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SINGING TO ENHANCE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING?

What are teachers' and first grade pupils' perceptions of songs as a resource for English language learning?

This thesis is worth 30 study points

ABSTRACT

This master's thesis aims at providing more research on the topic of Norwegian teachers' and pupils' thoughts and opinions on the subject of songs as a resource for English language learning in the first school year in Norway. Research related to the topic can be found in several countries, however, there is a clear lack of said research in Norway, especially research that incorporates both teachers' and pupils' perceptions. The data in this study was collected from the same region of Norway, and the findings can therefore not be generalized beyond said region. However, some general tendencies were found that could be transferable to several schools and school districts outside of the location of data collection.

The aim of this thesis is not to offer an answer as to what didactic methods are best for language learning, only the experiences and opinions of first grade teachers and pupils on the topic of using songs for language learning.

The findings show that both teachers and pupils have in general a very positive attitude towards learning through song, and none of the teachers that were interviewed had any arguments against using it with first grade pupils. Naturally, there are some split onions between the pupils who responded, nevertheless, the majority state that learning through song is fun and makes it easier to remember new words in order to build their vocabulary.

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1. Introduction

A common didactic measure in first grade English classes in Norway is to use songs, both to introduce new English words and phrases, and to repeat already known words in order to acquire proficiency in the English language.

The study in this thesis explores the perceptions of first grade pupils, and teachers with experience teaching first grade, regarding the topic of songs as a resource for English language learning. The thesis will provide insight into teachers' thoughts through analysis of interviews and explore the pupils' views through an anonymous questionnaire. The overall main goal is to find out whether the thoughts of the teachers and those of the pupils correlate to the hypothesis suggesting that the use of songs creates excitement and motivation for language learning, as well as improving learning outcome.

In my own early language learning journey, songs played a significant role in the words and phrases I remembered, and the proficiency in sentence building. Songs made it easy to remember new words and created motivation for the classes. Later, in my academic schooling, I became curious to know if my own experiences are common ones, or perhaps out of the ordinary. For these reasons the focus of this thesis came naturally.

According to the current curriculum, LK20, teachers are allowed to use as much or as little song in their teaching as they see fit, with only one competence aim after year two specifically mentioning songs, compared to the previous curriculum, LK06, which had four. This is one reason why I argue that this thesis could be a valuable contribution to granting insight into how teachers are making their decisions on songs as a resource in the English classroom. I will explore if there have been any changes in their didactic approaches from the previous to the current curriculum, and how the pupils are responding to it.

Theorists suggest that children love songs and singing, and that music is a great resource for language learning (see e.g. Brean & Skeie, 2019; Fredens, 2019; Koppen, 2018; Kulset, 2019; Patel, 2014). It is argued that performing music stimulates multiple areas of the brain simultaneously, and so helps memory, and therefore could be valuable for language learning (e.g. Brean & Skeie, 2019; Kulset, 2019; Patel, 2014; Fredens, 2019). This study will investigate whether first grade pupils and teachers in a specific region of Norway agree with these theories.

Research on the topic of songs as a didactic measure of language learning has been conducted in several countries, with varied results. However, there is little to be found in Norway, and even less incorporating both the teachers' and the learners' points of view, which is why this thesis will contribute to fill a clear gap.

Some researchers present findings that show little or no correspondence between singing and learning vocabulary (see e.g., Albaladejo et.al., 2018; Gusrayani, 2015), while other researchers argue that their findings show significant positive connection between singing in class, and memorising English vocabulary more efficiently (Chou, 2012; Fisher, 2001; Feng, 2016; Rahbar & Khodabakhsh, 2013; Rougnø, 2021). Gusrayani (2015) emphasizes that even though their findings did not support the hypothesis that singing helps with remembering new words, the pupils seemed to enjoy the singing: "Song provides [greater] opportunities for children learning in a joyful situation since song can enliven the situation" (Gusrayani, 2015, p. 69).

From the theories, hypotheses, and with considerations for LK20 and LK06, I formed the research question: "What are teachers' and first grade pupils' perceptions of songs as a resource for English language learning?". To answer this question, I will be using a mixed methods design, combining qualitative semi-structured interviews conducted with teachers, and a short, simple, quantitative questionnaire with yes-no questions for first grade pupils.

The method choices are based on how to best answer my research question, as well as simplicity and achievability for the participants. I found it natural to use interviews with the teachers because the question of what teachers are thinking, can only be answered by asking teachers. In a semi-structured interview, there is room for explanations, clarifications and stories that contribute to the objective, making these types of interviews best suited for my thesis.

For the same reasons I could have chosen to conduct interviews with pupils as well. However, I wanted to be able to see tendencies on a larger scale. Additionally, the pupils in my study are very young (6-7 years old), making it potentially difficult for them to explain and reflect upon their own learning outcome. It might be more achievable to answer yes or no to a few questions. Using this method, I ensure more reliability because of the following three factors: (1) the pupils are only expected to keep focus for a short time period, (2) the questions will be easy to understand and answer, and (3) I can retrieve more data, giving the ability to discuss the theories on a larger scale.

The findings from both the interviews and the questionnaire show mainly positive results towards using song to learn English. None of the four teachers interviewed had any arguments against using songs for language learning, and in the questionnaire, the majority of the pupils answered that they both liked singing in English and remembered words easier when they were presented in song. However, there were differences between the six first grade classes that participated, which will be shown and compared. The findings from this research are not meant to be generalized beyond this research.

I will start by presenting the theoretical framework which the findings will be based upon. This includes both explanations of the curricula, previous research done on the same general topic, and findings from a diversity of theorists. From there I will present, explain, and defend the methods used for this research. Thirdly, the findings from the interviews and the questionnaire will be presented and discussed, both separately, and in comparison.

2. Theoretical Framework

The background for this thesis consists of three elements: LK20, previous research, and theory surrounding the connection between language learning and practicing music, which is why these three elements will be presented and discussed with their own subheading.

LK20 is the Norwegian national curriculum, which is mandatory for every school and all teachers. It decides what the learners are supposed to learn, as well as which elements should be emphasized. However, teachers have autonomy to choose *how* they want to teach, so called *freedom of methods*. This section will provide beneficial information in order to understand the teachers' arguments for changes in their practice from the last curriculum, LK06, to the current one, LK20.

Previous research on the topic of using songs as a means to learn a language can be found in several settings and countries. However, little research can be found on this topic in Norway, especially with the combination of first grade pupils' and teachers' opinions in mind. The research on English language learning through song/music, show various findings. Some found that song and music had an impact on both the learning outcome and the psychosocial environment, whereas others only found an environmental improvement, but a lack of improved learning outcome. This section will show findings from various countries

and ages regarding whether or not the use of music or songs contribute to learning, and the perceived learning outcome from the perspective of the participants.

The theory this thesis will be based on discusses the connection between song/music and learning. This section will be split into two parts; first there will be a brief overview of the history of the perceptions of language learning in general. This offers background information on what the notion of learning has entailed through the last centuries, and how it is viewed today. Then, current views of the connection between language learning and music will be presented. Here it is suggested that music and song contribute to a child's natural way of learning, helps memory, and improves fluency. Moreover, singing and using music in schools is regarded as a common teaching technique.

This chapter will therefore first present how the national curriculum views singing and music as language learning resources, as well as a comparison between the current curriculum, LK20, and the previous one, LK06. The second part will explore previous research conducted on the topic, presenting findings varying from a clear positive connection between the use of songs and learning outcomes, to no significant relations between the two. Lastly, I will present theory on the correlation between music and learning, how there should be a natural link between the two, and why it is regarded as a beneficial teaching technique for young learners.

2.1 The National Curricula

The current core curriculum states that school must respect and nurture different ways of exploring and creating, that the pupils shall learn and develop through varied activities, and that this broad repertoire of learning activities should create motivation and joy for learning (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017).

The English subject curriculum emphasizes that the English subject should be taught through an exploratory approach, with opportunities for the pupils to "express themselves and interact in authentic and practical situations" (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p. 2). Even though singing can be considered as a form of expression, and an authentic communication situation, only one of the 11 competence aims after year 2 include the word *singing*: the pupils should "listen to and explore the English alphabet and pronunciation patterns through play and singing" (p. 5).

In comparison, the previous English subject curriculum, LK06, had four competence aims that mentioned singing/music/aesthetic forms of expression. They revolved around listening for and use of phonemes, words, and expressions through, among other forms, singing. Also, they said the pupils were to participate in, and express own experiences through, among other forms, singing (Ministry of Education and Research, 2013, p. 6). It is worth mentioning that LK06 had in general a greater number of competence aims than LK20, with 15 aims and four different categories, in comparison to LK20's 11 aims without any categories. However, the four competence aims explicitly mentioning songs/music/aesthetic learning in LK06, make up about 26% of all the competence aims, whereas the one for LK20 makes up only 0.9%. This shows that the emphasis on singing/music/aesthetic learning has had a decreased explicit position in the competence aims. Nevertheless, LK20 uses more general language in their presentation of the competence aims, making it possible to use songs/music/aesthetic learning to achieve several aims, other than where the technique is explicitly stated. Songs are for instance, considered authentic texts, which is why songs can be used when the pupils are to explore authentic texts and listen to authentic language users.

2.2 Previous research

Several researchers have tried to discover if and how much of a correlation there is between music/song and language learning, and the results vary from the songs having little impact on learning to having a significant correlation. Even though the researchers disagree on the direct learning outcome of using music/song as an educational technique, they all seem to agree that using music and song generally creates joy and active learners. Moreover, there are more researchers who show through their studies that using music/song has a positive effect on language learning than those who do not see a strong correlation, which could indicate that there is in fact a natural strong connection between language learning and music, if used with intent.

The research presented in this section ranges from studies conducted with young learners in preschool, to learners in early school years, to teens and young adults.

2.2.1 Research that does not show a strong correlation

Gusrayani (2015) and Albaladejo et al. (2018) are some researchers who compared the learning outcome of young children between learning language through stories and learning through song. When comparing how many new words the children remembered, both researchers present findings that support the theory that stories are better for language learning. As stories present full sentences, correct syntax, and more clear semantics, it would be presumed that the language learning outcome from listening to stories would prove to be quite significant. What was surprising, however, was Albaladejo et al.'s (2018) finding that the combination of songs and stories was not more effective than stories alone. "… the data indicated that in the Story condition the children recalled significantly more words [in both post-tests] than in the Combination condition" (p. 122). They explain that young children might be "overloaded" when the input is given in more than one medium. Additionally, the choice of songs is thought to have an impact on learning outcome. A song with high tempo might make it difficult for the children to grasp the target words (Albaladejo et al., 2018).

Davis (2017) reviews and compares nine different studies on songs in the young learner (age 3 to 12) classroom. In regard to vocabulary acquisition, Davis (2017) argues that the findings from studies show that using song does help, however, not to a degree where it would be considered a better teaching technique than others. This leads Davis (2017) to the statement that "texts presented as songs may not lead to any more vocabulary acquisition than the same texts presented as speech" (p. 449).

When examining the correlation between the use of songs and motivation, Davis (2017) comments on how research shows that there is a strong connection on a group level: pupils become more active; those who might find it scary to speak participate in singing; and the pupils themselves express that singing had a positive effect on their motivation (pp. 250-251). On an individual level, however, the research shows that not all students were able to take part in the singing, and there were some students who did not want to. These students, Davis (2017) explains, might disengage during song sessions, become easily distracted, and might not have any vocabulary learning from these sessions. In order to avoid disengaged students, Davis (2017) urges teachers to be mindful of the songs they use, making sure that the pupils are able to follow the songs by having songs that are on the pupils' appropriate level of difficulty (p. 451).

Davis (2017) concludes that although songs may have some pedagogical value, using songs as a pedagogical technique may not necessarily be any more effective than other resources, and should as such, not be the only pedagogical resource. He suggests that "it may be more effective to combine songs with other resources in order to provide a rich learning environment for young learners" (p. 453).

2.2.2 Research that does show correlation

In comparison to Albaladejo et al. (2018), who looked at the differences in learning outcome from using songs and stories, Chou (2012) looked at learning outcome from the combination of games, songs, and stories. The study was conducted through an intensive English course in primary schools in Taiwan, age 8 to 11, and showed significant improvement in vocabulary by the end of the course. Not only did the pupils agree that playing games, singing songs, and listening to stories helped them memorise English words more easily, Chou (2012) states that "almost all of the pupils loved to learn English through games, songs and stories in class" (p. 294). The activities stimulated the primary school pupils' motivation, they were more active; expressing themselves and interacting with the teachers, and they increased their cultural awareness by being introduced to songs and stories about international festivals.

Other researchers who also found that using song strengthened the students' vocabulary and motivation are Rahbar & Khodabakhsh (2013). They argue that listening activities are among the most difficult tasks for English language learners, and they claim that students are reluctant to do these types of tasks as they find it difficult to catch words spoken by native language speakers: "They complain that comprehending the native speakers' accent is difficult for them and as a result feel detached from authentic sources" (p. 63). After the study, the experimental group recognized significantly more words when doing listening activities, and similar to the pupils in Chou's (2012) study, the students expressed an increase in motivation. Rahbar & Khodabakhsh (2013) state that teachers can use songs to have "more attentive and successful learners" (p. 65). The learners in Rahbar & Khodabakhsh's (2013) study were Iranian students at the Kish Institute of Science and Technology. Rahbar & Khodabakhsh (2013) did not specify the age of the learners, and the English as a foreign language course at this institute can be held for both children and adults. Therefore, one cannot know the age of the students in the study.

Fisher (2001) studied 80 pupils across two years – kindergarten and first grade. The findings suggests that music helped improve the pupils' oral language and reading scores. Fisher (2001) adds that the classes where music was consistently used, there was a "low buzz of student talk", and the pupils had a "general excitement about school" (p. 47). Moreover, the pupils were often seen "hummin along as they worked" (Fisher, 2001, p. 47). The classes in which music was not a part of the lessons, were quieter and more reserved. Fisher (2001) explains that the teachers' personalities may have contributed to this environment, but the two teachers who used music in their lessons both expressed that it helped them maintain their pupils' "enthusiasm and demeanor" (p. 47). The music selected by the teacher, Fisher (2001) emphasizes, was complementary to the curriculum themes, or the language structures being taught. The effects of music that is not connected thematically or developmentally is therefore not known from this study.

Castro Huertas & Navarro Parra (2014) conducted an action research project intended to strengthen Spanish first-graders' speaking skills, as well as increase their motivation for learning English, through the use of songs. The research showed a positive effect on the pupils' confidence, happiness, and enjoyment. Castro Huertas & Navarro Parra (2014) focus much of their article on how to use songs efficiently, to ensure better learning outcome. They found that using visual aids and being mindful of repetition helped increase the pupils' understanding and use of the vocabulary in the songs: "We noticed that when students forgot the vocabulary, the visual of physical referent was sufficient to refresh the words and to thus increase their use of the English language" (p. 17). Castro Huertas & Navarro Parra (2014) also argue that teachers should be aware of how imitation and pretending to understand might be strategies the pupils use in the classroom: "Imitation is the first step and first evidence of progress of the development of the child's intelligence" (p. 18). Imitating either in written or oral form could result in learning vocabulary, but Castro Huertas & Navarro Parra (2014) note that this may not always be the case. An example from their research is a pupil who responded to the question "What's your name?" with the answer given in the song they had used in class (p. 18). Children's attention span, their motivation, and encouragement from the teacher are also factors Castro Huertas & Navarro Parra (2014) list as important to consider when teaching. They argue that using songs to learn another language proved to be a motivating factor for the pupils in their research, which in turn created a good place for learning.

Feng (2016) presents a case study consisting of fifty Chinese EFL (English as a foreign language) students, age 18 to 21, where the goal was to investigate the effects of songs on morphological development. Since songs provide context, Feng (2016) suggests that they can be valuable for teaching morphology. The results of the study showed that the participants had a significant increase in morphological awareness; the students were able to recognize more morphemes on the WIT test after using songs in lessons. The WIT test focuses on receptive knowledge, meaning the ability to recognize and understand. The other test conducted, the CPT, focuses on productive skills, meaning the ability to use the language in communicative settings. The results from this test, in contrast to the WIT test, showed very little improvement in morphological development, and the overall mean of production of compound words increased only from 2.9 to 5.9 words (p. 176). Moreover, learners with a small vocabulary previous to the course, scored lower on the post-tests than those with a larger vocabulary. "This suggests that the impact of vocabulary size on morphological development is based on learners' knowledge of base words that can help infer the meaning of unknown words in sentences" Feng (2016) claims (pp. 177-178).

Rougnø (2021) found in her study of Norwegian first-graders, that teaching through song showed significant vocabulary improvement. All learners had increased their vocabulary, particularly in words that were explicitly taught through song. Comparing to the control group, the difference in improvement was subtle, making it impossible to draw a conclusion of superiority of techniques. Through a questionnaire, Rougnø (2021) discovered that all 102 teacher respondents said they used songs or music in their English lessons, and over 25% said they always used songs or music in their lessons. The post-test for the pupils revealed that the research group performed better on words taught in all the lessons of the course, and on non-transparent words, leading Rougnø (2021) to the conclusion that song might strengthen the learning of non-transparent words (pp. 35-36).

Comparing the findings from the previous research on the subject of using song/music for English language learning, all studies found that using songs in lessons resulted in happy, engaged pupils on the group level. The research divides on whether the use of songs contributed to significant learning outcome or if it can be considered a more superior teaching technique than for instance story telling. However, there is more research showing an increase in learning outcome than the opposite.

2.3 Theory on language learning and the connection to music

This section will provide some insight into theories behind language learning and the connection to music. First, there will be an overview of some ideas that have shaped the current view of language learning. Then, in the second part, Patel's (2014) model for connections between language learning and music, substantiated by Brean & Skeie's (2019) neurological explanations of these connections will be discussed. Neurological functions and in-depth explanations of systems that take place in the brain will not be explored fully as it would serve no function towards answering the research question of the perceptions of teachers and pupils regarding using songs for language learning. This part will, however, give a brief overview of what scientists and linguists believe are reasons for why practicing music is so compatible with learning a language. Lastly, the chapter will end with some explanations for the connections between learning a language and practicing music through a pedagogical lens.

2.3.1 Historical overview of how children learn language

Brewster et al. (2004) explain that the views on how learning occurs have changed over time. Initially, scientists and teachers believed that language was required through imitation and practice, almost exclusively. This was a behaviourist view where the importance of positive reinforcements was stressed, where correct learning behaviour was rewarded by praise. However, today, linguists recognize that imitation and practice, although clearly important, do not provide the complete picture of how language learning occurs: "It does not explain children's gift for creativity in language" (Brewster et al., 2004 p. 17). It is common for young children when learning a language to recognize the structures of the language, and as a result, try to make everything fit into the structure they discovered. This is when overgeneralization happens, and children can for example say they "goed" somewhere instead of "went". "Goed" is not a word the child has heard from adults, and therefore, cannot be imitation. This shows that it is more than just imitation and practice that creates learning.

Throughout the seventeenth- and eighteenth-centuries, a new view arose, called the nativist or the innatist view (Brewster et al., 2004). This view claimed that every child is pre-programmed to learn a language, and that there must be universal language features of the human mind. In the 1950s, Chomsky was one of the leading theorists of this view, claiming

that infants are programmed with a universal grammar, which allows them to process the language they hear, categorize them, and have the ability to produce their own language:

> The fact that all normal children acquire essentially comparable grammars of great complexity with remarkable rapidity suggests that human beings are somehow specially designed to do this, with data-handling or 'hypothesis-formulating' ability of unknown character and complexity
> (Chomsky, 1959, published in Jakobovits & Miron, 1967, p. 143).

Chomsky (1959) argues that adults come across countless new sentences each time they read something, but still are able to understand the meaning, which disproves the theory that acquiring a language is done only through imitation and practice.

From the nativist views came the cognitive-developmental views, with the hypothesis that "certain thinking skills must first mature in order to create a framework for early language development" (Brewster et al., 2004, p. 18). It is from these views that the claim of a critical period for language learning arose. The cognitive-developmental views were highly controversial, and criticised by many researchers for denouncing the importance of other important factors, such as motivation and learning conditions (Brewster et al., 2004).

As a reaction to the previous views, social-interactionist views arose in the late 1970s and 1980s with linguists like Bruner and Vygotsky at the front line (Brewster et al., 2004). The focus now switched from viewing learning as happening in isolation, to viewing learning as being more efficient when constructed in a social context, and sometimes learning would depend on social interaction. In contrast to the previous focus on what children learn on their own, the new view focused on how efficient learning happens with help.

What is understood today as most efficient, is a complex combination of these previous views. Imitation and practice are important elements in language learning, however, not the only components. Children are immensely creative when learning language, trying new combinations they have never heard and playing with the boundaries of what is "allowed" in that language. Creating situations in the learners' zone of proximal development, meaning what the learners can do with help from someone more knowledgeable or skilled, is also an important factor to consider, as it has been shown that children learn more when they have help (Brewster et al., 2004). There are naturally several other factors to consider in order to understand the complete picture of how children learn language. However, these ideas are some of the main views that have, over time made up how we understand the complex phenomenon of language learning.

2.3.2 Connections between learning a language and practicing music

> Why do children learn the alphabet quicker when there is a rhythm to the long line of letter? Why do we remember the lyrics we had forgotten, the second we hear its melody? Why are little children able to sing a whole sentence, but normally they cannot join more than two words?
> (Kulset, 2019, p. 43, own translation).

These, and more, are questions not only Kulset has asked. For many decades linguists and researchers have observed the connection between language and music and tried to explain the relationship. For language teachers, the more significant question is how to best take advantage of this connection in their foreign language teaching. Kulset (2019) argues that music has a great effect on language learning because it fires up multiple areas of the brain simultaneously, which makes language learning happen "accidentally" when singing (p. 44). Furthermore, Kulset (2019) explains how songs present language more slowly than regular speech, giving the brain more time to pick up sounds and figure out when a word starts and stops. In addition to the points made by Kulset, Fredens (2019) argues that singing helps the work memory to expand, and the mental flexibility to increase; two elements vital for all learning.

To further show that practicing music can enhance language learning, Patel (2014) has created the acronym OPERA. By creating awareness of these five factors, one increases the chance that the musical practice will have a positive effect on language learning: Overlap, Precision, Emotion, Repetition, and Attention.

Overlap refers to the fact that music and language share some areas in the brain, creating an overlap between the two, where the brain can recognize music and language as very much the same thing (Patel, 2014). However, it is worth mentioning that naturally not all parts are connected, which can explain why someone who has suffered a stroke may not be able to talk, but still be able to sing, or someone who stutters may have no difficulty when singing. As for the second letter, which refers to *precision*, Patel (2014) explains that music demands more elements of the brain working at the same time than language does, and therefore requires more precision. One must be able to remember the lyrics, sing in the same tune, and sing in the same tempo as the others, all at the same time. *Emotion* refers to the fact that it is easier to learn anything when one is in good spirits and motivated. Creating a space for the joy of music can therefore be highly beneficial for language learning and learning in general. Patel (2014) argues that music triggers strong positive emotions, which would be

beneficial to make use of in language learning. As songs usually have lots of chunks that are repeated, singing also gives a natural opportunity for *repetition*. In addition to the repetition present in a song, children often enjoy singing familiar songs, creating another natural situation for repetition. The last element of Patel's (2014) acronym is *attention*. As with precision, practicing music demands a high level of attention as there are several elements that need to work together. With these five elements, creating the acronym OPERA, Patel (2014) explains and argues for the connection between learning a language and practicing music.

To further explain the connection between language learning and music, there is an area in the brain that is in active use both when working on language analysis tasks and when practicing music, called the Broca's area (Brean & Skeie, 2019). This area is most likely what helps a person identify grammar, both in music and in language. What is meant by "grammar in music" is the structure of a musical piece or genre in terms of, for instance, which harmonies, chords, and scales are "allowed" (p. 98). Similar to how one would notice if someone used grammar wrong when speaking, one also notices if someone is playing a wrong note or chord in a song, often without having heard the song prior because the brain already has some expectations in terms of genre, tonality and rhythm (Brean & Skeie, 2019). Based on this, learning a new language through songs could strengthen the memory of the new words and phrases because the combination of music and language lights up more areas of the brain than speaking alone does. Moreover, while language gives precise information about the world that surrounds us, music can give precise emotional information, create unity, and trigger emotions (Brean & Skeie, 2019, p. 146). For these reasons, incorporating singing into classroom lessons could help strengthen the bond of the pupils and help create a healthy psychosocial environment. Brean & Skeie (2019) also explain that the activities that have the most impact on the brain have a high sensorimotor complexity, an element of extensive repetitions, activates emotions to a high level and triggers the reward systems in the brain (p. 135). Few activities meet these demands to the degree that practicing music does. As Patel (2014) and Brean & Skeie (2019) argue, practicing music requires both precision and attention, because practicing music is a highly complex sensorimotor activity. A characteristic element of music is that it has extensive repetitions. Additionally, practicing music also activates the emotion centres and the reward systems in the brain by being a pleasurable activity (Brean & Skeie, 2019, p. 135).

From a pedagogical view, Koppen (2018) argues that children naturally learn language through music from the start of life, and using songs in education is therefore a natural choice: "Little children understand more from how it is said, than what is being said" (p. 161, own translation). Tonality, rhythm, tempo, and dynamics are all aesthetic elements that children pick up and connect to context. Using songs in education therefore takes advantage of children's natural way of learning. Additionally, "[m]usical education can be an important contribution to increase concentration, the desire to learn and the ability to learn" (Koppen, 2018, p. 157, own translation). Through her study, Koppen (2018) shows that working with aesthetic tools stimulates engagement from the pupils, regardless of their prior interest in school (p. 157). Even though it is a fact that different learners learn in different ways, she (2018) argues that musicality naturally exists in every human being, and that musicality is an intelligence with the ability to develop the earliest and last the longest. Another intelligence with the same traits is language, which shows another natural connection between the two. Further explanations of the field of multiple intelligences will not be explored, but is mentioned here to show another example of the many connections between learning a language and practicing music.

Others who argue for the use of songs in language learning, are Brewster et al. (2004). They are among those who claim that children love songs, rhymes, and chants, and argue that the repetitive nature of them "make them an ideal vehicle for language learning" (p. 162). Brewster et al. (2004) provide a long list of the benefits of using songs, rhymes, and chants in language education consisting of the main arguments that they are a linguistic, phycological/affective, cognitive, cultural, and social resource. They state that songs allow new language to be introduced and familiar language to be presented in new forms. Songs provide natural and enjoyable repetition and help improve all aspects of pronunciation. Not only how to pronounce the sounds in the new language, but also other essential features of pronunciation, such as stress and rhythm, can be practiced in a natural way using songs and rhymes: "Encouraging children to clap the beat as they go along or say rhymes will help to develop a sense of rhythm in English" (Brewster et al., 2004, p. 164). This helps the children learn about stress in the target language, without having to use complicated language or methods that the children may not comprehend.

Another important factor that Brewster et al. (2004) mentions, is the affective element that songs are motivating and fun by nature, which helps to develop positive attitudes towards

the target language. This is important because motivation is a key element when efficiently learning a language (see e.g. Brewster et al., 2004; Koppen, 2018; Patel, 2014).

In addition to the linguistic and affective elements of songs, rhymes, and chants, there are also cognitive aspects, Brewster et al. (2014) elaborate. This refers to songs, rhymes and chants being a resource to help develop concentration, memory, and coordination. The repetitive nature of songs also helps children develop the ability to predict what comes next and consolidate language items; learning which language chunks go together and how to use them. Moreover, Brewster et al. (2004) explain that songs, rhymes, and chants can be a cultural resource if one uses authentic sources. They can also be a social resource, Brewster et al. (2004) argue. When the class or group sings or chants together, this creates a natural shared social experience, which "helps to develop a class and group identity" (Brewster et al., 2004, p. 163).

These, and many more, are reasons why songs are recognized as a valuable teaching technique in most language teaching programs (Brewster et al., 2004). In addition to the reasons showing how songs are beneficial for learning, Brewster et al. (2004) also point to the fact that they are accessible and offer flexibility to the teacher: "There are plenty to choose from, [they] can be used with a variety of age groups at different stages in their language learning, […] and can complement and supplement other resources" (p. 163). Moreover, they are flexible as they can be used in many different ways, both as pedagogical tools for learning the target language: to introduce, practice or revise language, and as social or psychosocial tools: as a way of creating group identity, change the mood, or as closers or starters for the day or the lesson (Brewster et al., 2004).

3. Methodology

According to Maxwell (2005), all elements of a research design should intertwine and be connected to the research question as shown in Figure 1.

For the methodology part, the connection between the different elements of the research design will therefore be shown.

My research question:

"What are teachers' and first grade pupils' perceptions of songs as a resource for English language learning?"

was answered using both qualitative and quantitative methods in a mixed methods design.

Figure 1 Maxwell's Interactive Model of Research Design

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with four teachers who have experience with teaching English to first grade pupils, and a simple quantitative questionnaire containing four questions with 100 pupils from six different classes in the first grade. I want to specify that all the teachers did not necessarily teach in first grade at the time of this research; some did, while others had prior experience with teaching English in the first grade. As different methods were used with different participants, the data was combined only in the analysis part, not throughout the process of sampling.

This chapter will consist of explaining the process of deciding which methods and designs to use, the process of sampling, in-depth explanations of my process of collecting data, and finally, the process of analysing the data.

3.1 Which methods and designs to use

There were several factors that were important when I made the choice of having a mixed methods design with qualitative semi-structured interviews and a quantitative close-ended questionnaire.

Gleiss and Sæther (2021) state the following: "Research is characterized by the fact that there is rarely only one valid procedure" (p. 194). They go on to argue that instead, one is faced with alternatives, where the choices one makes effect the research process and the

knowledge developed in the project. Maxwell (2005) argues that if not a definite link, there should be an empirical connection between the research question and the methods used. In my own research design, I chose to conduct qualitative interviews with the teachers in order to allow participants' experiences to be understood in context, retrieve details, and have the ability to ask follow-up questions. A quantitative approach would not allow this as it does not adequately present personal stories or provide opportunities for asking for explanations or clarifications (Creswell, 2015).

Furthermore, one course of action I could have taken, would be to conduct qualitative interviews with both the teachers and the pupils in order to answer my research question of what their respective thoughts are on the topic of songs as a language learning resource. Nevertheless, several factors lead me to the conclusion of retrieving the pupils' thoughts through questionnaires instead, but still retrieve the thoughts of the teachers through semi-structured interviews, creating a mixed methods design consisting of both qualitative and quantitative methods.

One factor that made me decide on a quantitative questionnaire with the pupils was that I wanted the process to be simple and achievable for the pupils. Some children might find it hard to put into words why they have the opinions they do, and some may not have very strong opinions on the topic, making it even harder to explain them. Moreover, the unfamiliar setting of being interviewed by someone they do not know, who uses different words than they are used to, and who expects them to keep focus for what could be considered a long time for a child, could potentially cause a reliability and validity risk. Children often want to please, and so may try to look for the "right answer", or they might grow tired of the questioning. As a result, they might give answers that are not truthfully their own opinions. The children could also misunderstand the questions and give answers to different questions than what the researcher had intended. Additionally, I wanted to see tendencies on a larger scale, which would not be possible with interviews within the scope of this thesis, because I would need too large a number of interviews.

Based on these reflections, I concluded that the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods would best answer my research question. For the design, I decided on what Creswell (2015) calls a *convergent* design, which is approximately the same as what Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) call a *parallel* or *simultaneous mixed method* design. This type of design entails data being collected simultaneously, as opposed to collecting one first

and then the other. Moreover, the findings are then compared to find agreement or disagreement between the data sources. Creswell (2015) explains that "Both [types of data results] are useful results, and their combination adds up to not only more data, but also a more complete understanding than what would have been provided by each database alone" (p. 36). I collected the quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously, analysed both materials separately at first, and then merged the results for comparison and discussion.

3.2 Sampling

The process of sampling informants for this thesis was done through a non-probability, purposeful convenience sampling. It can be considered a purposeful sampling as all teachers and first grade pupils in the region from which the sample was drawn from would be of equal interest in regard to the research question, and representativity was carefully considered. The sampling was also selected through geographical convenience, as I asked schools and teachers who were located close to where I was located, all in the same region, in order to have better accessibility when it comes to interviews being done in person, as well as retrieving filled-out questionnaires. Additionally, I had to consider the Covid-19 pandemic, which also limited my accessibility in terms of travel.

One ethical dilemma I encountered during the process of sampling, was that some of the participating teachers for the qualitative interviews were familiar to me. Some I had worked with, or otherwise had a relationship with. This could cause a possible reliability risk regarding informed consent that is freely given, as is a demand when conducting research with participants (NESH, 2021). Some potential informants might feel pressured to consent to a research project when the research is conducted by someone they are familiar with. Additionally, they could choose not to withdraw consent even if they would want to, in fear of the withdrawal having negative effects on the relationship with the researcher (Høgheim, 2020). Due to this, I was very clear when explaining the rights of the participants, what informed consent entails, and ensured them that withdrawal of consent is within their rights, and that it would have absolutely no negative affirmations.

Another point to be made regarding the familiarity with the informants was whether or not the findings would be objective, as I could be considered a so-called *insider*. Gleiss and Sæther (2021) explain how it can be assumed that objectivity is impossible when one is on the inside of the social environment of the participant, and that true knowledge therefore

requires an *outsider.* However, there are also what Gleiss and Sæther (2021) call "myths", that say the opposite; that true knowledge requires an insider because one has to be on the inside of the social environment in order to retrieve and interpret the informants' experiences and reflections (p. 88). Gleiss and Sæther (2021) also discuss what makes someone an insider or an outsider. In light of their observations, it could be argued that I am both an insider and an outsider depending on what criteria one lays for the different terms.

My previous knowledge of music both from didactic, academic and performance standpoints would place me as an insider on the topic of music as a genre and subject in schools. My relationship with some of the informants could place me as an insider with regards to being familiar with the speech patterns of the informants, and perhaps having the informants be more comfortable with sharing experiences. Contrarily, not having teaching experience other than from arranged practice and substitution could place me as an outsider on the topic of teacher experiences. Additionally, having no knowledge of the classes the informants teach could also place me as an outsider of the situational circumstances each informant has. As shown, the terms *insider* and *outsider* are therefore relative, and statements on what position is necessary to retrieve true knowledge could therefore be considered (as Gleiss and Sæther (2021) do) "myths", and so, cannot be proven.

Another key point to consider when collecting a sample group, is that the sample should be representative (Høgheim, 2020). Even though the findings in this study are not meant to be generalized beyond the population from which the sample was selected, I made inferences within said population. Because of this, it was a necessity that the sample group was representative of the population from which they were drawn. Considering the question from Bryman (2016, p. 164): "…what would [the sample] be representative *of*?", the population from which the sample was selected, consisted of first grade classes from schools within the same region of Norway, and teachers who have experience with teaching English in first grade from the same region. There were several elements that indicate that the sample was representative.

For most qualitative studies, generalizations are not desired, as it is individually, situationally, and time dependent (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). However, I agree with Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) that some degree of generalizability of general inferences is necessary. With this in mind, it was important that the qualitative interviews had a gender distribution that was representative of the first-grade teachers in the region. Moreover, all

names and pronouns in this thesis have been made gender neutral in order to prevent gender bias and preserve anonymity.

The quantitative population I drew my sample from consisted of first grades from both large and small schools, and the sample classes in this thesis were also classes from both categories. In the question of gender for the quantitative part of the study, I have no data to show the number of girls and boys that participated, as I have no personal information about the pupils in the classes. However, as whole classes participated, it is natural to assume that the gender distribution was representative of the first-grade pupils in the region. However, as I have not collected the names or number of pupils in each class, I cannot say with certainty that every single pupil in every class participated. Moreover, as I have not gathered any information about the pupils other than that they are in first grade, factors like ethnicity, multilingualism, learning difficulties, socioeconomic status, and others, were not considered when analysing the data. Nevertheless, given the large size of the participating group as a whole, I argue that the results could still represent the pupils of the region. Additionally, whether or not these factors would influence the pupils' responses could be discussed, and would need further research.

It is also worth mentioning that this study is only accurate for the time the research was conducted as the participation population of the quantitative questionnaires shifts each year as there are new first graders each year.

Although the findings in a study cannot be generalized beyond the population from which the sample was retrieved from, Bryman (2016) suggests that a study could function as a "springboard" for further research and allow links to be forged with the findings in a different population (p. 187). In this case, that could translate to, for instance, other regions of the country. Gleiss and Sæther (2021) support this by stating that analytic or theoretical generalization, which can entail categories or typologies that are made, could be relevant for other settings than where this study was conducted (p. 207).

3.3 The Interviews

The qualitative method in this study is semi-structured interviews which I conducted with teachers who have experience with teaching English to first grade pupils. Following Maxwell's (2005) model, a semi-structured interview entails a certain structure in order to

compare data across individuals, yet it opens for individual particularity that might be of interest. I had prepared questions beforehand, however, the teachers were allowed and encouraged to take the interview in the direction they wanted based on what is important to them as English teachers. I also asked for elaboration or explanations where I felt necessary. Despite the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic I preferred to conduct the interviews in person. The informants were asked if this was something they were comfortable with, and if not, I would without questions or judgement organize an online meeting. All four teachers agreed to have the interviews in person at the schools where they worked. The interviews were recorded with two external dictaphones as the informants had consented to this. The recordings were deleted immediately after transcription. As recordings are considered personal information, I had to apply to NSD, the Norwegian centre for research data, to ensure that my study does not violate any ethical laws or guidelines. The interviews were conducted in the Norwegian language as that was what felt natural, and it was the language my informants were most comfortable expressing themselves in. I regarded the teachers being able to express their thoughts and opinions in the way they wanted to, to be more important than me being able to directly quote them without translation. Additionally, to answer my research question regarding what teachers were thinking, I found it necessary to allow them to express themselves in the way that was most natural for them.

After conducting the interviews, I realised that those done with the teachers I had no previous relationship with took longer than those involving teachers with whom I was previously familiar. The difference in time was under ten minutes, and therefore might not be significant. Moreover, I also had the interviews with the familiar teachers first, which might have been a contributing factor. However, my own experiences from the interviews were different when I knew the teacher compared to when I did not. During the interviews with the first teachers, I was very aware of them, and wanted them to be comfortable. I did not want to ask any unclear or unnecessary questions, and I did not want them to feel any negative sensations throughout the interview. Naturally, I wanted all my informants to be comfortable, but, during the last interviews with the unfamiliar teachers, it felt easier to ask what some would consider unnecessary questions, because I was an outsider, and there were no expectations of my knowledge. Moreover, I did not set any expectations of such for myself.

The teachers were given the gender-neutral pseudonyms Kim, Charlie, Sam, and Robin, in no particular order. I chose to use gender-neutral names for a couple of reasons. The first reason was that I wanted to preserve anonymity, as it could have been possible to

identify the teachers if their genders were known. Another reason was because there is a skewed distribution of genders of teachers in Norway (see e.g. Statistisk Sentralbyrå, 2020), and this skewed distribution is representative for the region in which my study was conducted. Therefore, I wanted to prevent any gender bias.

3.4 The questionnaire

The quantitative method for this study was a questionnaire with four close-ended questions conducted with first grade pupils. The task was to answer yes or no by colouring blue or red in boxes next to each of the four questions. It was important that the questions were understandable and the task doable for the pupils, with familiar language and a short timeframe. For this reason, the questions were written in, as the pupils were currently learning English, and were not yet fluent in the language.

Synger klassen din engelske sanger?	
Synes du det er gøy å synge på engelsk?	
Husker du engelske ord lettere når du lærer de i en sang?	
Synger du engelske sanger når du ikke er på skolen?	

Figure 2: The questionnaire

The translation of the questions is as follows:

1. Does your class sing English songs?
2. Do you think it is fun to sing in English?
3. Do you remember English words more easily when you learn them in a song?
4. Do you sing English songs when you are not at school?

I formulated the yes-no questions with words like "fun" (Norwegian: "gøy") and "remember" (Norwegian: "huske") to substitute for "motivation" and "learning" to ensure as much as possible that the pupils understood the questions. The pupils used the colours red and blue to substitute for writing or crossing yes/no because the pupils could not be expected to be literate at this stage. The choice of colour was based on the level of distinguishability; some children may recognize green as a symbol of yes, however, in this case it was necessary to use a different colour as some children may be red-green colourblind.

The teacher was the one who was present with the pupils when the questionnaire was conducted, explaining what the pupils were supposed to do, reading the questions out loud, and answering any questions the pupils might have had. Additionally, the teacher had the

important role of emphasizing the significance of anonymous participation in words that were comprehendible to the pupils. As it is normally advisable for the researcher to be present in order to answer questions and see that everything is done correctly, the reliability of the answers may vary because it was dependent on the teachers of the pupils to ensure this and as there were six classes participating, there were at least six different teachers explaining the task to the pupils. However, children are considered a vulnerable group. By having myself be present and/or being the one to conduct the survey, I would risk the pupils not understanding or misunderstanding the questions or my explanations. I would also risk them being too distracted and not answer knowingly and honestly. Moreover, they might have tried to look for the answer they believed I would have wanted by their perception of me, rather than their honest opinions. Because of this, I ranked the risk of reliability issues much higher if I were to be present, than if the teachers, a familiar source using familiar words, would guide the pupils through the questions.

After the teachers had carried out the questionnaires in their classes, I retrieved the filled-out questionnaires. There were, as previously mentioned, six classes that participated, all together that made 100 pupils. Both small and somewhat large classes participated, ranging from below ten to above twenty pupil responses for each class. Considering the fact that I was never in the classroom myself, nor did I gather any information about the classes, I cannot say with certainty that every single pupil in each class participated. Furthermore, I cannot say anything about the distribution of gender, the ethnicity or number of pupils who were multilingual, socioeconomic status, or a number of other factors, in these classes or as a whole. However, I argue that the distribution would be representative of the region in which this research was conducted regardless, because of the large number of participants. As a result, the factors of differences between the pupils were not taken into consideration when analysing the findings, and whether or not these factors would be deciding factors would need further research.

3.4.1 Invalid answers

In my research, I tried to ensure as best as possible that the pupils would understand the task and the questions in the questionnaire. However, some invalid answers were to be expected given the young age of the participants. The questionnaire only allowed for yes or no answers. There was no option for "I do not know" or "somewhat" or similar. Moreover, when colouring it is not often easy to erase the colour if you accidentally picked the wrong one, and one might end up with colouring over the first colour. These might be some reasons for why some pupils chose to have more than one colour in a slot.

Figures 4, 5 & 6 show different examples where pupils chose to use both colours in the same slot. I cannot argue whether the pupils changed their minds and chose to colour the other colour over the first, whether this was the pupils' representation of "maybe" or "I do not know", or whether there were other reasons for why they chose to colour the slots like this. Therefore, these, and answers like these, will be considered as invalid answers.

Before collecting data, I expected that there would be some invalid answers. Because of the young age of the participants, I was expecting a larger number of invalid answers than I would expect had I conducted the questionnaire with adults, because of the demand of cognitive reflection needed to answer this questionnaire. Out of the 400 answers (100 participants answering 4 questions each), only 9 answers in total were invalid, which makes up 2,3% invalidity as a whole.
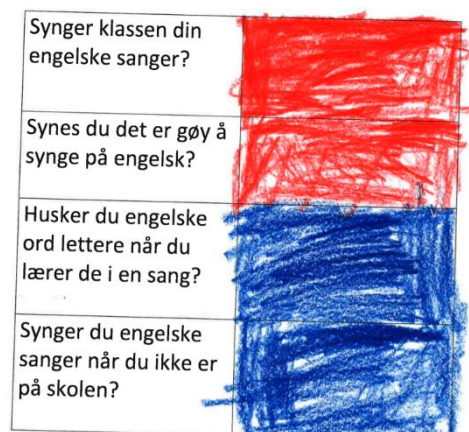

Figure 3 Example of correctly filled out questionnaire

Figure 4 Example of an invalid answer

Figure 5 Another example of an invalid answer
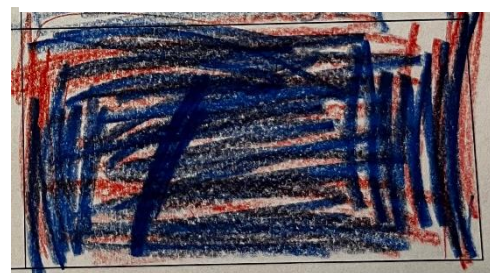
Figure 6 Third example of an invalid answer

Questions	Yes	No	Invalid	N	% Yes	% No	% Invalid	% N
Does your class sing English songs?	86	14	0	100	86,0 %	14,0 %	0,0 %	100,0 %
Do you think it is fun to sing English songs?	67	31	2	100	67,0 %	31,0 %	2,0 %	100,0 %
Do you remember English words more easily when you learn them in a song?	65	33	2	100	65,0 %	33,0 %	2,0 %	100,0 %
Do you sing English songs when you are not at school?	44	51	5	100	44,0 %	51,0 %	5,0 %	100,0 %

Table 1 Answer distribution of all pupils

The only question without any invalid answers was the first one: "Does your class sing English songs?" (Original: "Synger klassen din engelske sanger?"). The three other questions had some invalid answers, the last one "Do you sing English songs when you are not at school?" (Original: "Synger du engelske sanger når du ikke er på skolen") being the one with the highest percentage of invalidity at 5%. The reason for this question having the highest invalidity percent cannot be confirmed, however, some possible reasons could be that the pupils found this particular question difficult to understand. Perhaps they were confused by the openness of the question, without an option to specify a "sometimes" or "rarely". A third possible reason could be that the pupils are not mindful of the language of the songs they sing or listen to when they are at home, and so may be unsure if some of the songs they sing at home are in English or perhaps in another language. These are just some possible reasons and are not meant to be considered as the only reasons. However, these are some plausible reasons, although speculative.

3.5 Approaches to analysis

When starting the process of analysing the data, several types of analysis could have possibly been useful. I have used different approaches when analysing the quantitative and the qualitative data. Moreover, when comparing the results of the quantitative and the qualitative data, I used another approach. This created a rather complex process of analysing the data groups separately at first, and then combining and comparing afterwards.

3.5.1 Analysing the interviews

When analysing the qualitative interviews, I created codes and categories that summarized the mass of narrative data, which Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) argue is the essence of qualitative data analysis regardless of type. The approach was initially inductive, gradually finding the codes based on what was in the data material (Tashakkori & Teddlie,

1998; Høgheim, 2020). However, when the codes were created, I went back into the material with a deductive approach, looking for similarities across the interviews. Without limiting myself to a strict program of analysis, I ended up with an approach close to what Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) describe, called a *constant comparative analysis*. This analytical scheme involves "unitizing" the data material, which refers to separating the text into small meaningful units of information giving the base for codes, and then "categorizing" the material, which refers to combining the units, or the codes, that can be related into a larger unit that is internally consistent (p. 123). Høgheim (2020) adds to this by stating that this approach entails working with one document at a time, comparing the next one to the codes that are already created from the last one, combining the similarities and finding the differences (p. 216). Additionally, I used what is referred to as *in vivo-coding,* which means using units from the data material to create codes, in contrast to descriptive codes, where codes are created that describes the units without being retrieved from the material itself (Høgheim, 2020, p. 204).

3.5.2 Analysing the questionnaires

As the quantitative questionnaire only consisted of four questions, and since these questions were closed ended, there was a limitation on how much conclusion analysis could be done without causing a reliability risk. Additionally, the participants for the questionnaire are considered to be a vulnerable group because of their young age, resulting in the need to be even more careful not to claim or interpret their answers as anything other than what they explicitly stated. The results from the questionnaire are therefore presented through tables showing the "frequency distribution" (Field, 2018), and described and discussed descriptively. A frequency distribution, Field (2018) explains, is a graph or table showing the number of answers to each question. In this study, this refers to how many pupils answered yes and no to each of the four questions. The number of invalid answers is also presented. Because the variable only consisted of two answers when answering the questionnaire, yes or no, it is considered a dichotomous variable (Høgheim, 2020). Nevertheless, as there were some invalid answers, the tables showing the results give the impression that, while still a nominal variable, there were three options when answering. Regardless, the main part of the analysis considers the variable as dichotomous.

The dichotomous variable makes certain means of measurements impossible. As the two groups are mutually exclusive, certain measures of central tendencies like mean or median, would either not be possible or not serve any purpose. Furthermore, with only two options, the mode of answers becomes very clear, as it refers to the response most frequently answered (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). What proved to be more beneficial, was to compare the results of each class with each other, with the whole, and lastly, with the teachers' interview responses. When presenting the answers from each class, only the percentages are shown, as it might be possible to identify the schools based on how many pupil responses there are. As explained, both small and somewhat large classes participated, resulting in a significant difference in the number of responses. To preserve anonymity, I made the decision to only present percentages from each class, but include the number of answers when discussing the whole group of participants.

3.5.3 Analysing the combined data material

Creswell (2015) explains that there are in general two main approaches when integrating two data groups. Either the two groups mix in a way that one is dissolved, creating a new unit where it would not be possible to separate them again, or the two groups mix in a way where they are connected while at the same time each group still stays intact. Because the two different data groups in my study are collected from different groups of participants, one being teachers and the other being first-grade pupils, the two data groups will remain intact even when they are integrated. The integration will be shown last in the results and discussion chapter after introducing and discussing the findings from each group separately. This approach is called *merging of the data,* and is often found in convergent designs, which is the design this study used (Creswell, 2015, p. 83).

4. Results & Discussion

In this part of the thesis, I will present the findings from the interviews and the questionnaire and discuss them. I will start by discussing the findings from the interviews with the teachers. Secondly, I will present and explain the findings from the questionnaire with the pupils, and lastly, I will discuss the findings by comparing the perceptions of the teachers with the ones of the pupils.

4.1 The interviews

The four teachers with the pseudonyms Kim, Charlie, Sam, and Robin have had some different experiences with using song as a teaching technique for language learning, but they share the same view of it; that it should be considered a great tool for early language teaching. The teachers have various amounts of experience with teaching first grade, ranging from having had first grade just a couple of times, to quite a few times. There was also a difference in how much time the schools, and the teachers, had scheduled for English lessons each week, where Sam and Charlie said they had half an hour scheduled each week, while Robin and Kim said they currently did not have any scheduled English classes with their first grades. However, regardless of the schedule, all teachers taught English to their first-grade pupils, as they all agreed that early input is important. Using songs is regarded by the teachers as a natural choice for early language learning when there are no scheduled classes. From the analysis of the interviews, I created four categories that will be presented under their own subheadings: Everyone can sing, Enjoyable, Enlightening, and Easy access.

4.1.1 Everyone can sing

> I think that the pupils are supposed to learn in a variety of ways, and it's also the fact that children learn best in different ways. With songs you catch a lot more; some write, but some can't, and the thing with song is that… it's something everyone can join! You don't get those big differences regarding individual adaptation, I mean, a lot has to happen for someone to not be able to join, right!? So, it's this inclusive thing too (Sam's interview, from code "adapt").

As Sam explains, singing is something most pupils can do. Regardless of the pupils' level of competence in the target language or basic skills, they are very often able to join singing a song that has been practiced. As a result, singing songs is an activity the whole class can do together at the same time, creating equity and unity. This correlates with what Brean & Skeie (2019) claim, that singing in the classroom can trigger emotions and help create unity, because it creates a setting where everyone can be equally active and perform at a somewhat equal level.

Nevertheless, the teachers emphasize that for the pupils to learn a new song, the song has to be repeated several times over a period of time. Charlie states: "One has to sing a song quite a few times before they know it. […] [When] I choose a song, I sing it every day throughout the week, sometimes two weeks" (Charlie's interview, from code "repeat"). Here Charlie explains the process of how the pupils learn a new song, and it becomes clear in the

interview that even though Charlie chooses to sing the same song every day throughout one or two weeks, the pupils find this enjoyable. Repeating the song multiple times ensures that all pupils eventually learn the songs, as there is a difference in how many repetitions the pupils need in order to remember new input. Robin adds that there are naturally some who pick up the songs more easily than others, but in general the songs they use have to be repeated often in order for the pupils to learn and remember them. All teachers express that using songs is a technique where the different levels of competence among the pupils are more hidden because they all do the same activity. Additionally, all the teachers argue that the ones who pick up the songs quickly do not seem to get bored by the repetition of the songs, and the ones who are struggling with remembering the new words seem to find it easier when they learn a song. As Brean and Skeie (2019), Koppen (2018) and Brewster et al. (2004) argue, songs provide natural, enjoyable repetition which may explain why the teachers have experienced that even the pupils who pick up the songs quickly seem to enjoy the repetition of the songs.

Sam emphasizes how important it is "to 'shower' them in English, the whole thing in teaching is to shower them in it" (Sam's interview, from code "repeat"). What is meant by this expression is to expose the pupils to as much English as possible. Sam argues that using songs is one good way of exposing the pupils while still being mindful of the level of difficulty the pupils should be exposed to. Both Charlie and Kim also reflect upon the level of difficulty when choosing songs: "I think about the fact that they shouldn't be too advanced, and they should have a catchy chorus, a simple one, or where the song sings first, and we repeat" (Charlie's interview, from code "adapt"). Kim adds that the songs should be "a song where it's clear from the lyrics what we want to emphasize" (Kim's interview, from code "adapt"). This is closely connected to what Kulset (2019) argues, that songs usually present language more slowly than regular speech, giving the learners more time to retrieve and remember sounds and words. The teachers seem to be aware of this fact, and they are therefore mindful when choosing songs that they do present the language more slowly, that the pupils can easily understand which words they are meant to remember, but all the while, that the songs have entertaining elements.

Moreover, Charlie explains that they also use songs as a familiar and safe activity that every pupil can participate in. These songs are sung very often, over a long period of time, and functions as an enjoyable and inclusive activity. Charlie gives the example of a "thanks-for-today" song in English that they sing at the end of each school day with their class, and

Charlie argues that "it is very safe and comforting to have a song that the children know well, and that they become very fond of" (Charlie's interview, from code "comforting"). This song, according to Charlie, helps end the day with positive emotions and becomes a favourable moment for the pupils. Brewster et al. (2004) explain how songs are flexible in their use, making them ideal both as pedagogical tools and social or psychosocial tools as for instance closers for a day or lesson.

Three of the teachers also explain how the activity of singing also gives room for the teacher to join, which the teachers have had positive experiences with: "It's the thing with…, when they see that I'm singing, they might try to join" (Sam's interview, from code "singing with them"). Sam continues their reflection on the topic: "I don't know if or what effect it has, but it's worth it anyways that they see the teacher being this role model. I do think it helps them join" (Sam's interview, from code "singing with them"). The word "effect" that Sam uses, is probably meant to refer to learning outcome. Robin has shared the same experience as Sam, and claims that "it's easier to get them engaged" when the teacher joins the activity (Robin's interview, from code "singing with them"). Moreover, Charlie argues that the phenomenon of pupils becoming more engaged or active when the teacher joins the activity applies to more than just singing: "I think it matters, like with everything else, that if the teacher is engaged and does the same as the pupils, then they become much more involved" (Charlie's interview, from code "singing with them"). It would seem that songs provide a natural opportunity for the teacher to join the activity with the pupils, and the teachers have had positive experiences with this.

It is clear from the teachers' responses that because the activity of singing is inclusive to most groups of pupils, it also becomes an enjoyable activity. The teachers enlist and describe several other components that makes songs enjoyable. This will be explored in the following.

4.1.2 Enjoyable

Both researchers and all the four teachers claim that children love songs (see e.g., Brewster et al., 2004; Koppen, 2018; Brean & Skeie, 2019). The teachers say it is natural to use music and songs when they want the pupils to have an enjoyable moment. They sometimes use the moments between activities or some left-over time after an activity or lesson to play a song for the pupils: "If we are waiting for someone to get the milk or we have

five minutes, I have asked if anyone wants to suggest a song, and then […] we have listened to it, and maybe danced a little around the classroom" (Charlie's interview, from code "fun/motivating"). Even though these moments are not thoroughly thought through by the teacher in terms of pedagogical value, the pupils might pick up some familiar words, or be more motivated to learn afterwards, creating an ideal setting for learning. Koppen (2018) argues that music can help increase concentration, and Kulset (2019) explains how songs naturally help with learning even when learning the language is not the focus, as will be explored in the next section regarding "accidental learning" (p. 44). Reasons for this could be that music activates multiple areas of the brain at the same time, and that songs give the brain time to pick up each word before moving to the next, because of the slower tempo (Kulset, 2019; Brean & Skeie, 2019; Patel, 2014).

Learning a song naturally requires the songs to be sung quite a few times as the teachers emphasise, yet this repetition does not seem to cause boredom for the pupils according to the teachers: "Oh no! They love it! The more they are able to sing along, the better!" (Charlie's interview, from code "fun/motivating"). According to Charlie the pupils become progressively more active participants each time the same songs are played, and thus, the repetition present both in the songs and by singing the songs multiple times, becomes natural and pleasurable. Many researchers have also argued for the fact that repetition in songs, and the act of singing the same song several times creates positive emotions (Patel, 2014; Koppen, 2018; Brewster et al., 2004). Sam expresses the same experience as Charlie, namely that the pupils do not grow tired or bored of singing the same songs, and that the joy experienced increases the more the songs are played:

> I think that when they are this little, even if they listen to them a lot of times, it's still fun. They are able to listen to the same thing many times. It then becomes more of a feeling of accomplishment, that they learn more and more from it when they have heard it a lot of times (Sam's interview, from code "fun/motivating").

Three of the teachers say they have a 'good morning'-song in English, and that even though this song is sung every morning throughout the year, the pupils still sing along and appear to have fun and are engaged by it. This can be explained by the argument that songs trigger strong positive emotions and stimulate the reward systems in the brain (Patel, 2014; Brewster et al., 2004).

Robin expresses that, in their experience, there are some pupils who might say that they find it boring to sing the same songs multiple times. However, "what is funny is that those who say that it is boring, are the ones who have the most fun, they are the most

engaged, and often the most enthusiastic" (Robin's interview, from code "fun/motivating"). It would seem, according to Robin, that the pupils who say the songs are boring, are either not being fully truthful, or might have other motives for this expressed negativity. One reason for this, as mentioned by the teacher, could be the class structures and hierarchy; that in some classes the norm, to gain a higher status in class, is to respond to the teacher's enthusiasm with negativity. As there is no research in this thesis to support this claim, this is only speculative. Another reason could be that the joyful nature of songs changes the moods of the pupils who initially did not want to sing at that moment. Brewster et al. (2004) are among those who argue that a change of mood might be one of many results from singing songs, which could be one reason for why pupils who initially seem unmotivated become engaged and interested during the activity of singing a song. In contrast to the speculation that some classes consider showing negativity towards the teachers' enthusiasm the norm to gain higher status, all four teachers express that in most cases, the enthusiasm of the teacher is a key factor for creating engaged, enthusiastic, and motivated pupils. In the previous section, the teachers argued for and explained why the pupils seem to become more engaged and active when the teacher also participated in the singing activity. This, combined with Brewster et al.'s (2004) argument that singing can change moods, reveals the importance of showing enthusiasm as a teacher, despite some expressed negativity from a few pupils.

Furthermore, even though the teachers have experienced some individual pupils who might not be eager to sing every time, none of the teachers have experienced teaching a first grade that, as a whole, would not sing. Sam claims: "The thing with song and music is that most, you have some who don't, but I feel that most want to join in. Music in itself is motivating" (Sam's interview, from code "fun/motivating"). Many researchers support Sam's claim, among them, Patel (2014) who argues that the motivational factor of songs is one of the elements that explain why they are beneficial for language learning. Kim claims that "children are born musical", and that this makes using music and songs in education natural (Kim's interview, from code "As a group, they all sing"). The claim can be supported by Koppen (2018) who argues that small children understand more from how a sentence is being said, meaning the tonality, rhythm, and dynamics, than the words that are being said. Before children understand words, they can retrieve some meaning based on context and tonality, which is what Kim argues using songs to learn a language takes advantage of.

> So, I think that children initially like songs and music, but I have been a music teacher in terribly, terribly, terribly many classes, so I have had some classes that have been difficult to get to sing if I haven't had them (Kim's interview, from code "As a group…").

Kim explains that when becoming the teacher of classes after fourth grade, where the previous teacher(s) have not used songs as much, or not at all, it can be challenging to motivate the pupils to sing, as they are not familiar with this approach anymore. However, Kim argues that if they are the teacher of a first-grade class (the expression "having them" means being the primary teacher in a class), they have never experienced much difficulty with having the pupils join singing songs.

Robin says that using songs comes naturally when working with the youngest pupils because the pupils would need to have somewhat of a vocabulary in order to start speaking, but they explain that they use less songs as the pupils age and learn: "I think it's great in both first, second and third grade, but then something starts happening where you might not need to use it to that extent […], [and] naturally you would transition to less childish songs" (Robin's interview, from code "adapt"). It is the view of Robin that when the pupils start to be able to form sentences and hold a conversation, the language learning activities gradually revolve more around conversation than singing and repeating songs.

The teachers also express that they enjoy singing themselves, which is part of the explanation for why they all argue that using songs as a pedagogical teaching technique and as a pleasurable relief, is natural for them. Kim explains that: "I'm a music teacher, so naturally, I like everything you can learn through song, whether it's math, Norwegian, English, or whatever, so I use terribly much music [in my teaching]" (Kim's interview, from code "Enjoy singing myself"). None of the teachers have arguments against using songs as a teaching technique, as Robin explains when asked if they had any reason against using songs: "No, I don't think I have… I enjoy singing myself, so it would be weird if I did" (Robin's interview, from code "enjoy singing myself"). The four interviewees all agree that when the teacher enjoys singing or music, they tend to naturally use more learning activities that includes music or songs.

4.1.3 Enlightening

In addition to being an inclusive and joyful activity, songs also have elements beneficial for language learning. All four teachers express that using songs in language teaching has, in their experience, increased the pupils' level of competence in the target language. First and foremost, the teachers find that the pupils have a tendency to remember single words more easily when learning and singing songs that include the words they are

supposed to learn. Sam states that "I think that it's through the implementation of songs that it sticks or is automatized. I think [the pupils] would learn less if they didn't have songs to sing about the things we are learning" (Sam's interview, from code "learn faster"). Charlie adds that "children are very good at learning things by heart" and that songs are "a great tool for remembering things by heart" (Charlie's interview, from code "learning things by heart"). One reason why songs are considered a great tool for remembering words and phrases is that they are repetitive, and as Brewster et al. (2004) argue, the repetitive nature of songs makes them ideal for language learning. A key factor for the teachers when choosing which songs to use for pedagogical purposes, is the factor of repetition. The teachers express that they search for repetitive elements in a song when considering using that song in lessons: "They have to be repetitive" (Charlie's interview, from code "adapt"). Additionally, "they shouldn't have too many different verses, it has to be somewhat simple", Charlie argues. Nevertheless, when these factors are taken into consideration, all the four teachers claim that the songs they use in lessons help the pupils remember words and phrases more easily. Fredens (2019) supports the claim that singing helps with remembering, because singing expands the work memory, and helps the mental flexibility to increase.

The teachers express that first and foremost it is introducing words to build a vocabulary that is the main focus when they teach English to first-grade pupils: "In first grade it's mostly words and simple phrases, we have 'my name is'-songs for instance, or 'how are you? I'm fine, thank you'-songs, that are phrases, but it isn't much dialogue" (Charlie's interview, from code "A lot for free…"). Charlie says their focus when teaching English in first grade, is to introduce a multitude of topics through songs, in order to help the pupils build their vocabulary to be able to start having conversations at a later stage. Sam adds to this, stating that:

> We use a lot of songs in English, that's where I think the first start is, by using English songs to learn all kinds of things, from days of the week to colours to… it's motivating, and they get that sense of rhythm in songs (Sam's interview, from code "A lot for free…").

Both Robin and Kim also argue that songs are a good place to start, because there is no requirement of a large vocabulary in order to participate. Kim adds that another benefit of using songs in education is that music stimulates more areas of the brain than speaking alone does, as Patel (2014) explains when arguing for why practicing music demands more precision than speaking. When stimulating more, and other, parts of the brain, Kim claims that several more pupils than prior, become motivated to learn, and as a result also learn more: "By going that way about it, you can 'flip the switch' on a whole bunch of children

that I think are more difficult to turn on otherwise" (Kim's interview, from code "A lot for free…"). They explain that in a class there are the ones who will learn "no matter the circumstances" (Kim's interview, from code "A lot for free…"), no matter the competence of the teacher, or the activities used, there are some who will understand and "get it", according to Kim. However, then there are "those you want to reach" (Kim's interview, from code "A lot for free…"), who Kim argues, often can be reached by songs to become motivated and to remember more easily.

Charlie seems to agree with the statement that there are more pupils who become engaged and who learn more easily when the teacher uses songs. However, in order for this to be the case, Charlie emphasizes the importance of making the pupils aware of why a certain song is used:

> I think it's smart to make the children aware of the fact that when we sing, it's of course enjoyable and to have fun and to learn, but also in order to go back later, and remember that 'that's the song I learned about colours' and if [they] are asked about colours in a different setting, that [they] have learned that competence, and so, it is useful (Charlie's interview, from code "A lot for free…").

Charlie argues that when the pupils understand that the songs they learn are meant as a tool to help them remember the language more proficiently, they will become more equipped to use the songs for that purpose at a later stage. The songs naturally help with the memory, as several researchers have found, and when combined with the knowledge of the purpose of learning the songs, this seems to create the most ideal setting for learning, according to Charlie.

Sam adds to this, explaining that by using songs to introduce, or work on different topics, they are able to connect the different subjects, and work interdisciplinary, creating time for more English than scheduled:

> If it's Christmas you put on some [Christmas songs], and it doesn't have to be in English class; it all depends on the topic. […] It's not like that anymore where we only have English and the songs when we are having English lessons. An English lesson is only half an hour a week, but we have so much more (Sam's interview, from code "A lot for free").

Here, Sam claims that teachers do not feel bound by the schedule, and that they are encouraged to look for opportunities for interdisciplinary work, which can be achieved by using songs. The additional benefit to this is that the pupils get more language input.

Robin argues that "you get a lot for free through songs" (Robin's interview, from code "A lot for free…"). They explain that not only do the pupils get exposed to words they are intended to learn, but:

> You hear a little of how the language is structured, they won't understand that, but you see it as an adult that a lot of it is there, so it's a lot you can take from [the songs], and you can bring that into the classroom (Robin's interview, from code "A lot for free…").

Robin explains that even if the pupils themselves are not aware of language structures, pronunciation, or discourse, singing songs helps the pupils start the process of automatizing all these aspects, making it easier for them to learn and understand the grammatical aspects later on. Sam agrees with this, stating that: "It's not just words, it is to get a holistic understanding, to pick up several things, […] and hear how one can say something in that language" (Sam's interview, from code "A lot for free…"). Sam argues, as Brewster et al. (2004) also discuss, how songs help improve, in addition to other aspects, pronunciation features like tonality, stress and rhythm. Moreover, when singing the pupils grow used to hearing their own voice in another language. This, Kim expresses, has helped many pupils with reading out loud, as they become more confident in listening to their own voice:

> I've gotten confirmation [from other teachers] on making [the pupils] do things they never dared to prior, and this goes for English too. I got them to sing solo, alone, […] and that helped with their reading, too, because they started to learn to listen to their own voice (Kim's interview, from code "A lot for free").

As Kim shows, using songs is, in addition to language learning, intended to help with motivation and confidence. For this reason, not all songs the teachers present to the pupils are meant to be learned by heart or understood completely:

> Maybe there is a song that I don't pick apart entirely; where they learn all the words, rather they just learn to sing English. The content may not necessarily be in connection to the lessons in itself, but it's just fun to sing a song that is catchy and with movements and that is just fun (Kim's interview, from code "adapt").

Even when the teachers use songs that are not meant to be learned or remembered, Kim gives multiple examples of what Kulset (2019) calls "accidental learning" (p. 44). Kim explains that even when using songs that are not adapted to the pupils' level, there is learning involved, and moreover, they argue that this creates excitement and motivation for learning English. Kim presents an example where the pupils were learning to dance samba through an instructional video. In the video the steps and movements were shown, as well as explained in English. Kim's intentions were that the pupils would be able to follow the video by repeating the movements they saw even if they did not understand the verbal instructions. They explain that some pupils picked up on the words in the video, taken from the context and started to translate for fellow pupils: "And what was fun to see was that a couple of them were standing there and translating for their friends. […] 'that meant up, and that was down, yes…, and now they are saying that', translating for each other" (Kim's interview, from code

"A lot for free…"). While the purpose of this activity was to create joy for music and dance, the setting naturally resulted in vocabulary learning for some pupils.

Sam has also noticed examples of "accidental learning" where pupils seem to know the words to a song seemingly on a level of difficulty high above what would be expected for their level of competence: "they have probably heard both English children's songs and such when they were little, […] but also a lot of [these] new pop [songs]" (Sam's interview, from code "so much out there"). Sam explains how they have heard pupils singing songs that were popular at that moment, that are, naturally, not intended to be used for language learning. Still, the pupils managed to retrieve some words and sing along. In addition to Sam, Charlie also explains that even though the pupils are young, some of them are very aware of what and who is popular to listen to at the moment, and the pupils are often heard singing along to these popular songs, exploring with words and sounds to achieve the correct pronunciation. Even when the pupils do not understand every word, they still try to sing along, exemplifying Brewster et al.'s (2004) point, that children naturally like songs, and Koppen's (2018) argument that singing and other aesthetic practices stimulates engagement and interest in children.

None of the four teachers had changed their views or practices regarding song to learn English after the change in curricula. Their perceptions are that songs still are and should be a large part of how to teach language to young children, and they have not felt the need to use it less. Sam argues that their use of songs has not changed at all, and they do not believe the change of curricula has changed other teachers' practice either:

> No, because I think that [the songs] stick; that [the pupils] learn a lot from songs and music. […] I don't think it matters whether we have one less competence aim or such. I think most teachers just use them anyways. That's my experience at least, from work colleagues, and the ones I know, they use a lot of songs in their teaching (Sam's interview, from code "A central place…").

Robin adds to this claim, stating that "I think [songs] should have a central place with the young ones, because it's a very good way for them to learn" (Robin's interview, from code "A central place…"). They continue by explaining that "one has to have somewhat of a vocabulary in order to start speaking", and so Robin believes it might be difficult to start dialogues or meaningful discussions with the young learners in the target language, and as a solution, they use songs to give the pupils meaningful language input on a level that suits them. Charlie expresses that they have not and would not change their view on using songs for language learning, and they explain this by stating that "I think that you use what works, and with experience we know that songs work. […] I am pretty sure that song and music is an

important part of both life, everyday life, and as a teaching technique" (Charlie's interview, from code "A central place…"). Kim explains that because English is not scheduled in their first-grade class, they had not felt the need to concern themselves with what the curriculum says, or the changes that were made from the previous to the current curriculum. However, they argue that song and music, regardless of the competence aims, do have a strong position in the current curriculum:

> If you think about the main part of the curriculum, the new one, approaches like exploring, play, creativity etc. that's of high value, so I guess it's with that in mind that I think we approach English. When we don't have it scheduled, we don't have any competence aims that we neither need to access nor adhere to in that sense, so then we explore and are creative! (Kim's interview, from code "A central place…").

The current curriculum does, as Kim argues, demand that school must respect and nurture different ways of exploring and creating, and that the English subject should be taught with an exploratory approach (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017; Ministry of Education and Research, 2019). It seems this is what the teachers would consider the core of the English subject, and they are therefore focusing more on this aspect rather than on the specific competence aims when planning lessons. Research done on the connection between language learning and practicing music also supports the teachers' claims by arguing for and explaining several beneficial neurological and pedagogical similarities, summarized by Patel's (2014) model.

Charlie and Sam also mention how there is a focus when planning lessons, that the pupils should be introduced to a variety of learning activities and techniques, and that this includes singing: "It's like I said, this thing with using all the angles possible for teaching, meaning we cut things, do things, sing things, and something catches some, and something else catches someone else" (Charlie's interview, from code "All angles…"). As Charlie explains, teachers are carefully ensuring variety in their lessons. Moreover, Sam also argues that with songs and music, there is a lot of variety within: "There is a lot you can do with songs. […] Both the fact that they sing, but you also have a lot of moving" (Sam's interview, from code "All angles…"). The combination of activities also seems to be a factor for why the pupils learn more easily when singing: "They learn how to do the movements in addition to saying the words, and then they learn and remember faster" (Sam's interview, from code "All angles…"). This can be explained by how doing more activities at the same time demands more components of the brain to work simultaneously, as Patel (2014) describes, and the brain therefore saves the information more easily.

As the teachers and several researchers have shown, using songs in education has many benefits for language learning. Another benefit of using songs in education, is that there is easy access to an abundance of songs, which is helpful for the teachers when planning lessons. This topic will be explored in the following.

4.1.4 Easy access

All four teachers mention how the digitalization of the world has made using songs and music in the classroom much easier, and that the pupils also make use of this when they are at home. Sam comments on how teachers find it easier to find and retrieve, both authentic songs and those made with pedagogical intention, now that digital tools are available: "It's help for teachers! There's so much already out there that you can just pick and choose from, and then use in your class" (Sam's interview, from code "So much out there"). Here, Sam agrees with Brewster et al. (2004) who also point to the fact that music and songs are very accessible and offer flexibility to the teacher. Robin observes that there is an abundance of songs in English, both authentic and made with the intent of language learning: "[…] and with English there is so much out there! Compared to Norwegian that does not in the same way… you cannot search in the same way and find something to use" (Robin's interview, from code "So much out there"). However, with the abundance of songs available, Robin emphasizes that one does need to know what to search for, and how to use good search words in order to navigate through all the songs available. Nevertheless, they encourage every teacher to take advantage of the accessibility, because there is sea of songs teachers can use for free. There are several streaming platforms, both pedagogical and social where teachers and others can search for songs or topics and find several songs to choose from.

Charlie argues that a benefit of using songs that are available on a known musical streaming platform, for example 'YouTube', is that it makes it easy for the pupils to find the same songs at home as well. Charlie claims the pupils do find the songs when they are at home, and they listen to them in their spare-time: "We talked about if they found the same songs at home, and some do. They 'google' or find them on 'YouTube'" (Charlie's interview, from code "So much out there"). This shows that the accessibility to these songs also makes it easier for the pupils to both learn from and enjoy the songs they heard in lessons.

Sam has had experiences where the pupils already knew the songs before they were introduced in class, leading them to believe the pupils search for and listen to English songs

at home: "I feel that many of them do. An example is one of the ones we listen to now, especially the girls, they already knew the chorus to the song, and they sang along, and so I went 'Oh! You knew this one!' so I think they do listen to a lot of these new [songs]" (Sam's interview, from code "So much out there"). Sam explains that the children are aware, at a very young age, what and who is popular to listen to, and that they listen to the music that is popular at the time and learn them.

Kim has also had the same experiences with pupils who have listened to English songs when they are at home:

> I am absolutely sure that they do [listen to English songs at home], because they watch so much on 'YouTube', a lot of them, and they hear the English language in games more than before, so the digital school, and also the digital 'free-time'…, I believe that it does a lot for the English language development for children (Kim's interview, from code "So much out there").

Kim argues that the pupils have a different starting point today with the easy access to streaming platforms and the English language than before. This makes it easier for the teachers to further build upon the pupils' previous knowledge, and teach the target language using familiar activities, like singing.

To summarize, the four teachers all express how the easy access to a multitude of songs and music platforms, has helped the process of selecting songs to use in class, and for the pupils to be able to revisit these songs when they are at home. The teachers are in general very positive towards the use of songs as a teaching technique for language learning. The next chapter will show and discuss the perceptions of the pupils.

4.2 The questionnaire

In addition to the interviews with the four teachers, I also conducted a questionnaire with six first-grade classes from four different schools. This resulted in a total of 100 pupil participants. The size of the classes varied from just under ten for the smallest, to just over twenty for the largest. To ensure anonymity, because of the difference in sizes, tables from each class will only show the percentages of answers, and not the number of pupil responses. It is important to consider the fact that one pupil makes up a different number of percentages based on the size of the class. For example: in a class of 10 pupils, each pupil makes up 10% of the answers, while in a class of 20, each pupil makes up only 5%. This is especially important to remember when looking at the percentage of invalidity of each class. Even with

a high percentage of invalidity I regarded the yes/no answers as valid and reliable because the percentage of invalidity as a whole can be considered small.

4.2.1 Class 1

% Yes	% No	% Invalid	% N
33,3 %	66,7 %	0,0 %	100,0 %
55,6 %	44,4 %	0,0 %	100,0 %
100,0 %	0,0 %	0,0 %	100,0 %
44,4 %	55,6 %	0,0 %	100,0 %

Table 2 Distribution of answers in Class 1

Class 1 is the only class without any invalid answers.

On the first question: "Does your class sing English songs?" There were 33,3 % who coloured blue, and 66,7% who coloured red, translating to a divided answer where more pupils answered that they do not sing English songs in class, than those who claim that they do. This is the only class where the number of pupils claiming their class does not sing English songs is greater than those who claim it does. This is interesting because it is not possible that all the pupils are correct in this claim. Without drawing any conclusions, a possible reason for the divided opinions on whether or not English songs are used, could be that there is little use of English songs or little repetition of them, causing some pupils to have forgotten the few that possibly were used. There is also a possibility, (this applies to every question), that some pupils misunderstood the question, or were confused by it.

On the second question: "Do you think it is fun to sing English songs?" the class is almost split in two equal parts with 55,6% stating they do think it is fun, and 44,4% saying no.

What is an interesting find for this class is that regardless of the class being divided on whether or not they enjoy singing English, all of them claim that they remember English words more easily when they learn them through songs.

The answers on the last question: "Do you sing English songs when you are not at school?" is similar to the second, having an almost equal number of pupils answering yes as no. The difference is, however, that the numbers are in the opposite slot, with 44,4% claiming they do sing English songs, while 55,6% state they do not.

4.2.2 Class 2

% Yes	% No	% Invalid	% N
77,8 %	22,2 %	0,0 %	100,0 %
72,2 %	27,8 %	0,0 %	100,0 %
33,3 %	66,7 %	0,0 %	100,0 %
44,4 %	50,0 %	5,6 %	100,0 %

Table 3 Distribution of answers in Class 2

Class 2 does have some invalid answers, however, only on the last question.

On the first question 77,8% claim that their class does sing English songs, while 22,2% claim they do not. The second question gave a somewhat similar result with 72,2% claiming they like to sing English songs, while 27,8 say they do not like it. Then on the third question, contrarily to Class 1, the majority claim they do not remember English words more easily when singing, with 66,7%, and 33,3% claiming they do.

The last question shows an almost equal distribution between those who say they do sing English songs when they are away from school, with 44,4% and those who say they do not, with 50%. There is an invalidity percentage of 5,6%, which is of importance to discuss because, if answered correctly, those answers could possibly change the outcome significantly. Perhaps there are more pupils who sing English songs at home, yet, because of invalidity, not all answers were counted. Another possibility is that the difference between the answers would be greater, with a clear majority of those who claim they do not sing English songs away from school.

4.2.3 Class 3

% Yes	% No	% Invalid	% N
100,0 %	0,0 %	0,0 %	100,0 %
88,2 %	11,8 %	0,0 %	100,0 %
88,2 %	11,8 %	0,0 %	100,0 %
64,7 %	29,4 %	5,9 %	100,0 %

Table 4 Distribution of answers in Class 3

Class 3 is the only class where all the pupils agree that English songs are used in their education. This is also the class with the highest percentages for Yes.

Both question two and three: "Do you think it is fun to sing English songs?" and "Do you remember English words more easily when you learn them in a song?" gave a high response of Yes, with 88,2% claiming they do think it is fun, and they learn from them, while 11,8% say they do not think it is fun, and do not learn more easily.

The answers to the last question: "Do you sing English songs when you are not at school?", resulted in 64,7% stating they do, while 29,5% say they do not. The invalidity percentage is at 5,9%, very similar to that of Class 2. However, in contrast to Class 2, the percentage of invalidity would not be of significant change in outcome were it to be counted in either slot. If the invalid answers were to say No, the majority would still have answered Yes.

4.2.4 Class 4

% Yes	% No	% Invalid	% N
81,0 %	19,0 %	0,0 %	100,0 %
57,1 %	42,9 %	0,0 %	100,0 %
52,4 %	47,6 %	0,0 %	100,0 %
28,6 %	61,9 %	9,5 %	100,0 %

Table 5 Distribution of answers in Class 4

On the first question, 81% of Class 4 claim they do sing English songs in class, whereas 19% claim they do not.

The answers to question two and three, on whether or not the pupils think it is fun to sing English songs, and whether they learn more easily, have an almost equal distribution. 57,1% say they think it is fun to sing English songs, and 52,4% claim they remember words more easily when learning through song. On the other hand, 42,9% say they do not enjoy singing English songs, and 47,6% claim they do not learn more easily when singing.

The last question is the only one where a greater number of pupils have coloured red than blue, and similarly to the two previously discussed classes, this is the only answer with an invalidity percentage. Here, only 28,6% of the pupils claim they sing English songs when they are away from school, while 61,9% claim they do not. There is a somewhat high percentage of invalidity, with 9,5%. If the answers were counted as either Yes or No, the majority would not shift; there would still be a majority of the pupils saying they do not sing English songs while away from school, then those who claim they do. However, the clear

majority of those who claim they do not sing English songs other than in school, would be significantly reduced, were the invalid answers to count as Yes. Conversely, the clear majority would become even greater were the invalid answers to count as No.

4.2.5 Class 5

% Yes	% No	% Invalid	% N
100,0 %	0,0 %	0,0 %	100,0 %
61,1 %	27,8 %	11,1 %	100,0 %
66,7 %	27,8 %	5,6 %	100,0 %
38,9 %	55,6 %	5,6 %	100,0 %

Table 6 Distribution of answers in Class 5

Class 5 is the class with the overall highest percentage of invalidity, and I debated whether or not to include this class in the thesis because of the high invalidity percentage. If I were to only discuss each class separately, I would not have included this class, as the reliability of the answers from this class is low. However, because I will discuss the combined answers afterwards, I concluded that the percentage of invalidity when compared to the combined number of participants, was not of large significance.

In Class 5, all pupils agreed that they do sing English songs at school. 61,1% say they like to sing English songs, while 27,8% say they do not. This question gave the highest percentage of invalidity for this class, with 11,1%. Here it could be speculated that the pupils wanted to give a more defuse answer than simply Yes or No. Some might want to say: "A little" or perhaps: "Sometimes". This would automatically count as an invalid answer, because only those boxes with one singular colour in it were counted. It is worth mentioning that even if the invalid answers were counted as one or the other, the majority of the answers would still be Yes, however the clear majority would be significantly reduced if all the invalid answers were to count as No.

Similarly, with the third question of whether or not the pupils thought they remembered English words more easily when they learned through song, there is a significant majority who claim they do, with 66,7%, while 27,8% claim they do not. Also here, there is an invalidity percentage, however, lower than the previous, with 5,6%.

The final question also has a slight percentage of invalidity, as most of the other classes also have, of 5,6%. This question is the only one where a larger number of pupils

answered No than Yes. The question was whether or not the pupils sing English songs when they are away from school. 38,9% claim they do, while 55,6% claim they do not. The invalidity percentage would not change the majority, however, the distribution of the two answers could have been more equal had the invalid answers been Yes.

4.2.6 Class 6

% Yes	% No	% Invalid	% N
100,0 %	0,0 %	0,0 %	100,0 %
64,7 %	35,3 %	0,0 %	100,0 %
70,6 %	23,5 %	5,9 %	100,0 %
47,1 %	52,9 %	0,0 %	100,0 %

Table 7 Distribution of answers in Class 6

Also in Class 6, Every pupil agrees that English songs are used in their class.

64,7% of the pupils say they like to sing English songs, while 35,3% claim they do not. 70,6% of the pupils claim they remember English words more easily when they learn through song, while 23,5% say they do not. There is also an invalidity percentage of 5,9%. This percentage would not change the outcome significantly, as there would still be a somewhat clear majority of the pupils claiming they do remember English words more easily when singing.

The last question does not have any invalid answers, same as Class 1, and is also the only question where a larger number of pupils have coloured red than blue. The question was whether or not the pupils sing English songs when they are away from school. 47,1% say they do, while 52,9% say they do not. This is very close to an equal distribution between the answers, and it shows that the class is very split in their opinions.

4.2.7 Altogether

Questions	Yes	No	Invalid	N	% Yes	% No	% Invalid	% N
Does your class sing English songs?	86	14	0	100	86,0 %	14,0 %	0,0 %	100,0 %
Do you think it is fun to sing English songs?	67	31	2	100	67,0 %	31,0 %	2,0 %	100,0 %
Do you remember English words more easily when you learn them in a song?	65	33	2	100	65,0 %	33,0 %	2,0 %	100,0 %
Do you sing English songs when you are not at school?	44	51	5	100	44,0 %	51,0 %	5,0 %	100,0 %

Table 8 Distribution of answers in total (Same as Table 1)

With all the six classes combined, 86% of the pupils state that they sing English songs in class. There is a clear majority of the pupils claiming this in all classes, except Class 1, where the majority of the pupils claim that their class does not sings English songs.

With regards to the second question, the clear majority claim that they enjoy singing English songs, with 67% colouring blue for this question. However, the number of pupils who say they do not think it is fun to sing English songs, 31%, is higher than could be expected in regard to the claim of several researchers, among them Brewster et al. (2004), that children love songs, rhymes, and chants. In some classes there is a clear majority who coloured blue for this question, whereas in other classes, the distribution is almost equal. None of the classes have results where there are a larger number of pupils who coloured red than blue; however, it is an interesting finding that there is not a significantly large majority of those who claim to enjoy singing English songs. Nevertheless, there could be several reasons for this outcome. There are many factors that contribute to the pupils' decisions. The 31% who claim they do not think it is fun to sing English songs are not stating that they simply do not like singing, or listening to, songs. As such, the claim of Brewster et al. (2004) is not proven wrong by this finding. Furthermore, there is still a clear majority of pupils who claim to think it is fun to sing English songs.

The distribution of answers for the third question is similar to the second, with 65% stating that they remember English words more easily when they learn them through song, and 33% saying they do not. In four out of the six classes, the distribution reflects that of the total, where there seems to be a similarity between the answers to question two and three. Patel (2014) is among those who argue that music triggers strong positive emotions, which makes the repetition enjoyable, and therefore, benefits language learning. It seems the answers from the pupils reflect this, that those who claim they enjoy singing English songs,

also claim they remember English words more easily. However, this is not the case for every class, as Class 1 has all the pupils claiming they remember English words more easily through song, but only around half who say they enjoy singing English songs, or as Class 2 where only 33,3% claim they remember English words more easily, but 72,2% say they enjoy singing English songs.

The distribution of answers to the last question is the only one where there are a larger number of pupils who coloured red than blue, translating to a larger number of pupils who claim they do not sing English songs when they are not at school than those who claim they do. This is also the question with the highest percentage of invalidity, with 5%, which might indicate that this was the question the pupils found the most difficult to answer.

In general, the pupils show quite positive attitudes and perceptions towards songs as a teaching technique, which is in line with the research on the subject. Nevertheless, the results also show that there are pupils who disagree with the notion that singing English songs helps them remember new words more easily and that it would be considered fun. The distribution of opinions varies between the classes, and indicates that there cannot be a general definite answer as to whether or not a class would enjoy extensive singing activities. However, none of the classes had a majority of pupils who claim to not think it is fun to sing English songs, which is an important finding considering that this coincides with the teacher interviews that claim the pupils enjoy the singing. The next section will show and discuss the similarities and differences between the pupil responses and the teacher responses.

4.3 Comparing the results

When looking at the combined results from both the teachers and the pupils, it seems that the majority of both the teachers and the pupils enjoy songs as a teaching technique for English language learning. The teachers argue, as Patel (2014), and Brean and Skeie also do, that music triggers strong positive emotions. They explain how the pupils seem to become engaged when songs are used, and that they sometimes use songs solely for the purpose to create a positive environment. The majority of the pupils agree with the statement that using songs as a teaching technique is enjoyable, by responding yes to the question of whether they think it is fun to sing English songs. Nevertheless, 31 pupils responded that they do not find it fun to sing English songs, which could be considered a high number considering the research and the teacher experiences that claim children naturally enjoy music. However, it is

important to consider that the pupils who responded that they do not think it is fun, do not claim they do not enjoy music or singing, nor do they claim to dislike singing songs in English; the question was whether they thought it was fun. This can be interpreted in a number of ways by the pupils, and the answers should therefore not be analysed as having another meaning than what it simply states. Additionally, two of the teachers, Robin and Sam, explain how some pupils might not initially agree that they think an activity is fun until they try joining, which could indicate another reason for the high number of pupils stating they do not think it is fun to sing English songs. Regardless, there is still a clear majority agreeing with both the teachers and researchers that singing English songs in school is fun.

The overall majority of the pupils claim to remember new English words more easily when they learn them through song, and all the four teachers argue that their experiences show that this is the case. Confirming what Kulset (2019) and Fredens (2019) argue, the teachers express that the pupils seem to pick up on new words very quickly when they learn a song containing the target words, and they seem to remember the words more easily in later encounters. Additionally, the teachers argue that a larger number of pupils become active participants when they sing songs. As Sam explains: "it's something everyone can join" (Sam's interview, from code "Adapt"), and as a result, they often do. Robin also argues that the songs make it possible to participate with a limited vocabulary, which could result in more pupils trying to join, which results in a better learning outcome, as one should be an active participant in order to maximize learning outcome. In addition to these observations by the teachers, Patel's (2014) model shows how practicing music contributes to language learning by stimulating multiple areas of the brain, and demands the pupils to be attentive. Kim touched upon this, and claims that because practicing music demands different parts of the brain to be active, a larger number of pupils are able to benefit from singing songs, in terms of learning outcome. It would seem that the teacher experiences are reflected in the majority of the pupils, as 65% state that they remember words more easily when they learn them in songs. One class, Class 1, had 100% of the pupils agreeing to this claim.

Regardless, even though the majority of the pupils claim to remember new English words more easily when singing, there are some pupils who do not agree with this statement, and in one of the classes, Class 2, the number of pupils who claim they do not learn the words more easily when singing, is greater than those who claim they do. The teachers do acknowledge that the pupils in their classes are different, and therefore have a difference in learning outcome from various teaching techniques. However, they do not believe that using

songs in their teaching is damaging to the pupils' learning, and they argue that even those who are not active participants still receive language input and repetition from the songs, and therefore also learn even if this learning is subconscious. This statement is not supported in the research in this thesis, other than the claims that music naturally helps memory, and so is only speculative on the part of the teachers.

The last question for the pupils was whether they listened to English songs other than when they are at school. This seemed to be a more challenging question for the pupils, based on the invalidity percentage being higher for this question than any of the others. It is not possible to determine the reasons for why this was the case, as the pupils have not been asked about this. However, an important consideration is that there are only 5% invalid answers in total, which can be interpreted as a rather minor percentage given the age of the participant. Some of the teachers express how the pupils sing songs at home without giving much consideration as to what language the songs are in, as they sing songs that are popular in society. Therefore, the pupils may not recall with certainty whether or not they have listened to English songs at home when asked. On the other hand, 44 pupils answered that they do listen to English songs when they are away from school. Almost half of the pupils express that they expose themselves to English through the means of songs when they are at home. This number is surprisingly high, when considering that the teachers expressed that they believed only some of the pupils listened to English songs at home. Sam expressed that they had experienced some who knew the songs they played in class beforehand, and Charlie explained that they had had conversations with the pupils regarding whether or not they listened to English songs at home where some responded that they did. It would seem that there is a larger number of pupils who knowingly listen to English songs at home than the teachers were aware of; based on the interpretation of the interviews with the teachers.

Nevertheless, all the teachers argue that with the easy access to entertainment, and English songs, today, the pupils are more exposed, and listen to, English songs. According to the teachers the pupils are much more aware of the popular culture in music now because of the easy access to them provided by musical platforms. Considering this, it might not be as surprising as originally estimated that the number of pupils listening to English songs when they are away from school is larger than some teachers initially think.

5. Conclusion

The research question of this thesis: "What are teachers' and first grade pupils' perceptions of songs as a resource for English language learning?", was answered by conducting a study with a mixed methods design consisting of a quantitative questionnaire answered by first-grade pupils and qualitative semi-structured interviews conducted with teachers with experience with teaching English in the first grade. When considering previous research on the subject of songs as a language teaching resource, the results were inconsistent. Some studies show that using songs systematically increased the level of language efficiency more so than the classes where songs were not used, while others present findings showing no significant increase in efficiency level compared to other teaching techniques. Regardless, the findings suggesting that using songs creates joy, motivation, and engagement seem to appear in all the research. There is also a difference in what perspectives the researchers had when they were conducting their research. Some focused on learning outcome, while others, similar to this thesis, focused on perceived learning outcome and opinions on the subject of songs as a teaching technique. Theory on the subject suggests that practicing music has several qualities that are beneficial for learning a language, and that music therefore is, and should, be considered a great tool for teaching. This study supports this claim, as there was a unanimous teacher response claiming that using songs for English language learning in the first grade has proven to be quite effective towards the pupils' learning outcome. They also argue that songs and music create a positive psychosocial environment in the classroom. None of the teachers expressed any change in their perception of, or execution of songs as a teaching technique after the change in curricula, as they all agreed that teaching experience shows that using songs helps improve learning. Moreover, the general part of the curriculum still emphasizes the importance of exploration and creativity, which the teachers interpret as including the use of songs and music. By including questions regarding the transition between curricula, I gained an insight into how teachers interpret the current curriculum when they are planning. It was interesting to see that the change in curricula had very little impact on the interviewees' perceptions of songs as a teaching technique, as the change in the representation of songs and/or music was quite large from the former to the current curriculum. As the teachers from this study cannot be generalized to represent all teachers in Norway, it would be interesting to research how the change in curricula has impacted the perceptions of English teachers in Norway on a larger scale, perhaps also with the focus on a larger age group.

The majority of the pupils in this study agree with the teachers that singing English songs in school is fun, and that they remember the new words more easily when they learn through song. Almost half of the pupils also state that they listen to English songs at times other than times when they are at school as well. This shows that the belief that today's children, who grow up with the technology and access to an abundance of authentic songs, take advantage of this when they are at home, and therefore are provided with enjoyable repetition, which is key for increased learning outcome. This study does not claim to prove any results regarding measured learning outcome. It can also be debated how one would conduct a study to prove or disprove learning outcome from the use of songs in education, as the term *learning outcome* can be interpreted in many ways and can vary in representation between different pupils. What is clear from this study, however, is that the pupils themselves seem to enjoy the activities where songs are included, and state that they learn from these songs.

To conclude, the teachers and pupils in this study are overall very positive towards the use of songs as a teaching technique to language learning. It appears to help the pupils remember words, and it is enjoyable for many. Songs are a natural way of learning, and a source of enjoyment according to researchers (see e.g. Koppen, 2018; Patel, 2014), which is why it should have a central place when teaching young children. As time progresses, perceptions of teaching and teaching techniques change. However, it would seem that practicing music as a teaching element is one that remains beneficial to language learning and the classroom psychosocial environment regardless of time.

What I can draw from working with this thesis, is that my own experience with learning more easily through song is a common one. Many pupils are claiming that they remember new words when they are presented in songs, and the teachers are reporting this to be the case as well. I have used many songs strategically in my own teaching, and will continue to do so if the pupils are enjoying it. The most important finding in this study, in my own personal opinion, is that pupils are different, and they learn in different ways. Teachers have to ensure learning for everyone, and therefore also vary the techniques and activities they use. As Charlie points out: "something catches some, and something else catches someone else" (Carlie's interview, from code "All angles…"), and teachers have to strive to "catch" every pupil at some point. Nevertheless, through working with this thesis it has become clear that singing, and making use of music, are activities that many pupils are familiar with and enjoy. Therefore, I consider songs to be valuable in teaching, especially

with the younger learners; a notion that is supported by a number of teachers, researchers, and pupils.

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7. Appendix

7.1 Research information with consent form

Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet

«Masteroppgave: Lærere og elevers tanker om bruk av sanger som en ressurs for engelsk språklæring i første klasse»

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er å kartlegge lærere og elevers tanker rundt bruk av sang i engelskundervisningen i første klasse. I dette skrivet gir vi deg informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.

Formål

Dette prosjektet har som mål å kartlegge lærere og elevers tanker om sang som læringsressurs. Dette er en masteroppgave som vil romme intervjuer med lærere som har erfaring med å undervise i engelsk på 1.årstrinn, i tillegg til en anonym spørreundersøkelse med 1.klasse elever.

Masteroppgaven ønsker gjennom intervjuer å vise hva lærere tenker om og erfaring med bruken av sang for å lære engelsk, og om noe har endret seg under overganger fra LK06 (kunnskapsløftet) og LK20 (fagfornyelsen).

Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?

Universitetet i Sørøst-Norge er ansvarlig for prosjektet.

Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?

Du er aktuell fordi du har erfaring med engelskundervisning på første årstrinn.

Det vil være mellom fire og fem lærerintervjuer til sammen i denne masteroppgaven, og derfor gis denne henvendelsen til aktuelle personer som uformelt har takket ja til å delta i prosjektet.

Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?

Hvis du velger å delta i prosjektet, innebærer dette å delta på et intervju som vil vare ca. 30-60 minutter.

Intervjuet vil bli tatt opp med et eksternt opptakerverktøy for å bli transkribert. Opptaket vil bli slettet raskt etter transkribering.

Spørsmålene i intervjuet vil omhandle din erfaring med engelskundervisning på første trinn, din erfaring med å bruke sang for å lære engelsk; både om dette er noe du aktivt bruker, eller om det er andre ressurser som du synes gir bedre læringsmuligheter, og om tankene og erfaringene dine rundt dette tema har endret seg etter fagfornyelsen.

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

Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger

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

De som vil ha tilgang til dine opplysninger ved Universitetet i Sørøst-Norge (behandlingsansvarlig institusjon) er Linda Mari Ødegaard-Jensen (masterstudent) og Cathryn B. McWillliams (masterveileder).

Det gjøres tiltak for å sikre at ingen uvedkommende får tilgang til dine personopplysninger ved at:

- Navn og evt. andre personopplysninger vil bli erstattet med koder som lagres på en egen navneliste adskilt fra øvrige data.
- Det vil bli benyttet en ekstern lydopptaker.
- I masteroppgaven vil navn bli erstattet med pseudonymer

Hva skjer med opplysningene dine når vi avslutter forskningsprosjektet?

Opplysningene anonymiseres når prosjektet avsluttes/oppgaven er godkjent, noe som etter planen er 1.juni 2022. Lydopptak fra intervju vil bli slettet umiddelbart etter transkribering, ca. 2 uker etter innsamling. Transkribering og evt. andre lagrede data vil bli slettet ved prosjektslutt.

Dine rettigheter

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

- innsyn i hvilke personopplysninger som er registrert om deg, og å få utlevert en kopi av opplysningene,

- å få rettet personopplysninger om deg,
- å få slettet personopplysninger om deg, og
- å sende klage til Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger.

Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

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

Hvor kan jeg finne ut mer?

Hvis du har spørsmål til studien, eller ønsker å benytte deg av dine rettigheter, ta kontakt med:
- Universitetet i Sørøst-Norge ved
    - masterstudent Linda Mari Ødegaard-Jensen på epost lindamaridegaardjensen@gmail.com eller telefon: 97 00 83 54.
    - masterveileder Cathryn B. McWilliams: Cathryn.B.Mcwilliams@usn.no.
- Vårt personvernombud: personvernombud@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: 55 58 21 17.

Med vennlig hilsen

Cathryn B. McWilliams   Linda Mari Ødegaard-Jensen
(Masterveileder)   (Masterstudent)

Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet «Masteroppgave: Lærere og elevers tanker om bruk av sanger som en ressurs for engelsk språklæring i første klasse» og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til (kryss av boksene du samtykker til):

☐   å delta i intervju
☐   at transkripsjon av lydopptak er tilgjengelig for masterveileder

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

----

(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

7.2 Interview guide

Hvor mye erfaring har du med å ha engelsk i første klasse?

Hva er din stilling til bruk av sang for å lære engelsk? (bruker du det aktivt? Lite? Når boka tilsier? Hvordan?)

(Bruker du engelske sanger utenom engelsk timene?)

LK06 hadde jo 4 kompetansemål etter 2. trinn som spesifikt nevnte bruk av sang i undervisningen, mens fagfornyelsen kun har ett. Har det endret noe på hvordan du ser på eller praktiserer sang i klasserommet? Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke?

Hva ville vært dine argumenter for og imot bruk av sang for å lære engelsk?

7.3 Research information and questionnaire

Spørreundersøkelse (med elevene)

Hei førsteklasse! Jeg heter Linda Mari, og jeg har noen spørsmål som jeg håper dere vil svare på som jeg skal bruke til å skrive en lang oppgave, som kalles master. Det er veldig viktig at du svarer helt ærlig; akkurat det DU mener! Da blir jeg veldig glad! Du skal svare ja eller nei med å fargelegge *blå* for ja, og *rød* for nei. TUSEN TAKK 😊

Synger klassen din engelske sanger?	
Synes du det er gøy å synge på engelsk?	
Husker du engelske ord lettere når du lærer de i en sang?	
Synger du engelske sanger når du ikke er på skolen?	

7.4 Evaluation from NSD

30.11.2021 - Vurdert

Det er vår vurdering at behandlingen av personopplysninger i prosjektet vil være i samsvar med personvernlovgivningen så fremt den gjennomføres i tråd med det som er dokumentert i meldeskjemaet med vedlegg den 30.11.2021, samt i meldingsdialogen mellom innmelder og NSD. Behandlingen kan starte.

TYPE OPPLYSNINGER OG VARIGHET
Prosjektet vil behandle alminnelige kategorier av personopplysninger frem til 01.06.2022.

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

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

PERSONVERNPRINSIPPER
NSD vurderer at den planlagte behandlingen av personopplysninger vil følge prinsippene i personvernforordningen om: · lovlighet, rettferdighet og åpenhet (art. 5.1 a), ved at de registrerte får tilfredsstillende informasjon om og samtykker til behandlingen · formålsbegrensning (art. 5.1 b), ved at personopplysninger samles inn for spesifikke, uttrykkelig angitte og berettigede formål, og ikke behandles til nye, uforenlige formål · dataminimering (art. 5.1 c), ved at det kun behandles opplysninger som er adekvate, relevante og nødvendige for formålet med prosjektet · lagringsbegrensning (art. 5.1 e), ved at personopplysningene ikke lagres lengre enn nødvendig for å oppfylle formålet

DE REGISTRERTES RETTIGHETER
Så lenge de registrerte kan identifiseres i datamaterialet vil de ha følgende rettigheter: innsyn (art. 15), retting (art. 16), sletting (art. 17), begrensning (art. 18), og dataportabilitet (art. 20). NSD vurderer at informasjonen om behandlingen som de registrerte vil motta oppfyller lovens krav til form og innhold, jf. art. 12.1 og art. 13. Vi minner om at hvis en registrert tar kontakt om sine rettigheter, har behandlingsansvarlig institusjon plikt til å svare innen en måned.

FØLG DIN INSTITUSJONS RETNINGSLINJER
NSD legger til grunn at behandlingen oppfyller kravene i personvernforordningen

om riktighet (art. 5.1 d), integritet og konfidensialitet (art. 5.1. f) og sikkerhet (art. 32). Ved bruk av databehandler (spørreskjemaleverandør, skylagring eller videosamtale) må behandlingen oppfylle kravene til bruk av databehandler, jf. art 28 og 29. Bruk leverandører som din institusjon har avtale med. For å forsikre dere om at kravene oppfylles, må dere følge interne retningslinjer og/eller rådføre dere med behandlingsansvarlig institusjon.

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

OPPFØLGING AV PROSJEKTET
NSD vil følge opp ved planlagt avslutning for å avklare om behandlingen av personopplysningene er avsluttet. Lykke til med prosjektet!

7.5 Analysis

Codes	Explanation	Examples from interviews
Category: Everyone can sing		
Adapt	The choosing of songs depends, among other things, on adaptability to fit the pupils	**Robin**: "I think it's great in both first, second and third grade, but then something starts happening where you might not need to use it to that extent […], naturally you would transition to less childish songs" **Charlie**: "I think about the fact that they shouldn't be too advanced, and they should have a catching chorus, a simple one, or where the song sings first and we repeat, there are also a lot of songs that do that, where you hear first how it should be and then repeat". "They have to be repetitive" "Then there's the thing that they shouldn't have too many different verses, it has to be somewhat simple". "Children now-a-days listen to a lot of pop-music, and such, and you can use them for joy and just to sing, but for learning, [the songs] have to be adapted to the group you have" **Sam**: "I think that the pupils are supposed to learn in a variety of ways, and it's also the fact that children learn best in different ways. With songs you catch a lot more; some write, but some can't and the thing with song is that… it's something everyone can join! You don't get those big differences regarding individual adaptation, I mean a lot has to happen for someone to not be able to join, right!? So, it's this inclusive thing too". **Kim**: "I think it's very nice to choose songs that have simple lyrics, so that when I use it as a pedagogical tool in that way, it should be easy to get a grip of the words that I want to emphasize, that they are easy to catch". "It has to be catchy, but simple, easy to understand, a song where it's clear from the lyrics what we want to emphasize". "Maybe there is a song that I don't pick apart entirely where they learn all the words, rather, they just learn to sing English. The content may not necessarily be in connection to the lessons in itself, but it's just fun to sing a song that is catchy and with movements and that is just fun".
Repeat	A lot of repetition of the songs is needed to learn the song, which creates a natural setting for repeating the target language.	**Robin**: "yes, they bring it with them, but you do have to repeat them a few times. There are some 'musical ones', who in some ways are quicker". **Charlie**: "One has to sing a song quite a few times before they know it". "[When] I choose a song, I sing it every day throughout the week, sometimes two weeks" **Sam**: "to 'shower' them in English, the whole thing in teaching is to shower them in it".
Singing with them	The teachers express a difference in the pupils' engagement	**Robin**: "It's easier to get them engaged… one can just be enthusiastic, but there's something with… [playing/singing with them]" **Charlie**: "If you just put on a song, and not join yourself… I think it has a huge impact that the teacher knows the song" "I

	when they take part in the singing	think it matters, like with everything else, that if the teacher is engaged and does the same as the pupils, then they become much more involved". **Sam**: "It's the thing with, when they see that I'm singing, they might try to join". "I don't know if or what effect it has, but it's worth it anyways that they see the teacher being this role model. I do think it helps them join".
Enjoyable		
As a group they all sing	The teachers have not experienced having a first grade where the class as a whole did not want to sing	**Charlie**: "as a whole, no, I don't think I have, I've been lucky". **Sam**: "not as a group, no, more individual pupils who have not wanted to join in when we sing, where one has to be a little like 'come on, join singing' a little, but not as a group, there I think… It looks like they enjoy it". **Kim**: "Not that have been mine, no, because, first of all, children are born musical. So, I think that children initially like songs and music, but I have been a music teacher in terribly, terribly, terribly many classes, so I have had some classes that have been difficult to get to sing if I haven't had them". (This does not apply to first graders).
Comforting	The pupils might find comfort in songs they sing often which bring safety	**Charlie**: "We have a set 'thanks-for-today' song in English, and it is very safe and comforting to have a song that the children know well, and that they become very fond of".
Fun/motivating	The pupils do not find the repetition of the songs boring	**Robin**: "what is funny is that those who say that it is boring, are the ones who have the most fun, they are the most engaged, and often the most enthusiastic". **Charlie**: Question: "and they don't get bored, or grow tired when you have to sing it that many times? - oh no! They love it! The more they are able to sing along, the better!" "If we are waiting for someone to get the milk or we have five minutes, I have asked if anyone wants to suggest a song, and then, but then we don't… we have kind of listened to it, and maybe danced a little around the classroom and such, but it hasn't been like "now we are going to learn this" **Sam**: "The thing with song and music is that most, you have some who don't, but I feel that most want to join in. Music in itself is motivating". Question: "and they don't get tired or bored? - no, that's what they usually don't. Two of the 'good morning'-songs, we have used throughout the entire first and second grade, sometimes I would switch it up, but when I put them on one day, the pupils do sing! So, I think that when they are this little, even if they listen to them a lot of times, it's still fun. They are able to listen to the same thing many times. It then becomes more of a feeling of accomplishment, that they learn more and more from it when they have heard it a lot of times".

		Kim: "What's important for me in English when I don't have scheduled hours is that it becomes natural, that it becomes pleasurable through the music, because, of course, when I'm enthusiastic and am a music teacher and teach first grade, naturally there will be a lot of music, and a lot of rhythms, and a lot of learning through that, so that comes naturally to me".
Singing with them		See code under **Everyone can sing**
Enjoy singing myself	The teachers express that they enjoy singing themselves with the pupils	**Robin**: Question: "do you have any arguments against using song in the first grade? - no, I don't think I have… I enjoy singing myself, so it would be weird if I did" **Sam**: "I enjoy music myself, so it's hard not to join when there's music you know!" **Kim**: "I'm a music teacher so naturally I like everything you can learn through song, whether it's math, Norwegian, English or whatever, so I use terribly much music".
Enlightening		
Repeat		See code under **Everyone can sing**
Learn faster	The pupils learn faster when using songs	**Sam**: "What I think about songs and rhythm, is that they learn faster, and that it's motivating". "I think that it's through the implementation of songs that it sticks, or is automatized. I think that they would learn less if they didn't have songs to sing about the things we are learning".
Learning things by heart	Children are naturally good at learning things by heart, which makes songs a good fit	**Charlie**: "Children are very good at learning things by heart" "[…] [songs are] a great tool for remembering things by heart".
All angles possible for teaching	Song is one way of varying the activities in teaching	**Charlie**: "it catches some children and maybe not others, but those we catch with other angles, so it's important to bring different… or to learn in different ways, and I think song is a very important part of that". "It's like I said, this thing with using all the angles possible for teaching, meaning we cut things, do things, sing things, and something catches some, and something else catches someone else" **Sam**: "There is a lot you can do with songs" "Both the fact that they sing, but you also have a lot of moving […] They learn how to do the movements in addition to saying the words, and then they learn and remember faster". "I do notice with English, that when they start to recognize something they are very eager, and I also use quite a lot of literature; books […] take 'the Gruffalo' for instance, which is very good for learning quite a lot, we listen to it, it has a rhythm, and it also has this song, […], and when they get in in song they learn a lot more because of the rhythm. They actually learn the words and sentences better than if we had just read them".

A lot for free	When using songs, the pupils learn both words and other aspects of the language. They also learn by making calculated guesses based on the context the songs provide.	**Robin**: "you get a lot for free through songs. You hear a little of how the language is structured, they won't understand that, but you see it as an adult that a lot of it is there, so it's a lot you can take from them, and you can bring that into the classroom".
To learn all kinds of things		"some probably have a better 'ear for language' perhaps... but most, I would claim, they join in, and then if you ask 'so what does this mean?' then they go 'oh, but that means that!' and then they guess a little based on context".
Context		**Charlie**: "We also have songs sometimes, that have to do with the topics we are learning, so for instance, when we learned about domesticated animals, you have the song 'Old McDonald' and other different songs, and we have learned the numbers from zero to ten, there are English songs on that, we have learned the days of the week in both Norwegian and English, and then we have had both Norwegian and English songs on that topic, and also, we have learned the English colours, and there you have a lot of songs to choose from, and... what more... some Christmas songs... So, I use songs a lot actually! A LOT!"
		"I think it's smart to make the children aware of the fact that when we sing, it's of course enjoyable and to have fun and to learn, but also in order to go back later, and remember that 'that's the song I learned about colours' and if [they] are asked about colours in a different setting, that [they] have learned that competence, and so, it is useful".
		"In first grade it's mostly words and simple phrases, we have 'my name is'-songs for instance, or 'how are you? I'm fine, thank you'-songs, that are phrases, but it isn't much dialogue"
		Sam: "We use a lot of songs in English, that's where I think the first start is, by using English songs to learn all kinds of things, from days of the week to colours to... it's motivating, and they get that sense of rhythm in songs".
		"If it's Christmas you put on some [Christmas songs], and it doesn't have to be in English class; it all depends on the topic"
		"It's not like that anymore where we only have English and the songs when we are having English lessons. An English lesson is only half an hour a week, but we have so much more".
		"It's not just words, it is to get a holistic understanding, to pick up several things [...] and hear how one can say something in that language".
		"In my experience they generally understand quite a lot. [...] They are always able to see a connection, and there's that thing again, to be able to retract a word... With some context, it varies, but if they hear a song they will recognize something that gives them some understanding, also with a children's book with some pictures next to it".
		Kim: "They learn a lot of single words, but when we sing an English song to have fun or just because it's catchy, or we listen to samba music that instructs in English, or we watch something that is not at a level that fits first grade... This song, that I taught about the colour, that is at a first-grade-level; the other ones are not at a first-grade-level, they are at a higher lever, but they are catchy and it's interesting and fun,

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<td>and that's when the children join, and when you get the children to join in; they learn! And you get that positivity, the interest, and then the exploring, and all these things that I think is important".

"You stimulate a whole other part of your brain when you do things through music". "By going that way about it you can 'flip the switch' on a whole bunch of children that I think are more difficult to turn on otherwise. Because, you always have those "good ones" in every class, that no matter the circumstances; bad teaching, good teaching, little, much, they will get it! And then you have those you what to reach, and by using music… I have seen so many, and I've gotten confirmation on making them do things they never dared to prior, and this goes for English too. I got them to sing solo, alone, and the teachers just went 'is this possible!?', and that helped with their reading, too, because they started to learn to listen to their own voice, and so there's no doubt that music is important!".

"Working a lot with rhythms in music, that supports the process of learning to read".

"it was an instructional video to samba that they were to follow and then dance the whole dance, and it was in English, and what was fun to see was that a couple of them were standing there and translating for their friends
LM: really!?
K: Yes, "that meant up, and that was down, yes…, yes and now they are saying that" translating for each other, so I truly believe in this in first grade, now that… that I do what I had planned to do, and that is to… have the language being learned in a kind of play-based way, and not (pointing) "window"… "c…" (pointing to the ceiling) "floor"… right! That's…. that's boring. That becomes a little boring"</td>
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<td>A central place with the young ones

You use what works</td>
<td>The transition from LK06 with four competence aims focusing on song/music, to LK20 with only one, has not changed the views on song for the teachers</td>
<td>**Robin**: "no, I think it should have a central place with the young ones, because it's a very good way for them to learn". "One has to have somewhat of a vocabulary in order to start speaking… You do get some sentences [in the songs], but… I think it's a very good thing!"
Charlie: "Not at all! No, I think that you use what works, and with experience we know that songs work" "I am pretty sure that song and music is an important part of both life, everyday life, and as a teaching technique".
Sam: "No, because I think that they ([the songs]) stick; that they ([the pupils]) learn a lot from songs and music". "I don't think it matters whether we have one less competence aim or such. I think most teachers just use them anyways. That's my experience at least, from work colleagues, and the ones I know they use a lot of songs in their teaching".
Kim: "No, it hasn't. Because we don't have English scheduled, I haven't checked out, or been too concerned with what the curriculum or the competence aims say, I just know that music is what I use as a tool in all subjects, and want them to grow fond of". "If you think about the main part of the curriculum, the new one, approaches like exploring, play, creativity etc. that's of high value, so I guess it's with that in</td>
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		mind that I think we approach English. When we don't have it scheduled, we don't have any competence aims that we neither need to assess nor adhere to in that sense, so then we explore and are creative!".
Don't think it's a waste	Even those who struggle with catching the words in the songs, or don't want to sing still benefit from the songs	**Charlie**: "I think that they sit there and listen at least, and will probably be able to think back that they have learned something, even if they don't participate. I don't think it's a waste". **Sam**: "they try at least, some don't as much, but I think regardless that they experience joy from them ([the songs])". **Kim**: Question: "what about those pupils that maybe doesn't want to sing, do they lose motivation for the English subject? - I don't think so, no, I don't think they become worse, or that it ruins anything. It's rather a gain, but it doesn't drag anyone down, I have never experienced that".
Easy access		
So much out there	The accessibility is great with the technology of today. Some pupils search for the songs at home and listen to them.	**Robin**: "and with English there is so much out there! Compared to Norwegian that does not in the same way… you cannot search in the same way and find something to use, it's completely crazy. But you do have to know what to search for, that's the thing, but when you have found some places there's so much to retrieve, so much free stuff to use". **Charlie**: "We talked about if they found the same songs at home, and some do. They 'google', or find them on 'YouTube'" **Sam**: "I feel that many of them do. An example is one of the ones we listen to now, especially the girls, they already knew the chorus to the song, and they sang along, and so I went 'Oh! You knew this one!' so I think they do listen to a lot of these new…, yes". "I mean, they have probably heard both English children's songs and such when they were little, I think quite a few do, but also a lot of this new pop… thing…" "And then it's help for teachers! There's so much already out there that you can just pick and choose from, and then use in your class". **Kim**: Question: "do you think they listen to English songs at home? - yes! I am absolutely sure that they do, because they watch so much on 'YouTube', a lot of them, and they hear the English language in games more than before, so the digital school, and also the digital 'free-time'…, I believe that it does a lot for the English language development for children".