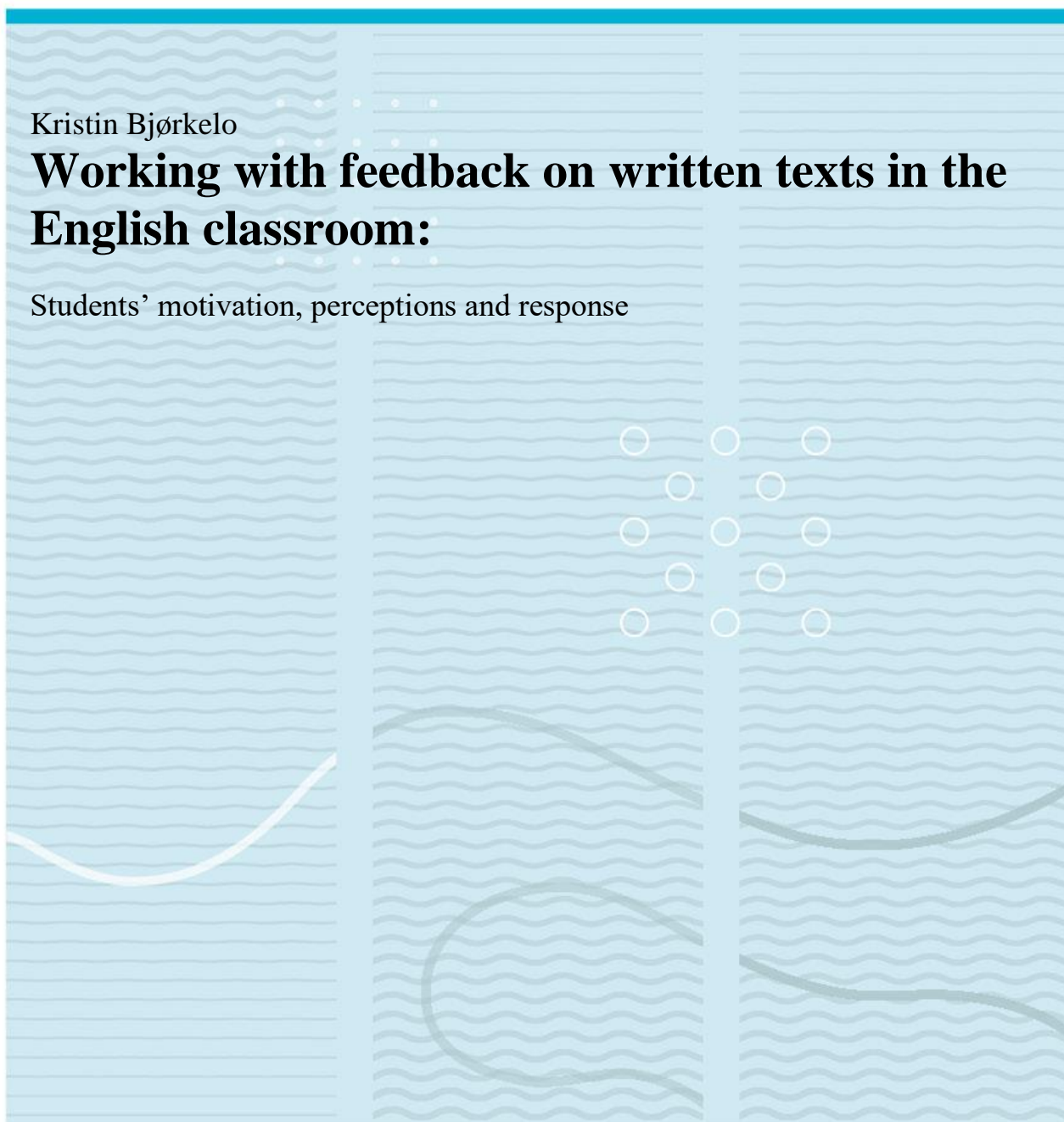USN

University of South-Eastern Norway

Faculty of The Faculty of Humanities, Sports, and Educational Science

Department of Languages and Literature Studies

Kristin Bjørkelo

Working with feedback on written texts in the English classroom:

Students' motivation, perceptions and response

This thesis is worth 30 study points

Abstract

This study is about teachers' feedback on lower secondary school students' writing and how students respond to it. More specific, it investigates how students' motivation influences how they treat feedback, what the students do with the feedback and their awareness regarding using feedback to enhance their learning and writing skills in the English subject. Previous research claims that feedback may be one of the most important factors in enhancing students' learning. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to provide insight into how students experience feedback regarding their motivation, what they do with the feedback and their consciousness towards the use of it.

This is a qualitative research study which employs five individual semi-structured interviews to examine students' own experiences when receiving feedback. The study was carried out with participants in a 10th grade class in a city in Norway. The purpose of choosing this group of students is to expand research of this topic among this age group; there is a limited amount of related existing literature.

The findings of this study suggest that the students lack clear instructions and information on how to use the feedback after they receive it. Students expressed feelings that their teacher takes it for granted that they know how to implement feedback once it has been given. Additionally, students experienced being somewhat motivated to use feedback to improve their work and enhance their writing skills.

The implications of this study suggest that students' learning could be enhanced by teachers spending more time explaining and teaching students how they can get the most out of the feedback they receive and how to implement it. Increased communication between the teacher and students about how to use the feedback, as well as what type of feedback the students prefer to receive would also be beneficial.

Acknowledgements

The decision of choosing the topic for this thesis was based on a wish to increase my knowledge and competence as a newly educated teacher. From reading, writing and researching I feel I have gained insight and knowledge that will positively influence my future as a teacher.

At the project's end, there are people I would like to thank. First, I would like to thank the students who participated in the interviews. Thank you for your time and for sharing your thoughts and experiences to shed light on this topic.

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Drammen, May 2022

Kristin Bjørkelo

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1 Introduction

As a soon-to-be teacher, my goal is to develop my ability to meet my future students' needs. This involves understanding how the teaching practice works, both inside and outside of the classroom. It is my responsibility, as the teacher and educator, to make sure the students learn and develop their skills. Therefore, it is important to understand the students' perspectives and experiences regarding the different aspects of teaching and learning.

This study is about teachers' feedback on primary school students' writing and how students respond to it. More specifically, it investigates to what extent students' motivation influences how they treat feedback, what they do with the feedback they receive, and whether they are consciously aware of how they should use feedback to improve their writing skills.

Feedback is one of the factors which has the strongest impact on learning outcomes (Hattie, 2009). Therefore, I want to investigate the aspects that can influence the use of feedback, such as students' motivation and awareness. In addition, I want to explore how those aspects may influence what the students do with the feedback. To study this, I have chosen to focus on the students' own viewpoints, mainly because investigations of motivation and awareness are directly related to their own experience suitably, but also in order to give the students a voice in the larger discussion of this topic. Data for this study has therefore been collected from through qualitative research, which involved five individual semi-structured interviews with five 10th grade students in a class in lower secondary school in Norway.

1.1 General background

Formative assessment is central in student education to enhance students' learning (Black & William, 1989). It has been an area of focus in the Norwegian school system, especially throughout the 2000s (Høihilder, 2009, p. 103-105). The Knowledge Promotion Reform of 2006 (LK06) was designed to strengthen several aspects of the education system, and the assessment system was one of the systems targeted by the reform. In fact, assessment was made statutory in the Regulations to the Act (Forskrift til opplæringslova, 2020), where a distinction was made between summative and formative assessment. The formative assessment practice requires the teachers to provide useful feedback to the students. It is specifically mentioned in the Norwegian Education Act as an important tool to enhance learning (Forskrift til opplæringslova, 2020, §3-10). Interestingly, the main emphasis in the

Regulations to the Act seems to be on formative assessment, where feedback is highlighted, with how it should be used to enhance learning and to develop competence.

However, despite the Norwegian educational authorities' focus on strengthening formative assessment practices, and the reported improvements in this area in later years (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2019), there are still challenges which need to be considered. For the assessment practice to work as intended, there are, first and foremost, requirements from the teachers. For example, an important requirement in formative assessment is that the feedback shall be given throughout the learning process (Høihilder, 2009, p. 103), and the students "shall receive feedback on how they can continue to work to improve their competence" (Forskrift til opplæringslova, 2020, §3-10, my translation).

Additionally, there are requirements and expectations on the part of the students; students' relationships with feedback and how they treat it is crucial for it to be effective. The paragraph describing formative assessment in the Regulations to the Education Act states that the pupils shall take part in the assessment of their own work and reflect upon their own learning and development. They shall also understand what their teacher expects from them, what they are supposed to learn, as well as information about what they have already mastered (Forskrift til opplæringslova, 2020, §3-10).

Several studies show firm evidence that strengthening the feedback students receive about their learning results in enhanced learning and learning gains and is essential for classroom work (Black & Wiliam, 1998b). Even more specifically, the quality of the feedback and the type of feedback that is given can have positive influences on students' achievements (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). The purpose of the feedback is to reduce the gap between the students' current achievement level and the desired level (Sadler, 1989, p. 4). One way to reduce this gap is increased effort from the students. This effort may be influenced by the students' motivation and their awareness of the importance of using feedback to enhance learning and achieving learning goals.

There have been several studies which have examined formative assessment practices and the importance of feedback. Ruth Butler, for example, investigated the effectiveness of different kinds of feedback, where she discovered the positive results of receiving feedback instead of scores and grades (Wiliam, 2018, p. 124). John Hattie and Helen Timperley provides insight in the power of feedback and claim that there are four major levels which directly influence

feedback and its effectiveness (Hattie & Timperley, 2007, p. 90). Further, the work of both Ramaprasad (1983) and Hattie and Timperley (2007) emphasise the importance of identifying the students' current level before aiming for the desired level. Other studies also show the importance of students being conscious about their own learning process and the importance of developing self-regulation skills (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). There has been a great deal of research in the area of metacognition and motivation and the potential benefits and challenges (Wiliam, 2018). Empirical studies on formative assessment and feedback will be explored further in in Chapter 2.

1.3 Purpose and research questions

There are, to my knowledge, few (if any) research studies in Norway which have focused on the combination of students' motivation, consciousness and what students do with feedback to develop their writing competence and enhanced learning, specifically in the subject of English. Since feedback can greatly influence students' learning, it is beneficial to explore this area. Focusing on students' perspectives further expands our knowledge and understanding of the matter — how their motivation, their awareness, and what they do with feedback influences the efficacy of feedback in enhancing their learning.

The purpose of this study is therefore to explore how students experience feedback regarding motivation, what they do with feedback, and their awareness of how feedback can improve their learning. Thus, the research questions for this study are the following:

1. How does motivation influence how students treat feedback?
2. What do students do with the feedback they receive from their teacher?
3. To what extent are the students aware of how feedback can help them develop their writing skills?

To investigate these questions, this study employs a qualitative research method. Since two of the questions focus on students' *thinking* about formative feedback, qualitative interviews should be highly appropriate in this regard, since they elicit empirical data from the research participants' own perspectives (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). Ideally, research question 2 could have been researched by observation method, but due to limited time, this was not possible.

The research was carried out by conducting five individual interviews from students in a 10th grade class.

1.4 The structure of the thesis

The thesis is comprised of six chapters. Following the introduction chapter is the theoretical framework and literature review, where I present the study's theoretical framework together with existing research on the topic at hand. In this chapter I focus primarily on formative assessment and feedback, motivation, and self-regulation. Chapter 3, the methods chapter, presents the methodology and justifications for the choices made for the study's research design. I also discuss the validity, reliability, transferability as well as ethical issues to be considered and handled appropriately. I also explain and give examples of how I did the analysis of the interviews. In Chapter 4, the findings from the interviews are presented: using one research question at a time, the findings are explored and shown with correlations with the other questions. Chapter 5 presents a discussion of the findings from the interviews; as with the findings chapter, I consider each research question, in order, and discuss the findings in light of previous research. Lastly, in Chapter 6, I present the conclusion, implications, limitations and suggestions for further reading.

2 Theoretical framework and literature review

This study explores how students' motivation influences the way they treat feedback, what students do with the formative feedback they receive from their teachers and if they are aware about using feedback to enhance their competence and develop their writing skills in the English subject.

The terms formative assessment and feedback are defined in different ways. Formative assessment, for example, was originally related to 'on-going improvement' (Scriven, 1967), whereas feedback, coined in the field of electrical science, was initially defined as "the return to the input of a part of the output of a machine, system, or process" (Merriam Webster, 2022). In education, feedback can be defined as information provided by an agent, such as a teacher, peer or self, regarding one's performance or understanding. "Feedback thus is a "consequence" of performance" (Hattie & Timperley, 2007, p. 81) In this study, I will primarily use definitions related to teaching and learning, by Hattie and Timperley (2007), Sadler (1989), Black and Wiliam (1998a). I will therefore start by defining the term formative assessment and its relation to feedback. Then, I will look deeper into and define the term feedback and what researchers have found regarding its importance in teaching and learning, what is required in order to give good feedback and what types of feedback are the most effective to enhance learning and achievement.

2.1 Theoretical perspectives on formative assessment

Paul Black and Dylan Wiliam define formative assessment as "encompassing all those activities undertaken by teachers, and/or by their students, which provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged" (Black & Wiliam, 1998a, p. 7). Wiliam (2018) states that it seems futile to try to restrict the use of the term formative assessment, because people will use it in whichever way they want. Some believe that the assessment must have an immediate effect on learning outcomes or instruction instructions in order to qualify as formative, while others think longer cycles of assessment can be counted as formative assessment. Some are of the opinion that the assessment must be given individually to the students to be qualified as formative, others hold that formative implies assessment that provides the teacher with guidance on what to do next with the group of students (Wiliam, 2018, p. 48). That is why he has chosen to define the term inclusively, meaning that the definition is not too vague but not too restricted either. The

definition Wiliam presents is one he believes provides a compromise between precision and comprehensiveness.

> An assessment functions formatively to the extent that evidence about student achievement is elicited, interpreted, and used by teachers, learners, or their peers to make decisions about the next step in instruction that are likely to be better, or better founded, than the decision they would have made in the absence of that evidence (Wiliam, 2018, p. 48).

The decisions he mentions in this definition are often made by teachers, but it is also the case that the students themselves and their peers may be involved in making the decisions. In other words, formative assessment can be implemented in different ways – by the teacher and also through peer- and self-assessment (Wiliam, 2018, p. 49).

Another way to theorize formative assessment is to contrast it with summative assessment. The main difference between formative and summative assessment is the purpose and intended effect. Summative assessment is used to summarize the status of the achievement and performance of students (Sadler, 1989, p. 120). It is an assessment usually given at the end of a period of instruction, typically in form of a grade to describe the students' performance. Summative assessment lacks the element of feedback which is meant to help the students further in the learning process. In other words, feedback is a key element in formative assessment (Sadler, 1989, p. 120). It not only contains information to students about what they did correctly and incorrectly, it also includes information to enhance and develop their learning and future achievement.

2.1.1 Five strategies of formative assessment

An interesting perspective is William's five strategies of formative assessment. The five strategies are:
1. Clarifying, sharing, and understanding learning intentions and success criteria
2. Eliciting evidence learning
3. Providing feedback that moves learning forward
4. Activating learners as instructional resources for one another
5. Activating learners as owners of their own learning

More specifically, when it comes to point one, "Students may find it more helpful to know what they are going to be learning" (Wiliam, 2018, p. 57). Despite that, sharing the learning intentions, or clarifying the goal(s) of instruction, with the students is still not a practice done in all classrooms all the time (Wiliam, 2018, p. 57). Students should be told what they are meant to be learning because they may interpret things differently; one cannot take for granted that all students understand the learning intentions by themselves. Some students know what successful work looks like, while others do not. "Ensuring that all students know what quality work looks like has a profound impact on achievement gaps" (Wiliam, 2018, p. 61). Moreover, the students should have roughly the same idea of quality as teacher has. The reason is for them to monitor the quality while producing the product (Sadler, 1989). There is no simple formula to ensure all this, but the responsibility to communicate the learning intentions lays with the teacher.

When it comes to the second point, eliciting evidence, this can be done in many different ways: the use of tests, oral presentations, teacher-student talks, written assignments etc. This can give the teacher (and also the student) "proof" of what the student knows and is able to do. (Wiliam, 2018). As for point 3, providing feedback which moves learning forward, the teacher or peers should give information to the student about how he/she can improve. "Feedback needs to direct attention to what's next, rather than focusing on how well or poorly the student did on the work" (Wiliam, 2018, p. 143). As for point 4, activating learners as instructional resources for one another, highlights the importance of how learners can help to improve the learning of their peers, and how teachers can encourage students to work together as resources for one another's learning (Wiliam, 2018, p. 155). Lastly, point 5, activating learners as owners of their own learning highlights the importance of students being involved in their own learning, and how that can result in major improvements in their achievement (Wiliam, 2018, p. 169). This point also mentions the importance of self-regulated learning and activating students' metacognition, something I will return to later in this chapter as well as in the discussion chapter.

The Education Act states that formative assessment shall be used to improve learning and develop competence (Forskrift til opplæringslova, 2020, §3-10). It stipulates that pupils shall participate in assessing their own work and reflect upon their own learning processes. The pupils shall also understand what the teacher expects, what they are supposed to learn and

what they already master. The Education Act also highlights the importance of pupils receiving feedback about what they should do next with their work, to enhance their competence (Forskrift til opplæringslova, 2020, §3-10).

The five strategies Wiliam (2018) presents, are interesting to consider in light of what the Education Act, §10-3, states about what students shall receive and do regarding the formal assessment:

a. Participate in assessment of own work and reflect upon own learning and development
b. Understand what they are going to learn and what is expected of them
c. Receive information about what they already master
d. Get guidance on how they can work further to increase their competence (Forskrift til opplæringslova, 2020, §3-10, my translation).

The five strategy points Wiliam mentions align with the four points written in the Education Act §10-3. Both lists of points mention the importance of students being involved in their own learning, the importance of knowing what the students are going to learn and knowing what they already mastered and the importance of feedback what provide information of how they can work further. All the points share the goal of increasing and developing competence and learning.

2.2 Theoretical perspectives on feedback

Defining the term feedback is also challenging. The term may have different meanings depending on the given situation and context. In this master's thesis, the context is learning situations and feedback given by teachers to students. More specifically, this research refers to feedback given to enhance learning and achievement during the process of learning, also known as formative assessment.

Royce Sadler defines the term feedback as "information about the gap between the actual level and the reference level of a system parameter which is used to alter the gap in some way." In other words, feedback is information which will alter a gap between the students' current stage in learning, and where they aim to be (Sadler, 1989, p. 4). This view has affinities with Ramaprasad's (1983) model of the three processes of teaching and learning. According to Ramaprasad, it is important to identify the goal that is to be reached and the current level of achievement; reaching the goal entails trying to close the gap. Moreover, in

terms of feedback, Ramaprasad emphasizes that "If the information on the gap is merely stored without being utilized to alter the gap, it is not feedback" (Ramaprasad, 1983, p. 5). On a similar note, Hattie and Timperley (2007) stress the importance of identifying the student's current level, clarifying the goal of instruction, and helping the students to progress from their current level to the level they set as a goal. They have categorized this process into three questions "Where am I going? (What are the goals?), How am I going? (What progress is being made toward the goal?), and Where to next? (What activities need to be undertaken to make better progress?)" (Hattie & Timperley, 2007, p. 86). These questions are mentioned by several other feedback researchers and are one of the most crucial aspects when it comes to feedback to enhance learning. The questions are meant to help the students get an overview of the further development in a course of learning. However, the feedback cannot only be a summary of how the students have performed, it needs to answer the three questions (Hartberg et al., 2012, p. 88). Moreover, as already touched upon, the ideal situation is that both the teacher and the students seek answers to those questions.

2.2.1 What we know about feedback from theoretical and empirical research

According to Hattie & Timperley (2007) "Feedback is one of the most powerful influences on learning and achievement" (p. 81). In Hattie and Timperley's article "The power of feedback", they provide an analysis of the concept of feedback and present its impact on learning and achievement. The evidence shows that even though feedback is a powerful influence, it is affected by what type of feedback is used and the way it is given. Feedback can be given in several different ways, but the important part is that it needs to be effective to fill the gap and enhance students' performance.

"Effective feedback must answer three major questions asked by a teacher and/or by a student" (Hattie & Timperley, 2007, p. 86). A mentioned earlier, the three questions are: "where am I going?", "how am I going?" and "where to next?". As for the first question, "where am I going?", the teacher needs to inform the students of clear and specific goals. The goals can have a wide range – they can be goals for the whole class as well as individual goals for each and every student. Goals can promote goal-directed action (Hattie & Timperley, 2007, p. 88), and setting clear goals may lead to achievement (Wiliam, 2018). Feedback may also help students to set reasonable goals. If the feedback is clear and understandable for the student, then the feedback itself could be used as a goal. For example, if a student receives feedback about how they should work further with writing more structured paragraphs,

writing structured paragraphs would be a goal the student could set for him-/herself. A problem that can occur, however, is when the feedback is not directed toward the attainment of the goal. An example of this: students receive feedback on spelling and word count, when the goal for the assignment was to create a specific mood in a story. Such feedback will not be effective in decreasing the gap relating to the goal of creating moods in stories (Hattie & Timperley, 2007, p. 89).

It is important to mention that students may not naturally share the same commitment to attain goals as their teachers. The commitment needs to be developed and built. "Commitment can be induced by authority figures; peer groups; competition; role models (…) general valence and instrumentality" (Hattie & Timperley, 2007, p. 89). In other words, commitment can be built and developed by being surrounded by or looking up to people who also want to attain goals and learn. This commitment can also be seen as motivation, a factor which I will return to later in this chapter.

The second question is "how am I going?". As already touched upon, the ones providing answers to this question could either be teachers, peers, the student him-/herself or tests/tasks. Teachers, peers or the student him-/herself may provide information about the students' performance on a task or assignment. Even though test results may also give answers about where a student is, the results may not be effective and can often "fail to convey feedback information that helps teachers and their students to know how they are going" (Hattie & Timperley, 2007, p. 89). Therefore, looking at results alone to answer this question can be ineffective in terms of providing information about progress or how to proceed since it may not provide quality feedback.

The last question, "where to next?" identifies which activities or strategies are needed to make better progress. This question may have a powerful impact on learning and it should be answered and discussed between teacher and student. Typically, answers to the question can be generalized and vague, such as "do more" or "keep up the good work", but these statements have little effect and could ultimately be demotivating (Hartberg et al., 2012, p. 95). The student needs to know what they already have achieved and what the next goals are – information which may come via feedback from the teacher. When this is established, the student can focus on how the next gap can be decreased. Another answer for how to proceed may be the use of strategies, which include enhanced challenges and more self-regulation

over the learning process (Hattie & Timperley, 2007, p. 90). I will get back to this point in sections 2.2.5 and 2.2.6 below.

All three questions are supposed to work together at each of the four levels I will present in the next paragraph. That is because they are interdependent, each one having a relation to the other. For example, answering "where to next?" would be challenging without having already answered "how am I going?" or "where am I going?". All three questions give information about where the students are and where they aim to be, which may lead to the goal of decreasing or closing the gap.

2.2.2 Four types of feedback

Hattie and Timperley claim that there are four major levels of feedback which, to a larger or a lesser extent, influence its effectiveness. Those levels are feedback about the task, about the processing of the task, about the self-regulation and about the self as a person. More specifically, feedback about the task, or product, typically involve directions about whether the work is correct, incorrect or needs more or different information. Second, feedback about the process of completing as task, or creating a product, involves information about different types of strategies to use when solving a task or writing an assignment. Third, feedback about self-regulation can be used to develop students' self-evaluation skills. This can lead to more confidence and engaging them to work further on tasks and products. Fourth, feedback about the self as a person is personal feedback and praise directed to the student's self.

2.2.3 Feedback about the self as a person

According to Hattie and Timperley, feedback as the self as a person, is the least effective. This is feedback such as "You did a great job, well done." Feedback such as praise will not have any effect on, for example, the student's development of writing skills. Praise is often "too often unrelated to performance on the task" (Hattie & Timperley, 2007. p. 90). It does not provide any information about how the student performed or what to do next. In other words, praise does not provide information related to the three major questions – how am I going? Where to next? and Where am I going? However, when discussing praise towards the person, it is important to distinguish between praise with no information about the task versus praise regarding self-regulation, effort or engagement relating to performance and the task.

The latter can have effect on students' self-efficacy and therefore have effect on their performance, though the effect may be low (Hattie & Timperley, 2007, p. 96).

2.2.4 Feedback about the task

The next is feedback about the task. This is the most common type of feedback. It includes feedback about performance, correctness and knowledge of results. An example could be "You need to include more information about the characters' personalities." This type of feedback and information can be powerful and is necessary when moving on to feedback about the process and about self-regulation. That is because to move forward, the student and the teachers need to know where the student is right now.

One important thing to consider when giving feedback is to not include too much feedback at the task level. This is because it may encourage the "students to focus on the immediate goal and not the strategies to attain the goal" (Hattie & Timperley, 2007, p. 91), in other words, it may lead to trial and error strategies – something which should be avoided. Feedback about the task is "powerful when the task information subsequently is useful for improving strategy processing or enhancing self- regulation (which it too rarely does)" (Hattie & Timperley, 2007, p. 91). For the feedback to be effective, the goal is to give corrective information about the task and performance and to help students see the relationship between instructions, feedback and the intended learning.

2.2.5 Feedback about the processing of the task

Hattie & Timperley (2007) argue that feedback about the processing of the task is one of the two most effective types of feedback. It appears to be more effective in enhancing deeper learning. This form of feedback helps students develop effective information searches and task strategies. The type of feedback given also relates to students' error detection strategies. Detecting errors may indicate that the student has done something wrong, and that it is time to change strategy or to seek help. These are skills which can be used and developed in future learning and implemented in any approach to tasks; this enhances deeper learning. (Hattie & Timperley, 2007, p. 93). An example of this type of feedback could be "Use the strategies we talked about earlier to make your text more structured". The following strategies could be referring to a dictionary or looking for spelling mistakes and checking the grammar.

Whether students choose to act upon the errors they detect depends on, among other things, their motivation to continue to work towards the goal. To do this, the teacher needs to provide clear enough information that the students experience the goal as manageable, and then develop their processing skills (Hattie & Timperley, 2007, p. 93). This is a particularly interesting point for the current study. Whether the students act upon errors and their motivation to do things with the feedback they receive is one of the interesting findings and points to discuss in relation the research questions. I will return to this in the discussion chapter below.

2.2.6 Feedback about self-regulation

The second type of feedback Hattie and Timperley claim to be one of the most effective is feedback about self-regulation. In recent years, there have been discoveries regarding self-regulation and how it contributes to better learning outcomes. Research has been conducted on how students' awareness of their learning process can improve their achievement and enhance students' self-control, with successful results (Zimmermann, 2002, p. 65). This relates to, among other things, issues such as planning, monitoring and evaluating their work. Despite this, not all teachers prepare students to develop their self-regulation skills.

The goal of feedback is not only to tell the students what they have done and what to do next; it is also to develop their self-regulation and monitoring skills. An example of this type of feedback is: "You already know how topic sentences make your text more structured, check your paragraphs to see if you have incorporated topic sentences". This type of feedback can have major influence upon students' self-evaluation and regulatory skills. The goals are for the student to be able to continuously monitor the quality of their work during the production of their work (Sadler, 1989, p. 121).

There are at least six aspects of feedback regarding self-regulation that mediate its effectiveness:

- the capability to create internal feedback and to self-assess
- the willingness to invest effort into seeking and dealing with feedback information
- the degree of confidence or certainty in the correctness of the response
- the attributions about success or failure
- the level of proficiency at seeking help

(Hattie & Timperley, 2007, p. 94).

Effective learners create their own feedback and routines when engaging in a task or assignment at school. Conversely, less effective learners will have minimal self-regulation strategies. They are more dependent upon their teacher for feedback and will also rarely use feedback to enhance their learning and self-regulation strategies. (Hattie & Timperley, 2007, p. 94). Focusing on developing the aspects that mediate the effectiveness of self-regulation should be done by the teacher, since research proves that students' ability to self-regulate and evaluate will enhance their achievement. This is an important topic that is relevant to one of this study's areas of research: students' awareness regarding the use of feedback to enhance their learning and development. I will return to this issue in the discussion chapter.

2.3 Motivation

Students' motivation regarding feedback may influence how they experience and treat feedback. Motivation can be considered the initiative to act (Deci & Ryan, 2008, p. 182), which, in this context, would be the action of using feedback and improving assignments and texts. Motivation may also lead to goal-directed behaviour (Hussain et.al., 2020, p. 17), which makes motivation an important factor for pupils to achieve success, especially in language learning, where motivation seems to be an indicator of success (Gass, et.al., 2013, p. 522).

Therefore, students' motivation is crucial to take into consideration when looking at what students do with feedback and their awareness of using feedback to improve their work. I will therefore start by looking at their motivation in relation to the findings from the interviews. Most of the students answered that they were somewhat motivated, but for different reasons and different factors influencing their motivation.

2.3.1 Motivation and metacognition

As discussed above, research evidence shows that activating students as owners of their own learning can result in remarkable improvements in their achievement, and that "the most effective learners are self-regulating" (Butler & Winne, 1995, p. 245). Metacognition, which "refers to *an awareness of and reflections about one's knowledge, experiences, emotions and learning* in the contexts of language learning and teaching" (Haukås et al., 2018, p. 13), is therefore an important concept. Training students in metacognition may raise their

performance and achievement, and improving can skills in self-regulation is key to this. Self-regulated learning "enables the learner to coordinate cognitive resources, emotions and actions in the service of his or her learning goals" (Wiliam, 2018, p. 174). Even when students have skills in self-regulated learning and are trained in metacognition, they still may not use them in the classroom, "which suggests that the problem is not a lack of skill but rather a lack of motivation or volition" (Wiliam, 2018, p. 174).

There are two types of motivation, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation "refers to doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable" (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 55) whereas extrinsic motivation "refers to doing something because it leads to a separable outcome" (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 55). When it comes to learning, it refers to "a source of satisfaction itself or the potential gains from the result of learning being the driving force" (Harlen, 2012, p. 173). Extrinsic motivation may result in goal attainment but would not be related to what is learned; the learning would just be a means to an end. The problem with this is that learning is not the end, it is just a focus on the goal attainment. To the contrary, intrinsic motivation would arise in situations where the student finds satisfaction in developing skills and knowledge, therefore finding enjoyment in the learning process itself. People are more motivated to learn when they value the consequences, such as reaching a goal you have set for yourself or avoiding trouble for not doing an assignment (Wiliam, 2018, p. 176).

As for self-determination, one may speak of dimensions of behaviour. Low self-determination is represented by low or no motivation (Harlen, 2012, p. 173) Conversely, a high level of self-determination is represented by stronger and more intrinsic motivation. For learning, intrinsic motivation is seen as the ideal because it has higher chances of leading to students desiring to continuing learning, rather than learning simply to pass an exam or test (Harlen, 2012, p. 173) This focus may mean the student misses the importance and usefulness of what they are learning (Harlen, 2012, p. 173).

2.3.2 Views on motivation

Much of the existing literature about motivation views it as something that students possess either a lot or very little of it. In other words, we blame a lack of motivation if students fail to learn. Moreover, there are people who believe that the teacher is responsible for motivating

the students. (Wiliam, 2018, p. 176). Following this logic, if the student fails to learn, the reason is that the teacher was not a sufficient motivator, so the ultimate cause of failure lies with the teachers (Wiliam, 2018, p. 176).

There are other views on motivation, which identify the problem as something not directed at the teacher or learner, but rather as a view where motivation is seen not as a cause, but as a consequence of achievement. The goal is to find an appropriate match between the students' capability and the task's challenge level. This can avoid lapses in motivation or failure. If the challenge level is too high, and capability too low, students may have no motivation or may even fail the task. The inverse should also be avoided; if the challenge level is low, and the students' capability high, boredom and no motivation or achievement may occur (Wiliam, 2018, p. 177). Wiliam (2018) describes this perspective as a radical view on motivation because blames neither the teacher nor learner for failures. However, this perspective does not necessarily excuse students or teachers from seeking solutions; the reason for an unmotivated student is likely "a signal that the teacher and the learner need to try something different" (Wiliam, 2018, p. 177). It is also worth noting that motivation is a factor which does not remain constant; it is influenced by both internal and external influences that students are exposed to (Dörnyei, 2000, p. 524). Therefore, levels of motivation will fluctuate over time, varying from situation to situation, and strategies to handle motivation may need to change accordingly.

2.3.3 Negative impact on motivation

Assessment is intended to have a positive effect on achievement and to generally enhance learning, however, assessment practices can also have negative impacts on the students' motivation. Assessment practices with negative impacts may, for example, include focusing on teaching what is being tested, prioritising performance-based goals rather than learning outcome goals, and providing feedback primarily in terms of grades and scores. These are things to avoid (Harlen, 2012, p. 177-178) because, instead of providing useful measures of students' learning, they can instead negatively impact students' motivation and general learning success.

One of my research questions is about students' motivation regarding using feedback to develop their writing skills in the English subject. It is therefore worth noting what influences students' motivation. This issue will be returned to in the discussion chapter.

2.3.4 The importance of providing clear goals

The gap between the desired and current learning levels can be reduced by both the teacher and the student. Reducing the gap may lead to achievement of learning goals. Regarding the student's role, one of the ways he/she can reduce the gap is to increase their effort. Improved or increased effort is particularly valuable and effective when it entails "tackling more challenging tasks or appreciating higher quality experiences rather than just doing "more."" (Hattie & Timperley, 2007, p. 86). Students are more motivated and more likely to increase their effort and therefore reach goals when the goals are clear and specific, as well as when students believe in their capability for success. When students perceive the goals as being out of their reach or impossible to achieve, they may give up on learning and instead focus on lower-level goals that they know they can reach (Wiliam, 2018, p. 177). It is therefore important for teachers to provide clear and specific goals to increase the chance of students reaching them. Although, as discussed previously, success or failure cannot generally be attributed to either teachers or students, in regards to motivation, teachers are the ones who have the opportunity to make a real difference; students' motivation and belief in their ability to succeed may decline throughout school, so support from teachers is crucial (Wiliam, 2018, p. 178).

It is important that the goals are specific and clear enough that it is possible to plan both lessons and assessments based on the goals (Hopfenbeck, 2016, p. 30). Norwegian classroom researchers have revealed an important change in Norwegian schools from the 2000s and throughout recent years. The change concerns the practice and focus on clear goals and assessment practices. In particular, it has been noted that teachers have had much more focus on what the students were supposed to *learn*, rather than on what they should *do*, and that the teachers started making clearer goals for teaching and learning (Hopfenbeck, 2016, p. 30).

2.4 Chapter summary

To sum up, feedback from teachers is one of the most important factors for students' learning and development. The students' motivation is an important factor that will influence the way

they use feedback and the potential benefits from the feedback. Students' awareness and working with metacognition will also influence the way students use the feedback. All in all, there are a variety of factors relevant to successful learning strategies and assessment, but all of them influence how students treat feedback and what they do with it. How students choose to implement the feedback they receive, if they implement it at all, is something that directly influences their learning and competence development.

3 Method

In this chapter I present and discuss the methodological process of this study. First, I present the research design followed by a description of the research participants and data collection. Then I discuss validity and reliability of the methods used. Lastly, I discuss the ethical considerations I have made during this study.

3.1 Research design

This study aims to collect information about students' motivation to use their teachers' feedback to enhance learning and to develop their writing skills in the English subject. The study also explores what students choose to do with the feedback they have received. Additionally, it finds out the extent to which students are aware of how their use of feedback can enhance their learning. In order to investigate the research questions, I chose to employ interviews with students to gain insight regarding their views about and their experiences with feedback.

3.1.1 Qualitative research

Qualitative research methods were employed in this study, because, as Merriam and Tisdell state: "Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 6). Rather than seeking information about numbers, statistics and characteristics, qualitative research, such as this study, seeks information to understand in depth what people think and experience. As a simplified definition, qualitative research uses words as sources of data, then collects and analyses them in a variety of ways. This method contrasts quantitative research, which uses numbers as sources of data then analyses them with statistical techniques. (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p.6). According to Merriam and Tisdell, there are four main characteristics of qualitative research: "the focus is on process, understanding and meaning; the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis; the process is inductive; and the product is richly descriptive" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p.15).

I aim to find out what students do with the feedback they receive from teachers, in addition to their motivation and their awareness of how they can successfully use feedback. To find answers to these topics of interest, I need to understand what students think and experience, as

well as why. Having an in-depth knowledge of students' perspectives allows educators, such as myself, to better understand the efficacy of feedback processes between teachers and students. The goal is not to gather a large amount of data from a large number of pupils; instead, it is to gather a deep understanding of a few students' points of view. To achieve this understanding and information, I found it suitable to conduct interviews rather than to employ quantitative research methods, such as questionnaires. While both quantitative and qualitative methods have their strengths and weaknesses, I found a qualitative research method, with the use of interviews, to be the best solution. I will return to relevant issues related to interviews in section 3.3.1.

For this study, it would have been beneficial to observe students and their relationships with feedback over a longer period of time. Observing students in this manner would have provided an opportunity to follow them through the process of working on a project that involves being assessed by their teacher. Because larger might have multiple stages of receiving feedback, such as writing a draft essay, receiving the teacher's comments, then making suitable changes, conducting the study over a longer period could provide better insights into how students use assessment to develop their project. Due to limited time, however, I was unable to conduct interviews over a sustained amount of time like this.

3.2 Research participants

3.2.1 Context

The study was conducted in two 10th grade classes, both of which have the same teacher in the subject of English. The classes are from a middle school in a medium-sized city in Norway. This group of participants, 10th grade students, was chosen because they have experienced three years with both formative and summative assessment in English. In addition, the school they attend is a school which focuses more on formative assessment than summative assessment. This means that the teachers' assessments are designed to enhance learning overall rather than following summative assessment methods such as numerical grades. The teachers want to focus less on grades and more on enhancing learning through feedback. When the students have tests, assignments or oral presentations, they do not receive assessment in the form of a grade from one to six, and instead receive more descriptive feedback from their instructor about the level they are currently on. They receive a sheet explaining the different levels and information about the criteria that defines each of the levels. Each of the three levels are divided into three sections; low, medium and high. This

means that the students know which level they are on, but not the specific grade. The goal is to have less focus on the grades themselves and to focus primarily on the teachers' feedback and strategies for how the students can develop their skills and further their learning.

3.2.2 Selection/sampling

Unlike quantitative research, which generally surveys larger groups of people, qualitative research usually samples smaller numbers of participants. Qualitative research does not need many respondents, because the point is to go into depth about the topic at hand rather than to provide a wide-ranging survey of responses. According to Miles et al. (2014), as a qualitative researcher, you need to "define aspects of your case that you can study within the limits of your time and means, that connect directly to you research question" (Miles et al. 2014, p. 31).

In this study, purposeful sampling was used. This means that the chosen group reflects the average; it is not an atypical or unusual group of people (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 97). My criteria in choosing was to find an average group 15-year-old students, with a mix of both genders. By average, I mean the group reflected the average group of students, with different kind of characteristics, personalities and opinions. I contacted the contact teacher of the class with my request and criteria, and the teacher then selected and informed the students about the interviews. The group of participants was a mix of high- and low-performance students and consisted of two boys and three girls. I found five students to be enough to include in my study. It would be just enough to get insight in a few different people, but also not take too much time, considering my limited time schedule.

3.3 Data collection

In the following section, I discuss and present some of the characteristics of research interviews, different types of interview approaches, then explain and describe how I designed the structure of this study's interviews and how they were carried out.

3.3.1 Interviews

In this study, interviews were an appropriate choice because they are a qualitative method which is relevant for finding out "what is in and on someone else's mind" (Patton, 2015, p. 426; cited in Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 109). In order to find out what students think about

the relevance of the teachers' feedback, questioning them and letting them reply in their own words can be highly efficacious. A qualitative interview gives the opportunity to explore in-depth the experiences and opinions the participant talks about (Høgheim, 2020, p. 130-131).

3.3.2 Different types of interviews

There are several types of interviews, three of which are often mentioned regarding qualitative research: structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews. A structured interview means that all the participants receive the same questions, made in advance. There is also little or no flexibility in either how the questions are asked or how the answers are given. A semi-structured interview seeks to receive information about the informants' perspectives and their life world (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p. 150). According to Brinkmann & Kvale (2015), a semi-structured interview is neither an open conversation or a questionnaire interview. It has a sequence of themes to be covered and questions to be asked, but there is also openness to ask follow-up questions to answers given by the informants (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p. 150). The main difference between semi-structured and structured interview is the follow-up questions. In the structured interview, there are no follow-up questions, which is the reason I did not chose a structured interview; it does not allow for a deeper exploration of the subject in the way that semi-structured interviews can (Postholm, 2005, p. 69).

Unstructured interviews have few pre-structured and standardized procedures, which implies that "many of the methodical decisions have to be made on the spot, during the interview" (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p. 19). The reason I did not choose an unstructured interview method is because it requires high level of interviewing skills and "knowledge about the topic and familiar with the methodological options available, as well as an understanding of the conceptual issues of producing knowledge through conversation" (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p. 19). Without such extensive experience and knowledge, a semi-structured interview was a more appropriate choice than an unstructured interview. In addition, to make sure there was enough information gathered, specifically enough relevant information gathered, pre-made questions are helpful; they provide guidance and allow the conversation to stay on-track while gathering data. Therefore, the interview strategy for this study consisted of a semi-structured and formal interview using questions written in advance and the flexibility to ask follow-up questions when appropriate or helpful.

3.3.3 How I planned and carried out my interview

An interview guide was useful in planning questions and making sure that all the participants were asked the same questions. Preparation of the interview guide was crucial because the questions needed to provide enough information to be discussed in relation to the study' research questions. In addition, care was taken to make the interview questions elicit answers that would actually inform the research questions. I therefore spent some time making sure that the wording of the interview questions focused on motivation, what they do and awareness in a language that would be understandable to the students.

It is often advisable to start with a pilot interview in order to practice the role of being a researcher and asking questions (Høgheim, 2020, p. 165). A test interview/pilot can be conducted with peers, students or other people who can give appropriate and useful feedback. It has the advantage of helping to make sure the questions can provide the information needed for the research, as well as giving the opportunity to alter any questions or add new questions if that was necessary. In the data collection phase, I conducted a pilot interview with a peer from my university. From this pilot interview, I learned that I needed to clearly explain and elaborate upon the questions to make sure the participant could understand exactly what was being asked of them.

All five interviews were conducted individually and in a face-to-face setting. The interviews were conducted in Norwegian rather than in English. This was primarily to make sure the participants would understand everything, but allowing them to speak in the language they were most comfortable with made the conversation flow more easily and the participants could freely express their answers. Each interview lasted about 7-11 minutes. I chose to record the interviews and transcribe them later. Doing this allowed me to be fully present and attentive in the conversation. After they were complete, I transcribed the interviews by listening to them on 0.5 speed to hear everything clearly. While doing this, I wrote notes on my computer. It was necessary to listen to some sections repeatedly in order to fully understand what was being said. In the transcription I also included every sound the informants made, such as noises made when they were unsure of something. No names or identifying information were included in the transcriptions.

(See Appendix A)

3.4 Research credibility

As a researcher, I have to be aware that there are certain factors that will affect my study and that efforts should be taken to ensure the strength of this qualitative research. Producing quality research entails ensuring validity and trustworthiness, reliability and transferability, but also identifying potential threats to or weaknesses of the study. The quality of the research and the potential threats concern how I collected, analysed and interpreted data for my study and the way they are presented. In the following section, I discuss the validity, reliability and transferability concerns of my method, how I corrected issues or strengthened them and my awareness of potential threats or biases.

3.4.1 Validity

Validity in the social sciences concerns how a method is suitable to examine what is being examined (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 250). This implies that I have to make sure the questions I ask in the interviews actually give me the information I need to be able to discuss my research questions. Moreover, high validity or trustworthiness depends on providing readers with transparent and clear data, allowing them to accurately follow the entire research process and evaluate it. In doing this, the reader can gain insight into the choices taken throughout the process of the study project (Postholm, 2005, p.170). This study aims to meet this criterion in a variety of ways, such as clarifying in this methods chapter how I designed and carried out the research, including descriptions of the research participants and my role as the researcher.

Because validity refers to whether I am accurately measuring or examining what I claim to be examining (Bryman, 2012, p. 389-390), I spent a lot of time developing the questions for the research project's interview guide. Asking correct and suitable questions that would give me the answers I needed to discuss my research questions was imperative. The questions in the interview guide needed to reflect the theory and the research question, so the guide underwent several drafts to find the most suitable questions to achieve the study's goals. For example, to answer one of the research questions about to what extent the students are motivated by the teachers' feedback, one of the questions included in the interview guide was "Are you motivated to enhance your work and assignments with the feedback you receive from your teacher? Why or why not?". After writing the first draft of interview questions, I chose the questions to include in the final interview guide in collaboration with my supervisor.

3.4.1.1 Threats to the validity in my research

Qualitative research is interpretative research, so there are concerns and threats which need to be kept in mind (Creswell, 2014, p. 187). There are two types of threats to validity that are often discussed in relation to qualitative studies and research: researcher bias and reactivity (Maxwell, 2013, p. 124). Researcher bias concerns a researcher's values and personal background, both of which can shape and influence the interpretations and conclusions made in a study (Creswell, 2014, p. 187). This is a validity concern in my qualitative research. Since it is impossible to eliminate the researcher's perceptual lens and values, it is important to understand how a researcher's bias may affect and influence the interpretations and findings in the study (Maxwell, 2013, p. 124). To create an open and honest narrative, I will try to aim at being open about the interpretations I make and about how they may have been shaped by my background and my role as the researcher (Creswell, 2014, p. 202).

Reactivity is another relevant factor; it is the effect the researcher has on the individuals studied (Maxwell, 2013, p. 124). "What the informant says is always influenced by the interviewer and the interview situation" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 125). Even though there are ways to prevent this effect, such as avoiding leading questions, minimizing the researcher's influence on the participants is not a crucial concern, since it is not the goal in qualitative research. However, awareness of the phenomenon is important in understanding how I, as the researcher, influence the participants and what they say during the interviews, and how this can affect the validity of the study.

To avoid leading questions, the premade questions in the interview guide were written to be open-ended questions. To provide an atmosphere where the participants felt comfortable sharing their perspectives, I also tried to maintain neutral body language when the participant answered the questions. This was to avoid their answers being influenced or biased by facial expressions or body language I might reflect. For example, when I asked how much a student liked the subject English on a scale of 1 to 10, I gave somehow a consistent, neutral reaction, regardless of whether their response was a 9 or a 3. Staying somewhat friendly, having an approachable demeanour and asking open questions were all strategies designed to show participants that I was interested in their honest answers, not looking for a specific answer or opinion. When I started to discuss the findings from the interview, I realized I should have asked more follow-up questions to the statements from the students.

3.4.2 Reliability

Reliability concerns the consistency and trustworthiness of the research, sometimes judged in terms of whether other researchers could provide the same findings after replicating the study with the same method and the same type of data (Postholm, 2005, p. 169). Transparency regarding the research process is therefore important.

When it comes to the social sciences, reliability is problematic because "human behaviour is never static, nor is what many experience necessary more reliable than what one person experiences" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 250). Therefore, measuring the reliability of qualitative research is not the same as measuring the reliability of other types of research. For qualitative studies, the more important question regarding reliability is "whether the results are consistent with the data collected" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 251). Therefore, the terms dependability and consistency could be more suitable to measure reliability in qualitative research. Instead of demanding the same results over and over, it is more important that the data collected makes sense and is consistent and dependable (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 251).

A strategy the qualitative researcher can use to enhance the dependability, consistency and reliability is to describe how data were collected and how categories were derived (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 252). This means giving detailed descriptions of the process and the research choices being made. This provides the reader clear insight into the research study. To ensure this, I give detailed descriptions of my data collection in this methods chapter. I describe the process of making the interview guide, why and how I conducted a pilot interview and even a more detailed description of how I conducted the interview with the five students.

Reliability also concerns the researcher's ability to collect information and data accurately. Recorded and transcribed interviews, which are publicly accessible, give the opportunity for others to read what has been studied, and thus be used if others were to look for the same results or to research the same topic. Making interviews available in this way can also help to counter accusations that the study's analysis has been influenced by my values or biases (Bryman, 2012, p. 482). Recording the interviews also allows more thorough, and repeated, examinations of what participants said in the interviews, enhancing the reliability of the transcriptions and analysis of them.

3.4.3 Generalisability and transferability

Generalisations concern the question of whether the results of a study can be transferred to other interviews and situations (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 264). In qualitative research, the term transferability is often used instead of the term generalisation. To make transferability possible, the investigator needs to provide descriptive data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 254). Rich, thick description, is used to refer to a "highly descriptive, detailed presentation of the setting and in particular, the findings of a study" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 257). In other words, rich, thick description is a strategy to enable transferability, and refers to detailed description of the findings from interviews, evidence in forms of quotes from the participants or other relevant documents. To enhance the transferability of this study, providing a rich, thick description of the process and findings was a primary consideration.

3.5 Ethics

There were several ethical considerations to be conscious of when doing research for this study. Ethical issues may arise in all the different stages of a research project. To prevent them whenever possible, there are guidelines and principles which can ensure an ethical study. This research project has been approved for data collection by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD). In this section, I discuss the ethical considerations concerning informed consent, confidentiality and storage of data for this study.

3.5.1 Informed consent

Informed consent entails giving information to the research participants about the purpose of the research, the main features of the design and possible risks and benefits from participating in the project (Kvale, 1996, p. 112). The researcher needs to protect the research participants and develop trust with them. To protect the research participants, the research has to be in accordance with ethics principles (Creswell, 2014, p. 92), such as those outlined by NSD. The participants need to voluntarily agree and give consent to participate in the project. They also need information about their right to withdraw their participation at any time and information about how the researcher will make sure they are unidentified and anonymous (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 88). They shall also receive information about how the collected data from the interviews will be stored and used.

Before the interviews, participants in the study received a document with information about the research, their rights, such as anonymity, how they could contact me and their right to withdraw. I also explained how I would store the recordings from the interview. In addition to giving them a written document, I explained a short summary orally before conducting the interview, then they signed a consent form. All students interviewed, were above fifteen years old, which is the age limit set by NSD. That means I did not need a signature from the students' legal guardians for them to give consent and participate in the interviews.

3.5.2 Confidentiality

All the gathered information and data were stored and processed confidentially in accordance with requirements set by National Committee for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and the Humanities (NESH). NESH states that the research material must be anonymised, which I informed all the participants about (NESH, 2021). No identifiable information was gathered and pseudonyms were given to the students in the transcribed material from the interviews.

3.5.3 Storage of data

The audio files from the interviews were stored on my personal computer, as well as my personal mobile phone as a precaution, for backup in case of technical difficulties. Both my computer and my phone are locked by a code known only to me, ensuring I was the only person able to access the audio files. To further ensure the participants' privacy, the audio files will be deleted as soon as the research project is done. No identifiable information about the participants was gathered other than their signatures, which were stored apart from the audio files. I gave them numbers instead of names, that only I could recognise.

3.6 Analysis

The data analysis was done in multiple stages. The first stage began with transcribing the interviews and anonymizing them. Then, they were read through to gain an overall impression of the material gathered. Next, the transcripts were categorized. To do that, I used In Vivo coding as my coding method (Miles et al. 2014, p. 74). This system of coding means that the researcher summarizes a passage from the transcripts using "words or short phrases from the participants' own language" and then uses them as codes (Miles et al. 2014, p. 74). These words or short phrases will eventually provide an inventory with topics for categorising (Miles et al. 2014, p. 74). For example, I asked what a student thought was the reason for his

not being motivated to improve his work with feedback. In response, the student replied "ehh, when I am done with what I have done, then I have kind of worked with it enough, so I don't bother to do more afterwards". I coded this "do not bother". Table 1 below, provides an example of how the transcripts were coded. The student statements are translated from Norwegian to English by me.

Table 1: Examples of coding form the interviews

Students statement	Codes
Me: Okay, can you think of a reason for that? Student 2: Ehh, when I am done with what I have done, then I have kind of worked with it enough, so I don't bother to do more afterwards.	Do not bother
Me: Are you motivated to improve your work with the feedback you receive? Student 4: Yes, I usually am in the English subject Me: Yes, why is that? Student 4: Because it's pretty specific feedback, for example "you should work with your vocabulary", or "you should work with…" yes things like that	Motivated by specific feedback
Me: Are you motivated to improve your work, ehm, with the feedback?	Always motivated

Student 5: Yes, I am, I am not very good at English, but I am always motivated	
Me: What kind of feedback do you think is the easiest to understand? Student 5: Oral, because then she explains better, so I prefer feedback to be delivered orally	Prefers feedback orally
Me: mhm, could it be something that makes you not understand the feedback? Student 5: if they use advanced words	Advanced words
Me: Do you spend a lot of time to work with the feedback? Student 3: hmm, not so much, maybe little, to understand what I did wrong	Spend little time
Me: Do you look forward to receiving feedback on assignment or work you have done? Student 5: Ehh, yes, I do, or, if I have delivered a good text, then I look forward to get the feedback. If I know I did a bad job, then it may be worse, but overall, I look forward to it	Look forward to get feedback

A few of the questions in the interview guide were questions that asked for a response on a scale of 1-10. Even though the overall method of this study was qualitative interview, I found it useful to collect some of the data through numbers. This made comparison of the participants' answer easier to directly compare in certain situations. This also makes it easy for the reader to get an overview of the results from the provided tables. For example, the first question of the interview was "How much do you like the English subject on a scale of 1-10?", 1 = not liking English at all, 10 = liking English very much. This information is useful for comparing the students' responses to see whether their relationship to English had any correlation with the other questions. This type of data was coded with magnitude coding. Magnitude coding entails using alphanumeric, symbolic codes, or in my case numbers, to indicate a frequency or intensity (Miles et al. 2014, p. 80). To record and display this set of data, a table has been included containing all the students' answers to this question, providing an overview of the results. (See table 2 on p. 32).

The data material consisted of transcriptions from the interviews. When transcribing from audio recording into written text, there are some interpretational issues. Those issues concern losing the participants tone of the voice, intonation and breathing, which are all nuances that can influence the interpretations of the statements (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p. 204). Therefore, I chose to transcribe the interviews verbatim, with an oral style, including unfinished sentences and frequent repetitions of "ehh" and "mhm". The data from the interview are presented in English, even though the interviews and transcriptions were in Norwegian originally. Therefore, I put effort to try to provide the most accurate reflections of participants answer, but the English translations are not verbatim since the two languages are built different. So, for the statements from the participants to make sense in English, I tried to translate them the most accurate and with the same meanings, even though that meant I had to change the syntax of the sentences.

After categorising the codes, I found three categories that were relevant to my three research questions. Those categories concern what students do with their feedback, their motivation and their consciousness on using feedback to enhance their learning. The next section presents the findings that are relevant to the three categories and research questions.

4 Findings

In this chapter, I present the findings I elicited from the data collected. All extracts from the transcriptions are translated from Norwegian to English by me, and are therefore not verbatim statements, but the translations are aimed to be as close to the originals as possible.

4.1 Findings regarding research question 1

The students' motivation is one of the factors that may influence both their overall learning and their relationship to implementing feedback. Therefore, my research seeks information about students' motivation towards using feedback to improve their work and writing skills in the English subject. When considering motivation, the type that I ask the students about is the motivation they have to spend time working with feedback they receive, as well as their willingness to put effort into improving their work and assignments according to the teacher's feedback.

4.1.1 Motivation and how much the student like the English subject

To gather more information about factors which may influence their experiences and feelings regarding motivation and their treatment of feedback, I asked students how much they like the English subject. I asked them to identify their feeling on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 meaning very little and 10 meaning very much, of how much they like the English subject. The choice to include this small quantitative survey was made out of interest to see if answers to this question have any correlation to their motivation. I also considered students' genders to see if there were any notable differences between the genders regarding motivation.

Table 2: Students' score on how much they like the English subject

The participants	Scale of 1-10, whether they like the English subject. 1= very little 10= very much
Student 1 (girl)	9/10
Student 2 (boy)	7/10
Student 3 (boy)	7/10
Student 4 (girl)	5/10
Student 5 (girl)	3/10

Interestingly, the results of whether they like the English subject did not seem to automatically have correlation with their motivation. When asked the question whether they feel motivated to improve their work after receiving feedback from their teacher and why, student 4 and 5 responded with the following:

Student 4: Yes, I usually am (motivated to improve my work) in the English subject

Student 5: Yes, I am. I am not very good at English, but I am always motivated to do better

Several of the other students also made similar comments. However, when asked the question about motivation, student 2 responded with the following:

Student 2: No, I would not say that. Ehh, when I am finished with what I have done, then I have kind of worked with it enough, so I don't bother to do more afterwards.

As the two extracts shows, students 4 and 5 were motivated to improve and work with feedback, even though they scored the question of how much the like the English subject a five and a three respectively. Then, student 2 did not feel motivated, even though he answered 7 to how much he likes the English subject. Therefore, interestingly, it seems that the correlation between their attitudes towards the English subject and their motivation did not influence each other

4.1.2 Time spent on working with feedback

I asked all the students if they feel like they spend enough time working with feedback once they have received in. Students 1, 4 and 5 claimed they do spend enough time doing so. What "enough" means is uncertain since each student has different perceptions of what this means, but generally, it seems to be simply the amount of time it takes to review the comments and feedback they receive. The two remaining students had different statements in response to how much time they spend working with feedback.

Student 3: mm not that much, just to understand what I did wrong

Student 2: hmm, not that much, maximum an hour

All of the students may have different views on how much time they spend reviewing and implementing feedback, as well as what they consider to be "enough" time doing so; some may think an hour is enough, whereas student 2 did not see that as sufficient.

As for the relationship between time spent on feedback and their motivation to improve their work, there appeared to be a difference between student 1, 4, 5 and 2 and 3. Student 1, 4 and 5 pointed out that they were motivated, and also spent enough and considerable time improving their work. Student 2 and 3, on the other hand, were not very motivated and did not spend "enough" or very much time improving their work according to the feedback. I will return to this issue in the discussion chapter.

4.1.3 Other influencing factors

One other difference between the students was in related to whether the feedback motivated them — did they feel motivated by the feedback itself or did they experience motivation in general terms, unchanged by feedback. Student 3 answered that he was motivated to do better, but not by the feedback. When I asked why he did not feel motivated by the feedback, he answered:

> Student 3: I think that, like… or I often forget the feedback, and just improve my work by my self

Forgetting the feedback they have received may therefore be an issue to consider. For example, maybe the students need to be reminded to use the feedback. Student 3 also stated that he did not always understand the feedback he receives, which may be the reason why he did not feel motivated by the feedback itself. Student 3 also spent little time working with feedback. I will return to the issue of understanding feedback in the discussion chapter.

4.2 Findings regarding research question 2

The second research question in this study is "what do students do with the feedback they receive from their teachers?" To find answers to this question, I asked the students "what is the first thing you do when you receive feedback from your teacher?" All five students answered that their first step is to read through the feedback they receive. The majority read

through and actively use the feedback to make changes and improve their texts or assignments. For example, student 1, 3, 4 and 5 explained:

> Student 1: ehh, I read through and look at the feedback, then I see what I have done and haven't done (correctly)

> Student 3: well, I read through (the feedback), then I go into the text and see what I could have done better and fix it

> Student 4: Usually we spend time at school to work with the feedback, and usually we deliver the text once more so the teacher can see what changes we have done

> Student 5: hmm, usually I go through my text, if the teacher marked and commented somewhere I rewrite and do changes

The analysis showed that the students tended to treat feedback in fairly similar ways. However, student 2 stands out of the group with his answer. When I asked student 2 what he does after receiving feedback, after just reading through, he responded:

> Student 2: after that, I think I put it (the feedback) away. I do not think much about it.

I will return to the issue of student 2 not doing very much with the feedback, and his motivation in the discussion chapter.

4.2.1 Prioritizing

To know more about what the students do after receiving feedback, I asked them if they prioritized working with just some of the feedback, or whether they worked with everything the teacher commented on. All students answered that they prioritized something particular when they work with the feedback rather than making all suggested changes.

> Student 1: mm, I prioritize what is "worst", then I look further onto the feedback that is "better"

Student 2: eh, I prioritize maybe some of it

Student 3: I prioritize some

Student 4: hmm, if it is feedback with a long text and many comments, then I look at the bigger and more important comments first, and not the small ones

Student 5: ehh, usually I get the same comments, so I take one topic at the time, which will improve over time

This selection of answers was interesting, and it would have been beneficial to ask further details about why they made their choices about prioritizing what feedback they worked with. A possible explanation could be that they feel the feedback is too much or too overwhelming to consider every detail, and therefore they must pick and choose their focus. Another reason could be that they are not motivated to work with all the comments and feedback, and they simply stop revising their texts after looking at some of the feedback. Another could also be that they do not understand all the comments, and therefore prioritize the ones they immediately understand and are able to work with. It must be noted that these are not direct observations, simply speculations based on the conversations.

4.2.2 Instructions from the teacher

I also asked them if they received any specific instructions from their teacher with what they should do with the feedback. The answers to this question varied greatly. Two students explained how they receive feedback on an assignment they are meant to redo and deliver once more, therefore they are asked to both review and use the feedback to improve their assignment. The other three had different experiences. It should be noted that all five students have the same teacher and are supposed to have the same assignments and courses, but they are in two different classes, which may be the reason they experience some things differently. One may also speculate that the difference in feedback here was due to recalling different situations and examples when answering my questions in the interview. Some of them may also remember specific situations better than the others.

For example, student 3 and 1 experienced different instructions from the teacher about how to use feedback than the other three:

Student 2: eh, yes maybe, she (the teacher) says "you should work with this in the future"

Student 4: we get asked to do changes and improve our texts

Student 5: ehh, sometimes we get asked to look at the feedback and work with our texts, but not always

Student 3: I get asked to think about the feedback the next time I am writing a text or doing an assignment

Student 1: we receive the feedback, but she (the teacher) is not like "now you need to remember to use it", it is more like "here is it, the deadline is in one week"
Me: okay, do you feel like she takes it for granted that you understand what to do yourself?
Student 1: yes

All the students mentioned feeling like the teacher took it for granted that the students considered the importance of using feedback themselves. It was clear that none of them had experienced the teacher spending time explaining to them how to use feedback and why it is important for them to enhance their learning and develop their writing skills. It seemed as the students all knew the purpose of the feedback, but felt that it was their own responsibility to work with it. Even though they claimed to know the purpose, they would benefit from being trained in how to use the feedback and having deeper understandings of why it is important and beneficial. One could speculate that, since they have not been taught any strategies or ways to use feedback, they may not know the importance of learning such information.

4.2.3 Understanding the feedback

I believe there are several factors which may influence what students do with feedback they have received. One of the factors is whether they understand the feedback they receive from their teacher. Therefore, I asked them if they always understand the feedback, and what may

be the reason they do or do not understand it. Student 1 and 4 answered that they typically understand the feedback. The other three students, student 2, 3 and 5 and answered that they did not always understand the feedback.

> Student 2: not always, it can be too much text, then I become like "wow what does this mean? is this good or not?"

> Student 3: often, not always, sometimes the feedback can be too long, difficult to read and remember everything

> Me: mhm, what makes you not understand?
> Student 5: if they use very advanced terms and words

This shows that the length of the feedback may influence the students' understanding. Advanced words may also be crucial for some.

4.2.4 What type of feedback they receive

I asked the students what type of feedback they usually receive from their teachers on written assignments and text. Since they have the same teacher, they all responded with somewhat similar answers. Here are a few examples:

> Student 1: we receive written feedback on assignments

> Student 2: we usually get only written feedback, and maybe sometimes oral

> Student 3: mhm, written comments, it can happen that we get oral feedback, but mostly only written

> Student 4: mm, we often receive written feedback, that is what we typically get

> Student 5: on written assignments we receive written feedback, with what we have to practice more

These responses were expected. Giving oral feedback takes significantly more time compared with written feedback. Written feedback also makes it easy for the students to use it later on when writing new texts, avoiding issues such as not remembering their feedback, mentioned in section 4.1.3. Therefore, it is normal for students to mostly receive written feedback. Then, I asked what type of feedback they think is the easiest to work with and to understand.

> Student 1: eh, we usually get a scheme with the criteria, with the cores of high, low and medium, with crosses on where we are, that makes it easy to understand

> Student 2: ehh, I actually think (its easiest) when we receive oral feedback

> Student 3: ehh, when she prints out the text and comments in the text, with marks and errors

> Student 4: It is actually these schemes we usually get, with a view of how you scored, high or low, on the goal achievement and criteria. And comments and marks in the text when she prints it out

> Student 5: oral (feedback), because she explains better, so I prefer that

Three of the students receive the type of feedback they think is the easiest to both work with and to understand. On the contrary, student 2 and 5 do not usually receive the type of feedback they experience as the easiest. Positively, student 5 also reported feeling motivated and spends enough time to work with feedback, so it does not seem like the type of feedback influences her work negatively. An interesting observation is how student 2, who reported not being motivated, does not spend enough time using the feedback and is the one who claims he put the feedback away after reading it. This could may be influenced by the type of feedback he receives. He also answered 6 out of 10 when considering how he perceives the feedback helping him develop his writing skills. Perhaps he does not experience the feedback as helpful for him since he claims oral feedback to be the easiest to understand and to work with but often receives written feedback.

4.3 Findings regarding research question 3

To find out about the students' awareness or consciousness regarding the use of feedback, I asked them whether they actually think about the importance of using feedback to enhance their learning and their writing skills in the English subject, or if they do things without being aware and simply because they have to do it. All of them answered that they were somewhat aware about how feedback could help them develop their writing skills and learning, but some of them did also do it for other purposes as well. It seems like they may have different views on what was being asked, since some of them mentioned grades and results when I asked them.

> Student 1: well, it is to get good grades, and then you think like "okay, I have to do something with this" and not just look at it, but work thorough

> Student 4: in the English subject, it is just because I feel like I should (use the feedback)
> Me: okay, but when you say "should", is that because you want to perform better?
> Student 4: yes, I do, I want to do better

Student 1 and 4 seem to both be aware of how the feedback can help them do better, because they are driven by good results and grades.

> Student 2: No, I think that it (feedback) can make me better, if I take the time to do it
> Me: So, you are aware?
> Student 2: yes, I am aware that the feedback is there for a reason

Student 2 seems to be aware about how feedback can help him improve in English, but that his effort to do anything with it also matters.

I also asked them how much they feel the feedback they receive actually helps them to become better when writing assignments and texts for the English course. I wanted them to answer on a scale of 1-10.

Table 3: Students' experience with feedback helping them to develop their writing skills.

The participants	Scale of 1-10. 1= very little 10= very much
Student 1 (girl)	7/10
Student 2 (boy)	5/10
Student 3 (boy)	6/10
Student 4 (girl)	7/10
Student 5 (girl)	8/10

As the table shows, the answers were spread out on the scale, but no one answered below 5. From the results and their answers, I believe their consciousness and awareness about the importance of using feedback to develop their writing skills has a correlation to how much they feel and experience the feedback actually helping them become better writers in general in English. There also seems to be a correlation between some of the answers to this question and the answers to the question about their motivation. I will discuss this later in the discussion chapter.

It is interesting to see if there is any correlation between answers in table 2, the students' score of how much they like the English subject, and table 3, with students score of how much they experience feedback helping them develop their writing skills. The first thing to notice is that Student 5 who, likes the English subject the least (3/10), is the one who scored the highest (8/10) in how much she experiences feedback helping her develop her writing skills. Further, student 2, who liked the English subject (7/10), gave the lowest score (5/10) in response to feeling that feedback is helpful. The other three students did not have any major differences between the scores on the two tables. Students 2 and 5 indicate that there may not be a strong or direct correlation between how much they like the subject and how much they experience the feedback as helpful for their development.

5 Discussion

As outlined in chapter 1, the purpose of this study is to find out if students are motivated to use feedback to improve their learning and writing skills in the English subject, as well as what they do with the feedback they receive and whether they are aware of how they can use it to develop their writings skills. In this chapter, I discuss the findings from the interviews in light of previous research about assessment and feedback. First, I will discuss the findings about motivation, then discuss findings regarding what students do with feedback, identifying any correlations between theory about motivation and what students actually do, and how these affect each other. Last, I will discuss the findings regarding students' awareness about using feedback to enhance their learning and writing skills in light of theoretical perspectives discussed in chapter 2 about student awareness and self-regulation strategies.

5.1. Motivation and how much the students like the English subject

The interviews for this research began with a question asking the students to answer on a scale of 1-10 how much they like the English subject. This question was included to find out whether their overall satisfaction with English had any correlation with answers they gave to other questions, such as one regarding their motivation: "are you motivated to improve your work, with the feedback you receive?" Students, on the scale of 1-10, reported the following scores: 3, 5, 7, 7 and 9, respectively (see table 2, p. 32). Interestingly, the two students who gave the lowest scores (3 and 5 out of 10) answered that they were motivated to work with feedback. The two students who claimed to not be motivated both rated their enjoyment of English as 7 out of 10. From this information, it appears that the students' motivation was not influenced by how much they liked the English subject.

It seems positive that the students who did not like English very much were still motivated to work to improve their work, since motivation may lead to goal-directed behaviour and ultimately lead to improved learning (Hussain et.al., 2020, p. 17). Conversely, it could be an issue that the students who like the English subject feel unmotivated; this type of student behaviour or attitude could benefit from further attention. As discussed earlier, unmotivated students should be seen as "a signal that the teacher and the learner need to try something different" (Wiliam, 2018, p. 177).

5.1.1 Motivation and time spent

Questions were included in the interview about how much time students spend working with the feedback they received to improve their texts and assignments. Most of the students claimed that they spend "enough time" doing so. It should be noted that they did not explain in detail what they meant by *enough* time. "Enough" could mean that they worked with all given feedback and comments and thus felt the time they spent achieved their aims and was therefore sufficient.

Answers from the interviews revealed a clear correlation between how motivated the students felt to work with feedback and how much time they spent working with feedback. Student 1, 4 and 5 reported feeling motivated to use feedback to improve their work and develop their skills. These three students also reported that they spent much or enough time working with the feedback. On the other hand, student 2 and 3, who stated they did not feel as motivated, also reported not spending much time working with the feedback.

This correlation —that the amount of time spent working with feedback is related to how motivated the students feel— was not surprising. Yet, it is interesting to observe how crucial these students' motivation seems to be regarding their willingness to spend time on and implement feedback. Other research has also investigated the correlation between motivation to work hard and time spent working, with results of a significant positive correlation (Chapelle & Jamieson, 1986). The finding from this research therefore aligns with existing literature and theory on the subject.

As mentioned in chapter 2, the balance between students' capability and the tasks' level of challenge is important. For example, if the student's capability is too low, and the task is too challenging, the student may experience low motivation — or in the worst case, give up (Wiliam, 2018, p. 177). So, finding an appropriate match between the students' capability and the task's challenge level is ideal. One may speculate that the three students who spent much time working with feedback and felt motivated may receive feedback with a good balance between their capability and the task's challenge level.

5.1.2 Motivation and gender

Another interesting finding about motivation was how gender related to feelings of motivation and how much time was spent working with feedback. The three students who reported feeling motivated and spent time on the teachers' comments were girls. Conversely, the two participants who reported low motivation and less time spent with feedback were boys. This may indicate a difference between the genders when it comes to achievement and performance in language learning — a phenomenon that has been observed by other researchers.

Previous studies have reported a difference between the genders when it comes to using learning strategies in foreign language learning (Tabeti & Grazib, 2019). Research results show that females tend to use more strategies and use them more frequently. This finding has also been replicated in other studies (Tabeti & Grazib, 2019). These observations may provide a reason for why the girls in my study were more motivated; perhaps they use more learning strategies, something which generally leads to improved learning outcomes (Cohen, 2011) and in turn may have a positive influence on their motivation. Because this study uses a small sample size, such a conclusion cannot be generalized to apply to all students. But among this study's participants, there was an observable difference between the genders regarding motivation, which is a finding consistent with existing research.

5.1.3 Correlation between how the student experienced feedback to help them develop writing skills and how motivated they felt about using feedback to enhance their writing

Because it was desirable to have deeper insight into how the students' experienced feedback as a way to develop their writing skills and their learning in English, students were asked to answer, on a scale of 1-10, how much they felt the feedback helps them improve in writing English text and assignments (see table 3, p. 41). The answers to this question were interesting when considering their answers to how much they felt motivated to use feedback to enhance their learning and writing. The two lowest scores (5 and 6 out of 10) were reported by the two students who also claimed that they were not very motivated to use feedback. On the contrary, the three students who felt motivated answered 7, 7 and 8 out of 10; they experienced feedback as something helpful in developing their writing skills in English. From these answers, it seems that there is a correlation between students' motivation to use

feedback and their experience how helpful feedback can be in helping improve their learning and competency. It is difficult to claim whether their motivation makes them feel like the feedback is not helping them very much, or whether their experience of feedback not helping them negatively influences their motivation. Both factors could simultaneously influence one another.

5.2 What students do with feedback

All students reported that they read through the feedback they receive from their teacher. What they do next, however, is what differentiates them. Students 1, 3, 4 and 5 all answered that, in some way, they use comments and feedback to improve their text or assignment – either for the next delivery date or for the next assignment. Students' use of feedback for the next time they write or complete an assignment has been a subject of other research into what students do with feedback (Nazif et al., 2004).

Student 2 was the only one who put the feedback away after reading it and did not use it to improve his work. Student 2 also answered that he did not feel motivated to work with the feedback or spend time on it. It could be that his lack of motivation negatively influenced how he treated the feedback. The students who actively used the feedback to improve their work also reported feeling motivated. So, despite differing actions from the students, the correlation between motivation and what they do with feedback applies to all five participants in this study. This implies that motivation may have a great impact on what they do and how they treat and implement the feedback.

Perhaps student 2 lacked intrinsic motivation, i.e. an inherent interest and enjoyment in doing something (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 55). Intrinsic motivation is seen as the ideal because it may make the students continue learning rather than simply learning to pass a test (Harlen, 2012, p. 173). Therefore, it may benefit students, such as student 2, to develop their intrinsic motivation to influence how he treats the feedback positively. This is easier said than done, but a change of strategy or trying out new activities could be a starting point.

5.2.1 Instructions from their teacher

To seek more information about what students do with feedback, I asked whether they received specific instructions from their teacher regarding what to do with the feedback. Even

though the students are 15 and 16 years old, they still need direction and instructions from their teacher to improve their use of feedback to enhance their learning and writing skills.

As for the question of whether they received specific instructions from their teacher about what to do with the feedback, they reported different practices. Student 2 and 3 reported that the teacher said they should use the feedback and comments the next time they write. Student 4 and 5 reported that the teacher sometimes told them to look at the feedback and improve their texts, but student 5 also reported that this did not happen every time. Student 1 claimed she did not get any instruction, other than a general comment that they have received the feedback, and there is a new deadline. All five students have the same teacher in the English subject, but they are from two separate classes, which could influence the different practices they described. Their answers were not specific or detailed enough to identify which student belonged in which class, which is not necessarily surprising; even if they have been in the same class, they may remember or interpret the same situation differently.

An interesting finding was that nearly all students felt their teacher took it for granted that they would use the feedback to improve their text and enhance their learning. Using feedback appears to be expected from the teacher, but this may not have been sufficiently communicated to the students. Other research has found that students feel it is optional to use the feedback (Gamlem & Smith, 2013, p. 160) meaning they may not be benefitting from it and improving their learning.

The students also reported feeling that the teacher did not spend adequate time explaining to them how to use the feedback, or why it is important to use feedback. This is related to the importance of setting clear and specific goals to improve achievement. "Students are more motivated to reach goals that are specific (…)" (Wiliam, 2018, p. 177). So, if using feedback to improve texts and assignments is never identified as a specific and clear goal, and instead perhaps seems optional or voluntary, their motivation to actually implement it may be lower than it could have been.

As mentioned, students did not experience receiving specific instructions from their about how to use the feedback. This highlights the importance of students clear communication so that students understand how to use feedback and how they should proceed after receiving it. This finding aligns with Hattie and Timperleys' theory of why it is important that feedback contains the answers to the questions: "where to next?" (Hattie & Timperley, 2007, p. 86).

"Where to next?" should include information about what the learning goals are and what actions need to be taken to get there. Results from this study suggest that the students receive feedback about what they have done correctly or incorrectly, as well as what they should improve next time, i.e. feedback on task level (Hattie & Timperley, 2008), but not information about *how* to do it and which steps need to be taken to make progress, i.e. feedback about process and self-regulation. Achievement could be improved if the teacher teaches the students specific strategies for revising their texts, and how to use feedback to improve their work.

5.2.2 Students' understanding

A factor which may influence what students do with feedback is their understanding of the feedback they receive. All students claimed that they usually understand, but three also claimed that there are occasions where they do not understand everything in the feedback. This lack of understanding could be for a variety of reasons – students identified factors such as the extensiveness of the feedback or the use of advanced words or generally not understanding what the teacher meant. Research which studies the issue of understanding the teachers' feedback has found the percentage of students who do not understand is quite low – lower, in fact, than in my study (Fernandez-Toro & Furnborough, 2018). The results of this study thus diverge from trends identified in other research. This could be due to including the follow-up question of what could make them not understand the feedback, so even though they usually do understand, there was another question asking to elaborate.

One could also speculate that the reason they do not always understand the feedback is not knowing the initial goals for the assignment. If they misunderstood or did not understand the goals, the feedback may not seem relevant or clear to them. As previously mentioned, it is important that students receive specific and clear goals (Wiliam, 2018). Regrettably, however, questions were not included about whether the students knew the assignment's specific goals and criteria before working on it. Still, there is evidence that using feedback actively as a goal itself, may help students to become more aware and put more effort into using it (Wiliam, 2018).

Another issue which could influence their use of feedback is whether they are able to remember to use the feedback actively the next time they work with an assignment or text. One of the students claimed that it was difficult to remember everything from the feedback. In

retrospect, this is an interesting factor which could have been further explored with all students. Not remembering has also been brought up as an influencing factor by students in other studies on student's treatment of feedback (Nazif et al., 2004).

Royce Sadler (1989) highlights the importance of students and teachers having a fairly similar understanding of the quality that is expected from students'. Students knowing what is considered quality work may also have great impact on their achievement (Wiliam, 2018, p. 61). This relates to the idea of "sharing… success criteria", as mentioned in chapter 2. In this study, there may be a relationship between the students' understanding of feedback, the learning intentions and the students' and teachers' view of what quality work is, i.e. the success criteria. Student 2 reported that he did not always understand the feedback: "then I become like wow what does this mean? Is this good or not?" This statement could imply that may not always know what quality the teacher expects from him or what quality his work is. For example, had the student understood what a good text relating to the task was, it may have been easier for him to understand how the teacher's comments related to the quality of his own text. Hence, it is important for the teacher to clarify the criteria and expectations of the end product, perhaps by sharing a model text, and to let the students reflect on these before beginning the assignment.

5.2.3 Prioritizing

All the students reported prioritizing what to work with after receiving feedback. Some of them prioritized the most serious mistakes or the more important comments. It seems that such methods of prioritizing may result in students not working with everything they get feedback comments on. This would have been an interesting topic to explore further – why they feel the need to prioritize or whether they intentionally leave some feedback out when revising. Without direct answers from the students, speculations would have to be made about the students' reasons for prioritizing. Perhaps they focus more strongly on some comments over others because they did not understand all of them or found some comments too challenging, so they neglected the comments they did not understand. Or, perhaps there was a significant amount of feedback and they only had enough time or motivation to implement part of it.

If the challenge is too high and their capability too low, it may result in the student giving up. The inverse is possible as well: if their capability is too high, and the challenge too low, boredom could ensue and result in the student not doing the work (Wiliam, 2018, p. 177).

5.3 Students' awareness

As mentioned earlier, when seeking information about the students' motivation and what they do with feedback, I found it interesting to look into self-awareness as well. Students' awareness of using feedback and their relationship to it may provide interesting insights when discussing the topic of feedback. Regarding students' awareness of the importance of using feedback to enhance their learning and development, they all reported being aware of it to an extent. However, some of them discussed using feedback to improve their work with the end goal of achieving better grades. This shows that in some situations, students use formative assessment to achieve better summative assessment results. Formative and summative feedback are connected; using feedback throughout the year to enhance learning and improve text and assignments may end in results at the end of the year through summative assessment (Black & Wiliam, 1998a).

It may be that some students focus on performing and improving to achieve better grades, rather than enhancing their learning and competency. To illustrate: one of the students said "well, it is to get good grades, and then you think like "okay, I have to do something with this" and not just look at it but work thorough". This response is an example of extrinsic motivation, meaning that the goal is in focus, and the learning is just be a means to an end, i.e. their desired grade (Harlen, 2012, p. 173) Harlen (2012) highlights the problem of assessment causing students to care more about grades than the learning itself. Formal assessment and feedback is intended to enhance learning, not just to achieve better grades. Motivation to succeed in such assessments may be why some of them mention grades as their reason for implementing feedback.

All students claimed they knew the purpose of the feedback and that it would, to some degree, help them improve. Given their responses, in retrospect, it would have been interesting to include more follow-up questions to investigate the extent of their awareness of the importance of using feedback, elaborating on the simpler question of whether they are generally aware of its purposes and importance.

Even though all students claimed to know the purpose of the feedback, they also claimed that the teacher did not spend time teaching them how to use it. Research reports the benefits of students being aware of their own learning process. It is therefore beneficial to train students'

metacognition so they can be more aware of their learning because this can result in "extraordinary improvement in their achievement" (Wiliam, 2018, p. 169).

The lack of training about metacognition and self-regulation may influence the students implementation of feedback, as well as their motivation to actively use it to improve their texts and writing in the English subject. Also, as mentioned earlier, the students did not receive specific instructions about what to do with feedback or how to use it. This lack of information or instruction may also negatively impact their process of developing self-regulation skills and awareness. This may prove that the students lack information and training in how to develop their self-regulation, awareness and skills to become better to improve their texts and writing.

5.4 Chapter summary

In sum, this study's findings point to a number of issues that teachers may need to consider in order for feedback on written assignments to work effectively. First, students' motivation has crucial influence on what they do with the feedback and how much time they spend working with it to improve their texts and writing skills. Second, the teachers need to provide clear instructions about what students should do with the feedback, teaching them how to use it effectively. Last, the teachers should also spend more time working with metacognition and developing the students' awareness about the importance of using feedback to enhance their learning and developing their writing competence in the subject of English.

6. Conclusion

This thesis has sought to answer the following research questions: 1. To what extent are students motivated to use feedback to enhance learning and develop writing skills in the English subject? 2.What do students do with the feedback they receive from their teacher? 3. Are the students conscious of how they can use feedback to enhance their learning? To answer these questions, I employed a qualitative research method, using interviews, to gain insight into the students' perspectives, experiences and thoughts. In this chapter I present a conclusion, discuss the implications of the study and make some suggestions for further research.

Since formative assessment and feedback are such an important aspect of enhancing learning and competence development, and indeed a compulsory part of the Norwegian educational system through the Education Act (Forskrift til opplæringslova, 2020, §3-10), they must be included in the English language classroom. However, in order for feedback practices to be effective, it is crucial that they are carefully designed and worked with on a consistent basis. For feedback to work effectively, both teachers and students need to be involved in the process and do their part. However, it is first and foremost the teachers' responsibility to make sure that their feedback actually enhances learning and that the quality of their feedback is good and understandable. Additionally, teachers must ensure the students understand feedback and learn how to use it effectively. These considerations are also linked to the issue of motivation; classroom practices that are not meaningful to students, such as incomprehensible feedback, can be demotivating. Teachers should not take it for granted that the students are motivated or that they know how to use the feedback to make most of its benefits.

As this study shows, the students generally know the purpose of feedback but they did not feel their teacher has spent adequate time explaining, in detail, how to use it. They all report reviewing the feedback after receiving it, but their use of it to improve their competence and to enhance their learning has potential for improvement. Such improvement could be guided by Wiliam's (2018) five strategies of formal assessment, making sure the feedback is effective and also aligns with § 3-10 in the Education Act (2020). Teachers' feedback could also benefit from considering Hattie and Timperley's (2007) questions —How am I going? Where to next? Where am I going?— in structure and content.

The students would also benefit from learning about metacognition and self-regulation. Awareness of their own learning and how to regulate it can be a useful strategy in improving their learning and competency. Teachers may need to teach the students more specific strategies and ways of using feedback to improve their texts and assignments. The more students learn this, the more they will be able to develop self-regulation skills and be able to self-assess during the learning process. All of these factors and strategies can enhance their learning and competence, helping them reach their goals and improving their achievements (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

6.1 Implications

A challenge that needs to be addressed is the students' perception of the purpose of the feedback. It seems like students used the feedback to receive better grades and results, while the feedback discussed in this study is feedback that is intended to enhance learning and to develop competence. Even though enhanced learning and improvement of grades and results are connected, there is a difference between learning to achieve a goal, or learning with satisfaction in developing skills and knowledge while also finding enjoyment in the learning process. Teaching the students about the importance and benefits from this —learning to develop skills and experience enjoyment— could potentially influence the students to feel more motivated and enhance their learning.

Teachers should actively use the three processes mentioned by Ramaprasad (1989): identifying where the students are at current time, what the goal is, and how to get there. Therefore, the must make students aware of their own learning process and involve them in the learning process, as mentioned on the Education Act. In addition, the teachers need to help students to understand the success criteria and what is expected of them. This could be done by providing example texts to look at, for example. Lastly, the teachers should be very specific and clear about how students should use the feedback to improve their texts and assignments. The students need to know what to do with the feedback, which can be reinforced with clear, specific instructions.

6.2 Limitations and suggestions for further research

The intention of interviewing students was to obtain insight regarding their thoughts, as well as to let their experiences and voices be heard. The interviews were therefore particularly

relevant for research questions 1 and 3 since they concern the participants' cognition. It should be noted however, that this research only presents the issue of feedback from the students' perspectives, leaving out that of the teacher. Including the teacher's voice could complement the observations of the students and provide a fuller picture of the topic. Even with just the students' perspectives, valid data on feedback practices and students' thinking about these practices have been gathered and analysed. Overall, this provides important information about how aspects of formative assessment may be undertaken to help students learn.

Another, more important, limitation is the use of interviews for studying research question 2. Employing interviews to study behaviour has clear limitations, since we know that there may be discrepancies between what participants say that they do and what they do in practice. Due to time constraints, it was unfortunately not possible to observe the students in the classroom over a period of time. Despite this, the interviews still provide a perspective of feedback and how feedback is implemented, and has ultimately given me interesting data to analyse, compare and contrast with what appears in theoretical works about the subject.

Further research could explore the field by using the method of observation in order to obtain more insight about the actual practices of feedback and assessment. It would be interesting to use the method of observation to explore whether there are notable improvements after a change in assessment practice. Observation could also be done in combination with interviews to get even more comprehensive and detailed data.

It is evident that teachers should practice formative assessment in accordance with the Education Act, which aligns with Ramaprasad's as well as Wiliam and Hattie and Timperley's principles. The students need to be involved in their own learning and they need clear and specific goals and criteria. In addition, teachers need to give clear instructions about how feedback is useful as well as how they should use it, and not take it for granted that the students already know.

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Appendix A: Interview guide

1. På en skala fra 1-10, hvor mye liker du engelskfaget?

2. Hva slags tilbakemeldinger pleier du å få på skriftlig arbeid?
   a) bare karakter b) skriftlig kommentar c) muntlig kommentar d) både skriftlig, muntlig
   og karakter
   Hvis du får både karakter og kommentar, er kommentaren bare for å forklare
   karakteren eller er den for å hjelpe deg til å bli bedre i faget/ å skrive (eller begge deler,
   tror du?)

3. Når du får tilbakemelding på en oppgave/innlevering:
   - Hva blir du bedt om å gjøre med tilbakemeldingen?
   - Forstår du alltid hva du skal gjøre med tilbakemeldingene du får?
   - Hva gjør at du forstår eller ikke forstår?

4. Er du motivert til å forberede arbeidet ditt med tilbakemeldingene du får?
   (Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke)

5. På en skala fra 1-10, hvor mye opplever du at tilbakemeldingene hjelper deg til å levere
   «bedre» arbeid? (spesifikk forbedre den ene oppgaven) (hvorfor?)

6. På en skala fra 1-10, hvor mye opplever du at du at tilbakemeldingene du har fått har
   hjulpet deg til å «bli bedre» til å skrive tekster/oppgaver? (generelt)

7. Tenker du på hvordan tilbakemeldinger faktisk kan hjelpe deg til å bedre til å skrive
   engelsk, eller gjør du det læreren sier uten å tenke noe med over det?

8. Hvilke typer tilbakemeldinger er enklest å jobbe med/forstå, og hvorfor?

9. Hvilke typer tilbakemeldinger liker du best å motta og hvorfor?

10. Ser du frem til å få tilbakemelding på arbeidet du har gjort/jobber med?
    Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke

11. Hva gjør du med tilbakemeldingene du får? Prosessen fra å få tilbakemelding til du leverer på nytt eller gjør om på teksten din

- Hva er det første du gjør
- Jobber du med alt læreren har kommentert på, eller prioriterer du noe av det?
- Bruker du mye tid på å arbeide med tilbakemeldingen?
- Blir du bedt om å jobbe med tilbakemeldingene? Og hva blir du bedt om å gjøre?

12. Er det noe annet du vil tilføye som du føler du vil ha med?
13. Var noen av spørsmålene var vanskelige å forstå, isåfall hvilke?

Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet

Elver forståelse og forhold til tilbakemeldinger

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er å finne ut hvordan elever forstår skriftlige tilbakemelding fra lærer, og hvordan de arbeider med tilbakemeldinger. I dette skrivet gir vi deg informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.

Formål

Jeg, Kristin Bjørkelo er masterstudent på Universitet i Sørøst-Norge i Drammen. Dette forskningsprosjektet og intervjuet er en del av min masteroppgave. Masteroppgaven handler om elevers forhold til skriftlig tilbakemeldinger og vurdering fra lærere. Jeg ønsker å se på hvordan elever forstår skriftlige tilbakemeldinger og hva de gjør med disse tilbakemeldingene når de arbeider. Gode tilbakemeldinger er viktig for at elever skal utvikle kompetanse og forbedre læring. Jeg syntes det er viktig å se på elevers erfaring og oppfatning av vurdering og hvordan de arbeider med det. Jeg er også interessert i hva elevene syntes fungerer best og hvorfor. Denne kunnskapen kan hjelpe lærere, meg selv inkludert, i å vite hvordan elever kan bruke tilbakemeldinger og vurderinger på en enda bedre måte.

Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?

Jeg, Kristin Bjørkelo vil utføre intervjuene og er ansvarlig for dette prosjektet.

Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?

Du får spørsmål om å delta fordi du oppfyller kriteriene:

- Elever som går på ungdomsskolen i 10.klasse.

- Ungdomsskoleelever som har erfaring med skriftlige tilbakemeldinger.

Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?

Hvis du velger å delta, vil det bety at du deltar på et intervju. Jeg intervjue dere en og en. Jeg vil stille en del spørsmål jeg har forberedt fra før. Du vil få muligheten til å stille meg spørsmål underveis om det er noe du lurer på eller ikke forstår. Spørsmålene handler om deg som elev og din forståelse og erfaring med tilbakemeldinger fra lærere. Det handler om skriftlige tilbakemeldinger du får på oppgaver og tekster du arbeider med på skolen. Intervjuet vil ta ca. 15-20 minutter.

Jeg vil ta opp intervjuet med lydopptaker. Det er bare jeg som vil høre på disse lydopptakene, for å kunne huske hva dere svarer på spørsmålene. Etter intervjuet vil jeg gjøre om lydopptakene til tekst. Personlige opplysninger om dere vil anonymiseres. Når oppgaven min er ferdig vil alt av lydopptak bli slettet.

Det er frivillig å delta

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

Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger

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

Navnet ditt vil ikke kunne identifiseres med lydopptakene, jeg vil bruke kodeord «elev 1» osv.

Hva skjer med opplysningene dine når vi avslutter forskningsprosjektet?

Opplysningene anonymiseres når prosjektet avsluttes/oppgaven er godkjent, noe som etter planen er starten av juni 2022. Opptakene fra intervjuene vil bli slettet etter at prosjektet er avsluttet.

Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

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

Dine rettigheter

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

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

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

Kristin Bjørkelo (Student) på mail: kristin.bjorkelo@gamail.com
Henrik Bøhn (veileder) på mail: henrik.bohn@usn.no

Hvis du har spørsmål knyttet til NSD sin vurdering av prosjektet, kan du ta kontakt med:
- NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS på epost (personverntjenester@nsd.no) eller på telefon: 53 21 15 00.

Med vennlig hilsen

Kristin Bjørkelo

Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet *«Elevers forståelse og forhold til tilbakemelding»* og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til:

☐ å delta i intervju

Jeg samtykker til at mine opplysninger behandles frem til prosjektet er avsluttet, ca. Juni 2022

(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)