has provided me with increased knowledge and skills concerning the teaching of English, and improved my motivation to continue as a teacher. Having regular interaction with peers has also been very useful.

Particularly this final year, doing the master's thesis, has been a long and often tough process of development. It has taught me to pace myself and stay focused, which is helpful in all aspects of life. In addition, writing a master's requires dedication and perseverance. Now and then I have been thinking to myself "Why am I doing this?" But doubts are natural and they can be worked through, and I knew that this was something I really wanted. My supervisor, Britt Wenche Svenhard, has been a tremendous support and help in the writing of the thesis. In our meeting and her e-mails she has provided me with thorough feedback and insightful thoughts. I think her expertise in the field is impressive as well as inspirational and motivational.

In my opinion the most demanding part was structuring and designing the questionnaire. This is a difficult and very time-consuming task. I learnt that how the questions are asked and what types of questions are used must be carefully planned and evaluated. This is of importance to the analysis of the data, which also takes a lot of time. Perhaps, in retrospect, I could have tried to design an electronic questionnaire. Spending so much time on planning the questionnaire, I could have spent a few hours extra to design an electronic survey with *Microsoft Forms*. This online questionnaire software is available at my school as all the teachers attended a course last year. Then the answers are delivered at once and they are already in a computer-readable format, so that multiple choice and ranking questions are automatically converted into graphs. Through an electronic questionnaire I could also have checked immediately who had or had not responded. Besides, I think the pupils would have liked a digital survey form.

The thesis discovered the importance of carefully selecting literature to be introduced to the pupils. In addition, it indicated that pupils should be involved in text selection. I have learnt a lot about how to choose relevant literary texts to use in the EFL classroom and how important this is to create engagement and motivation among the pupils. These findings may be useful

for other teachers in the EFL context. Finally, I would like to mention that I now know what *creepypasta* and *memes* are.:)