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Multilingualism as a learning resource in the English classroom
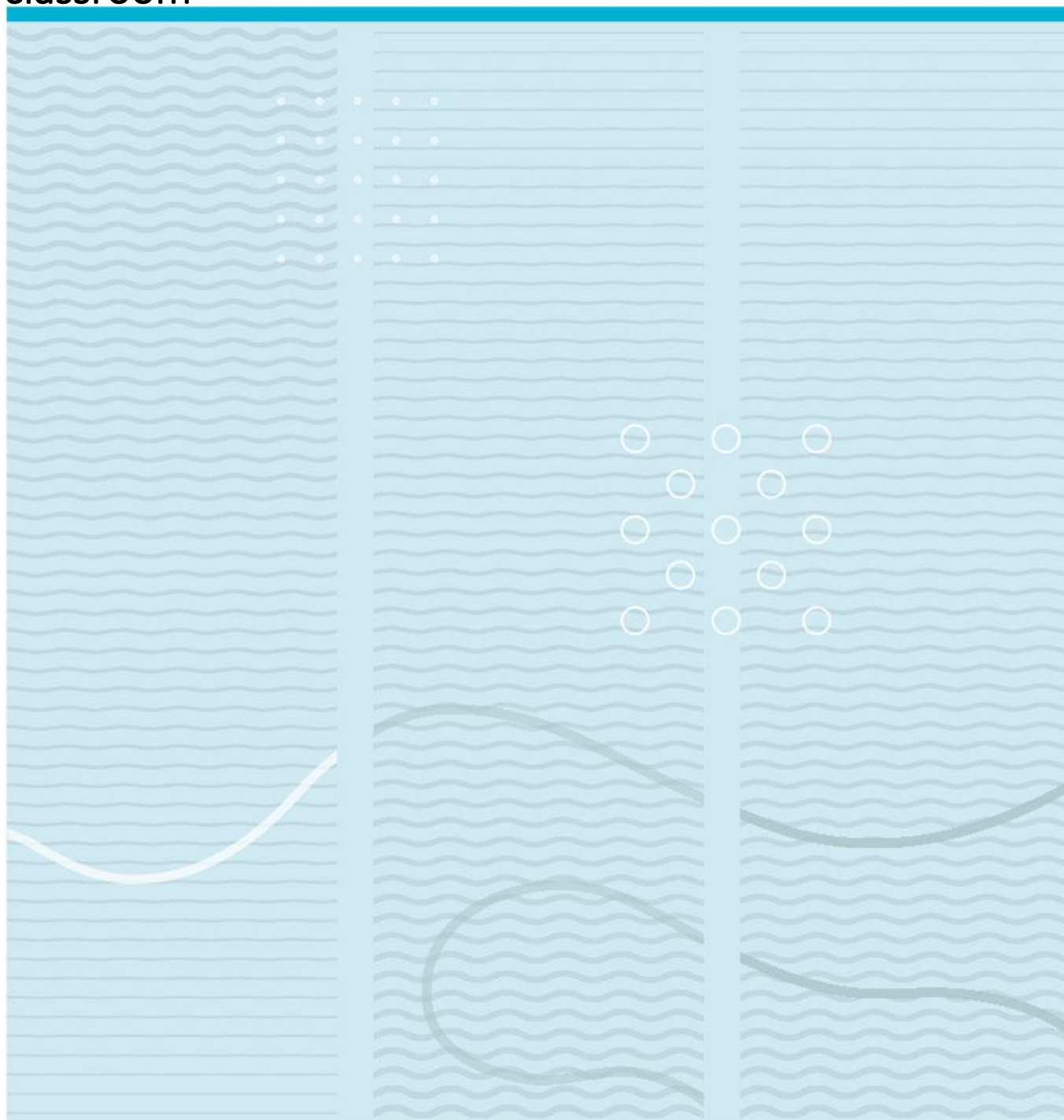
This thesis is worth 30 study points

Summary

With the globalization of the world, it is becoming very important to have linguistic competence. More and more individuals are becoming multilingual, meaning they have knowledge or competence in multiple languages. This thesis explores whether multilingualism can be used as a learning resource in the English classroom. The theoretical background of this thesis is the national curriculum, the Council of Europe and previous research that is relevant to the topic. Furthermore, the thesis features four semi-structured interviews with English teachers in Norwegian elementary schools. These interviews reveal the teachers' thoughts, experiences, and attitudes regarding multilingualism and how they currently use this as a learning resource in their classrooms. Finally, the findings will be discussed in the light of the national curriculum, the Council of Europe, and previous research regarding the topic to see whether multilingualism can be a useful learning resource in English classrooms.

Acknowledgments

First, I want to thank the teachers who participated in this study and made the interviews possible. I also want to give my thanks to everyone who showed interest in this study and the topic. This was very motivational and pushed me to complete this study within the deadline.

Secondly, I want to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor Cathryn Bronwyn McWilliams who guided me through this study and was there when I was struggling with the writing, thank you. It seems like we both have learned a lot about multilingualism during this process, which goes to show how little known this topic is.

Last, but definitely not least, I want to thank my family and friends, as well as my girlfriend for continuously cheering me on and supporting me throughout this semester.

We did it, everyone!

Contents

1 Introduction

1.1 Relevance

As the world and its inhabitants is becoming more and more globalized, communication becomes increasingly more important between the different societies and individuals on this planet. Due to this, multilingualism is becoming very relevant for many. Knowing multiple languages has always been an asset and is a quite attractive skill to many now. Many students in Norway have different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, which is reflected in many classrooms across the entire country. This means that there will be a great variation of languages in almost any modern classroom. Additionally, many children and teenagers today have spare time activities that feature multiple languages. When a student watches tv shows, reads, listens to music, chats online, or plays video games, just to mention a few activities, they will most likely use a different language than their mother tongue to a certain degree. This creates children and teenagers that have a very natural attitude towards languages from a very early age. Such activities also aid in language learning, which creates multilingual beings. Furthermore, it is also quite known that knowing languages can make it easier to learn new languages. This is also true in learning situations in schools. Therefore, this study focuses on whether multilingualism can be used as an effective learning resource in English classrooms.

1.1.1 Aim

This study aims and focuses on English teachers in Norwegian primary schools, and their thoughts, experiences, and attitudes towards multilingualism as a learning resource in English classrooms. Focusing on their attitudes and thoughts might give us insight on how multilingualism is currently treated in the English subject. Furthermore, this insight might also reveal whether multilingual approaches have a positive effect on students' learning and possibly ways to improve the inclusion of multilingual approaches in the future. Additionally, this study might also reveal potential missing research on this topic, which can be focused on in future research.

1.2 Personal interest

In addition to the topic being very relevant, I also have some personal reasons for choosing this exact topic. I myself am multilingual, I moved from Germany to Norway when I was five years old. At that point I could of course speak German at an advanced level, but I had to learn Norwegian to be able to start school. Even though I do not have any specific memory of learning Norwegian, I am always told that it went quite quick. Being able to communicate in both German and Norwegian, in addition to English made me a multilingual individual. Throughout my school years I had some teachers that were very interested in me being German and multilingual, and some that were not interested at all. Some teachers were very talented and creative in the ways they used my German knowledge in class. Having a different culture and different traditions was of course also useful in school, and many teachers drew on this and recognized it as something special. Naturally, this is something that I remember quite fondly as it was both fun and made me feel appreciated, seen and special. Therefore, I believe it is very important to see students for who they are, as well as value their background and skills in order to lift them up and make them feel special. Additionally, this might aid in their learning outcome, which makes multilingualism a very attractive approach for English classrooms.

1.3 Historical background

The usage of multiple languages in a country, or society has been around for hundreds of years. In medieval times it was quite normal that people of a higher class spoke a more sophisticated language. An example of this is England after it was conquered by the Normans in 1066, where a lot happened with the languages in England. Before the conquest, everyone talked a version of English in the country, and Latin was also used in relation to religion, culture, and sometimes official records. However, after the conquest all upper-class people talked French, as this was the Normans language. Lower class people would still mostly talk English but had to know some French and Latin to understand orders and such that were given from court. This shows that multilingualism was relevant already a thousand years ago and was much more normal in everyday lives than now. One big change that this type of multilingualism brought to life, is the effects different languages can have on each other. After the Normans conquered England and started speaking French, the English language gradually changed. It became normal to include French words when speaking English and using English words when speaking French. This is a big contributor to why there are many French loanwords in English today (McWhorter, 2020). McWhorter (2020) goes on to talk

about the advantages this type of linguistic invasion can have. Since modern day English has a great number of loanwords from both French and Latin, it can be easier for English users to learn for example French, or other languages that originate from Latin due to many similar words. This can also be seen in many of today's countries and languages, for example in Norway, where many young people tend to heavily rely on loanwords from English. Such examples show how multilingualism can have a big impact on societies and change languages by itself.

1.4 Outline of this thesis

This thesis consists of a total of eight chapters. This first chapter features the outline of the study as well as the aim and relevance of the thesis. Additionally, the first chapter features some historical background on multilingualism as well as the limitations that this thesis faced. The second chapter focuses on the theoretical background for this thesis, including definitions, the curriculum, and the Council of Europe, as well as earlier research regarding multilingualism. This is followed by chapter three, which explains the chosen method and reasoning around it. Chapter 4 presents the findings from the interviews, while chapter five discusses these findings in the light of the theoretical background from chapter two. Finally, chapter six features a conclusion for this study. Chapter seven shows the annexes, followed by chapter eight, the bibliography.

1.5 Limitations

This study faced a couple limitations that shaped it into what it is now. A big limitation while I was conducting the interviews, was the COVID-19 situation. I was hoping to interview students, as well as observe some of my interviewees' classes to get more in-depth findings. This however was not possible at the time which limited me to the four interviews with English teachers. A quite different limitation that I faced in this study was the small amount of available research on the topic. There is not a lot of research around this specific topic regarding multilingualism as a learning resource. This however will hopefully change in the next few years.

2   Theoretical background

Multilingualism is still a relatively new concept that needs a lot of research to really be understood. Hereby I mostly mean the use of multilingualism as a learning resource both in and out of school. Little research and knowledge around this topic make it hard for teachers in school to use multilingualism effectively and might therefore choose not to use it at all. Firstly, this chapter will define multilingualism in order to understand the term, and other terms that are often used when talking about multilingualism. Next, this chapter will look at the differences between multilingualism, bilingualism and plurilingualism before it moves on to how multilingualism is defined and portrayed in the new Norwegian curriculum LK20. In addition to this, this chapter will also take a look at what the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, or CEFR, mentions about multilingualism. Towards the end of the chapter, we will look at some earlier research done around multilingualism.

2.1   Clarifying terms

Before we start going in-depth on this topic, I feel it necessary to briefly mention some terms and abbreviations that will be used throughout this thesis in order to make them shorter, and easier to read. The first short abbreviations this thesis will make use of, are the terms L1, L2 and L3 languages. In this thesis L1 refers to an individual's first language, or mother tongue which is another name for it. However, this study will however use the term mother tongue rather than L1. The term L2 is an individual's second language. This refers to a language that an individual has acquired and learned after their L1 language. L3 and L4 and so on are the same definitions, L3 being the third language and L4 the fourth etc. A different abbreviation I will make use of is CEFR, which stands for Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Additionally, the abbreviation LK20 will be used in some parts of this study. LK20 is the abbreviation for the new Norwegian curriculum.

2.2 Defining multilingualism

First, I want to explain what multilingualism is and how it can be defined. It might often seem like defining multilingualism is simple and straightforward, but there are many different definitions and explanations in a wide range. Because of this I want to define what multilingualism is as simply as possible, and will throughout this thesis adhere said explanation. The different definitions of multilingualism often focus on how well the individual in question knows their languages. Aronin (2012) questions whether we should reserve the term multilingualism for individuals who have acquired a high and balanced skill in all their languages in reading and writing and producing and understanding speech. This is a critical question that needs to be answered when defining multilingualism in any situation. Additionally, Aronin (2012) mentions different situations like engineers who might easily read engineering instructions in another language or opera singers that can perform in different languages, such as German, Italian, and Spanish. This engineer might not be able to hold a conversation in the language in question but can read and follow instructions quite easily. The same goes for the opera singers that sing in different languages, but do not necessarily have the ability to hold a conversation in those languages outside of the opera. Aronin (2012) questions whether these individuals count as being multilingual even though they are unable to hold a conversation in the languages in question. Both researchers and authors who write studies and articles on multilingualism often answer this question differently. Because of this, I want to have a specific definition of multilingualism in this masters' thesis, specifically to avoid such confusion deeper into this thesis.

As mentioned earlier, one might only consider individuals that have a high skill level in all their languages as multilingual, but on the other hand one might consider individuals that can read and understand texts from different languages as multilingual, without them being able to communicate through speaking or writing in those languages. Considering these different aspects is what makes defining the term multilingualism so difficult, and different in many studies and theses. At what point can an individual count a language as one they have "control over". Does it matter whether they can read and write in a language, or is speaking or listening to it enough?

Wei Li (2008) defines a multilingual individual as "anyone who can communicate in more than one language, be it active (through speaking and writing) or passive (through listening and reading" (p. 4). Having enough knowledge to communicate in a language does not necessarily mean that one has native-like control over words, phrases, and the structuring of sentences. Nonetheless, the individual has the ability to get their meaning across when communicating, as well as understanding

what others are trying to say, either through writing or speech. A definition that is quite different from Li's, is Bloomfield (1933), who defines multilingualism as "having native-like control in two languages" (Bloomfield, 1933, p. 56). This definition is not as "modern" as Li's but is still relevant due to it being one of the first definitions of multilingualism. Many definitions today relate to this definition by Bloomfield, and it is therefore important to know that many people might think that individuals are only multilingual if they have native-like control in all their languages. This also relates to what Aronin (2012) questions, namely whether the term multilingualism should be reserved for such individuals. There is not really a correct answer to this question, I believe. However, in this thesis I will lean more towards Li's definition of multilingualism because there are few students in an elementary school who have such high skill in multiple languages that it can be called native-like control.

2.2.1 Multilingualism, plurilingualism and bilingualism

There are many ways to refer to an individual that knows multiple languages. The most common terms one might hear in this context are plurilingual, multilingual, or bilingual. In some articles and studies these terms are used as synonyms for each other, in other articles and studies however they have a different meaning from one another. This often makes it confusing for the reader if the terms are not explained beforehand. The CEFR, which will be used later in this thesis has a clear difference between these two terms. They define plurilingualism as "the dynamic and developing linguistic repertoire of an individual user/learner" (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 30). This definition is also shared by Haukås & Speitz (2018). Both Haukås & Speitz (2018) and the CEFR agree on the definition of the term multilingualism as well. They define multilingualism as the coexistence of different varieties of languages at a societal or individual level (Haukås & Speitz, 2018, p. 304; Council of Europe, 2020, p. 30). The CEFR defines plurilingualism as dynamic, and thereby constantly changing. Additionally, they mention that an individual's resources may be very different from one of their languages to another (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 30). The main idea behind the term plurilingualism however, is that a plurilingual individual has a "single, interrelated, repertoire that they combine with their general competences and various strategies in order to accomplish tasks" (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 30). The definition of multilingualism given here differs from the definition in section 2.1 since the definition in section 2.1 goes deeper in defining the term than

here. The definition given here shows that multilingualism is just seen as the coexistence of languages in an individual or society and does not mention the level of proficiency needed to be multilingual.

Bilingualism and multilingualism are often confused with one another in daily speech. As you will read later, multiple of my interviewees confuse these two terms. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the term bilingual is defined as "a person who can speak two languages equally well" (Oxford Learner's Dictionary, 2022a). This is a common definition of the term which emphasizes that the individual speaks two languages only. This definition is also shared by the encyclopedia Britannica (Britannica, 2021) and Krulatz et al (2018, p. 54). The Oxford Dictionary mentions that the individual must speak both languages equally well in order to be counted as bilingual. This is not necessarily a requirement that all definitions agree on. It is easy to see why many people confuse these terms and use them incorrectly in everyday speech. it is however important to have a clear distinction between these terms in a thesis like this one.

2.3 What does the national curriculum say about multilingualism?

Multilingualism plays a big part in many peoples' everyday lives. Many individuals use different languages in school, at work, at home, when watching tv, reading books, or playing video games, just to mention a few. Therefore, it is seemingly natural that multilingualism is included in school subjects and students' everyday learning. Multilingualism plays quite a big role in the new national curriculum which again shows its importance for learning. Point 1.2 under the core values in the curriculum mentions that all students shall experience that knowing different languages is a resource, in everyday life, in society, and in school (Udir, 2020b). Multilingualism being integrated in the core values of the curriculum shows that multilingualism is relevant and should be considered by all teachers in all school subjects. Furthermore, this also shows that multilingualism is not only useful in language learning subjects, but also in subjects like math, science, or history. For this reason, I chose to research this resource further, but only in the light of the English subject.

One of the important central values that are featured in the English subject curriculum is to work with the students' confidence. The curriculum mentions that "Through working with the subject the pupils shall become confident users of English so that they can use English to learn, communicate and connect with others." (Udir, 2020d). Boosting the students' confidence can be essential for

their learning and is important in order to help them through their life. Additionally, the curriculum also mentions in the section of interdisciplinary topics that the English subject should aid in "developing the ability of the pupils to express themselves in writing and orally in English. This forms the basis for being able to express their feelings, thoughts, experiences and opinions" (Udir, 2020c). This makes it quite clear that the English subject has a lot of responsibility for helping students feel confident and are able to express themselves in ways they might not normally do. This is especially important in the English subject since it requires confidence to speak a language that one is not necessarily comfortable with or confident in. Additionally, the English subject curriculum also mentions multilingualism as a central value in the English subject, stating that students "shall experience that the ability to speak different languages is a great asset for learning, in school, and in society in general." (Udir, 2020d). Since multilingualism is part of the English subject's central values, teachers should first of all, have competence on the topic, and secondly, have multilingualism as a possible resource in hopefully most of their English classes.

Furthermore, Kunnskapsløftet has several important competence aims that revolve around multilingualism. These competence aims ensure that students are aware of other languages besides English and can help them see similarities between English and other languages they might know or have heard of. However, it is completely up to the teacher how much they want to make use of competence aims like these in their teaching, and it is therefore very individual from teacher to teacher and class to class how much they learn about other languages besides English. A competence aim after year 10 in English mentions exactly this; "explore and describe some linguistic similarities and differences between English and other languages the pupil is familiar with and use this in one's own language learning" (Udir, 2020a). This competence aim also reoccurs throughout competence aims in earlier years, both year 4 and year 7 competence aims have a simplified version of this aim. This shows that multilingualism is a focus in the English subject, already from year 1 and on. Furthermore, this also shows that the Norwegian education system recognizes the potential that multilingualism has as a learning resource in school.

Sadly, most teachers in today's schools do not have any learned competence on multilingualism as a subject, due to it being a rather new term when it comes to learning resources. Only very recently have teacher study programs started to include whole semesters about multilingualism, and thereby naturally about multilingualism as a learning resource. In 2017, the teacher study became a master's degree, meaning it is now required to study five years to become a teacher. When studying English as a teacher student, at least one of the semesters is purely focused on

multilingualism, what it is and how it can be used as a learning resource. This ensures that future English teachers will have knowledge on this topic immediately when they are done with their degree. Due to this, I believe that multilingualism as a learning resource will be used a lot more frequently in a couple of years when more teachers have deeper competence on said subject.

2.4 What does the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages say about multilingualism?

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, or CEFR, is a set of guidelines meant to describe individuals' language ability. These language abilities are spoken interaction and production, listening, reading, and writing. The CEFR guidelines are often used by schools and teachers, as well as students to see on what level their different abilities in a language are. Although Norway is not a part of the EU, the CEFR guidelines are still used quite frequently in Norwegian schools. One of the CEFR's main focuses is "promoting a Europe of open-minded plurilingual citizens." (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 28). This goal clearly shows that the Council of Europe is working towards a plurilingual, or multilingual Europe. This goal that the CEFR has, is represented in the Norwegian curriculum by teaching students that having proficiency in languages is a great asset in school and society, as mentioned previously. Furthermore, it also shows the importance of multilingualism, and that it can be beneficial for European citizens, namely because they might be able to communicate easier with one another, as well as having a better understanding for each other's traditions, values and cultures because having knowledge in a language can make it easier to understand that country's culture in a different way. This is shown in the CEFR document, where it states that "Seeing learners as plurilingual, pluricultural beings means allowing them to use all their linguistic resources when necessary, encouraging them to see similarities and regularities as well as differences between languages and cultures." (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 30). This can also be helpful for teachers who might struggle with the usage of multilingualism (in this quote called plurilingualism), and how to implement it in the classroom. Encouraging students to use their linguistic resources when they are needed is a very important part of the teacher's role in this. Students might not be aware of their linguistic potential and might not know the benefits of using their different languages, therefore it is very important for the teacher to remind and encourage

them with this. Furthermore, as mentioned a little earlier, being proficient in different languages can help students see similarities and regularities between said languages, and thereby cultures, but this must also be encouraged and taught by the teacher, because most young students will not be aware of the ability they have.

2.5 Previous research relating to multilingualism

There are many ways a teacher can include multilingual resources in their teaching. A possible approach to this is something called "intercultural dialogue" presented by Heggernes (2019). Intercultural dialogue according to Deardorff (2019) is a way to develop attitude, skills and knowledge that might be needed for effective communication when communicating through differences (Deardorff, 2019, p. 5) meaning not knowing the same languages. Heggernes (2019) talks about how teachers can use intercultural dialogues to create effective learning in their students in class. When using intercultural dialogue in classrooms, it might often seem like normal dialogue to both the teacher and the students. However, intercultural dialogues have a more specific focus on intercultural themes, like for example traditions and values. An example of this could be that a multilingual student talks about his other language, which might be his mother tongue in front of class. This student could talk about the traditions and values if they are different from what the classmates are used to. Through this, this student will feel appreciated and seen, in addition to teaching his fellow classmates about himself. After such a presentation, the teacher can divide the class into discussing groups where they can discuss their thoughts on the mentioned culture and traditions, while also discussing their own different cultures they might have at home. Through activities like these, students might get new perspectives on different cultures through listening to a classmates' ideas and thoughts, and through seeing things through others' eyes in a group discussion (Wegerif, 2011, p. 180). It is however crucial that the teacher knows the class well and is able to create functioning discussion groups. Wegerif (2011) found that discussion groups must be able to work well together, or else the students might compete with each other to get "the correct answer", rather than discuss something that might not even have a correct answer. Students that do not know each other well or do not work well together also tend to agree with whatever statement a classmate mentions just to be nice and agree with them, rather than actually having a constructive and healthy discussion about it (Wegerif, 2011, p. 180).

When working with multilingualism in classes it is important to consider the students' needs and preferences as well. Kocaman & Aslan (2018) wrote a study about students' preferences when it comes to using either L1 or L2 language in an English learning classroom. The study featured a researcher who was very strict about sticking to L2 language both in and outside of class. This means that this researcher would only talk English with his students in his English classes. Throughout a longer period of time, it was observed that his students would prefer to go to other English teachers if they had any questions regarding the English subject because they did not want to ask the researcher who mainly used English. This shows that it can be important to let students use their L1 language when in class to communicate with each other, be it for discussing information, or just to feel more comfortable due to talking a language they have control over. Furthermore, it is often the case that non-native students or individuals in general feel less comfortable speaking English than they do other languages (Neeley, 2012, as cited in Aichhorn & Puck, 2017). This is quite a natural feeling most people have, but is something that must be recognized in school, as forcing students to speak a language they do not want to, just in order for them to learn it, might not be the right approach. It is said that some individuals feel anxious, restricted and reduced when speaking English (Neeley, 2012, as cited in Aichhorn & Puck, 2017). This is problematic for every student as this might affect their learning outcome as a whole.

On a side note, the study by Kocaman & Aslan (2018) mentions that students often prefer the teacher to use L1 language in class when explaining new words or grammar rules (Kocaman & Aslan, 2018, p. 186). Because of this, students that know multiple languages, in other words multilingual students, might have advantages when learning English due to them being able to understand new words and grammar rules in their own language first before applying said words or rules to the English language and their English speech.

Many English teachers in Norway and around the world tend to have a certain way of approaching their use of English in the English learning classroom. This certain way of approaching the English language use is often shared with the thought that the more English the teacher and students speak, the better. Cenoz & Gorter (2013) write that many English teachers are expected to not only speak English during their class, but to avoid other languages as well. This also includes L1 languages students might know (Cenoz & Gorter, 2013, p. 592). They further mention that such ideas have a deep root in both society, and in foreign, or second language learning and are hard to get rid of. Such thoughts might make sense in an English classroom, but can be dangerous for

multilingual approaches as it eliminates the possibility to use other languages in the English classroom. Monolingualism is a term that is frequently used by Cenoz & Gorter (2013). By monolingualism they refer to an individual who knows only one language. Cenoz & Gorter (2013) talk about how many schools in Europe have different teachers for different language classes, where they pretend to be monolingual speakers of said language (Cenoz & Gorter, 2013, p. 593). This means that an English teacher might pretend he only knows English, thereby excluding the possibility to use other languages in the classroom. This affects both the teacher and the students, since no one would be allowed to use another language, not even their L1 language, that both the teacher and students speak.

It is well known that it is often easier to learn new languages when having a repertoire of languages that supports learning a new language. Haukås (2016) interviewed teachers who all agreed upon this statement: "It is easier to learn new languages because you see connections" (Haukås, 2016). Such a statement is a very good reason to further explore the usage of languages to learn new languages. Additionally, this statement shows that multilingualism can be a relevant learning resource. Furthermore, one of Haukås' interviewees says that she recently learned Spanish, and her background knowledge of Latin, English, French and German were of great help when learning Spanish. This can be because these languages are similar to one another, and thereby makes it easier for the learner to see connections between these. Other interviewees also mention that they "actively used their linguistic repertoires to make sense of unknown languages" (Haukås, 2016). This shows how multilingualism could potentially be used in classrooms, and how it can help the students who have a bigger linguistic repertoire than others to use this to their advantage when learning English, or other foreign languages.

As previously mentioned, using foreign languages might not only be helpful for the students in class, but when the different language teachers work together, it might have a positive outcome for their students. The interviewees in this study by Haukås (2016) go on to talk about language teacher collaboration, the cooperation of different foreign language teachers. The interviewees mention that the collaboration between the different language teachers in their school are non-existent and some of them have not even thought about this as a possibility. However, when the researcher mentioned this as a possibility, they were quite positive to it. Such a collaboration between language teachers can help the different teachers be more aware of what their students are doing in other language classrooms and can thereby potentially make it easier for the teachers

to use this to their advantage in their classroom. One of the interviewees mentions that it is important to help students realize that what they learn in one language classroom can be connected to what they are learning a different language classroom. She mentions that "An important aim is that learners should see how knowledge relates to other knowledge and how it can be used outside the classroom" (Haukås, 2016). A lot of knowledge is often transferrable between different subjects, if students realize this, it can greatly improve their learning in both languages and subjects. However, not all teachers necessarily see the advantage of such collaboration. Haukås (2016) claims that in order for such collaboration to work, both Norwegian (L1) and English (L2) teachers need to recognize the benefits of such a collaboration with foreign language (L3) teachers. This recognition is not always present and can therefore make the collaboration between L1, L2, and L3 languages difficult. Hopefully, in the future, this collaboration will be seen as beneficial for all parts and is therefore often used in all schools. Another issue with the collaboration between the different language teachers, is the lack of time these teachers have available (Haukås, 2016). The English subject curriculum is quite large and features a lot of big topics that the teacher needs to go through. This requires a lot of time for the preparation and the implementation in the classroom activities. Therefore, English teachers rarely have enough time to prepare everything that is needed in their class. This leaves little to no time for English teachers to collaborate with other language teachers: "During a hectic workweek that allows little time for exploring new approaches and materials, teachers primarily rely on course textbooks." (Haukås, 2016). Most teachers tend to rely heavily on the textbook in their subject, which is only natural when there is little to no time to prepare new and exciting ways of teaching for their classes. This will also make it more difficult for teachers to use multilingual resources in their classes, simply because they do not have enough time to understand and prepare them.

A quite different study that caught my interest is a study by Kjellin & Stenfors (2003) which features a learning method that revolves around students receiving the responsibility to teach the curriculum to each other. This might not be directly relevant to multilingualism, but it shows that activities where students teach each other seem to be very effective. In this study, students receive a part of the curriculum they need to teach the others, then they are put in groups in order to give each other feedback and help each other before they later publish their work as chapters for the rest of the class to read and learn from. At the end of the semester, students sit two and two together, where they both act as experts on their topic and teach each other what they have learned (Kjellin & Stenfors, 2003). This study shows that activities where students teach each other

can be both very effective and fun for the students, and such activities are often something the students are not used to, which might make it even more interesting for them.

3 Methods

The research method that will be used in this study is a qualitative method. A qualitative research method is focused on collecting in-depth data from participants. This means that the focus is not on the collected amount of empirical evidence from different participants, but the in-depth responses from the participants. The main and only method this thesis will engage with is the interview method considering that this seemed like the most efficient way to gain insight and knowledge on this topic from experienced teachers. The interview will be structured as an *SSI,* or semi structured interview. An SSI does the following, according to Adams: "Conducted conversationally with one respondent at a time, the SSI employs a blend of closed- and open-ended questions, often accompanied by follow-up why or how questions." (Adams, 2015, p. 493). It was important to me to have individual interviews with one interviewee at a time as I think it is easier and more comfortable for the interviewees to talk about their thoughts and experiences without anyone else present. According to Thaagard (2018) interviews give good insight into a person's experiences, thoughts, and feelings as well as giving the interviewee the ability to give comprehensive responses of their perspective and point of view on the given topic.

I decided to go with a semi structured interview because the follow up questions could become an important part of the data collection progress considering that some responses from the interviewees can trigger new questions that were not on the interview guide from the start. This is because the interviewees respond with their thoughts and experiences, to which I can ask more in-depth questions afterwards as this is hard to do beforehand. Therefore, it felt enough to solely rely on the interview responses as empirical evidence for this study. Unfortunately, semi structured interviews have some negative aspects as well. Once the interviews are completed, they need to be transcribed so the information can be extracted from them, and this process takes up a lot of time. Adams says the following "SSIs usually entail the arduous task of analyzing a huge volume of notes and sometimes many hours of transcripts" (Adams, 2015, p. 493). Due to the time-consuming transcribing process, one might think twice about whether this is the right approach to choose. This study will interview between three and four teachers from different grades to cover a wide spectrum of how multilingualism is used throughout all grades in school. By doing this, the study will hopefully gather information that can help create more effective learning for students in the

future. Additionally, the difference in teachers and grades could possibly show that multilingualism is treated differently in different grades and why this occurs.

3.1 Constructing the questionnaire

Something that took a lot more time than expected at the start of this thesis was creating a thorough questionnaire for the interviews. While writing the questionnaire the main goal was to create questions that focused on the interviewees' experiences and thoughts around the topic of multilingualism. However, some of the interviewees were not as familiar with the concept of multilingualism as I had hoped, and this was due to different reasons that I will get into later. The lack of knowledge around the concept of multilingualism made it slightly more difficult to have an in-depth conversation with the interviewees and it also affected the answers that were given. That said, it is not necessarily negative that the interviewees had little experience with multilingualism, since this is also an important and interesting answer to research more on.

When the interviews were completed, it also turned out that the questionnaire might not have been thorough enough as there were some aspects of using multilingualism as a learning resource that were left unexplored and unanswered.

3.2 Conducting the interviews

The entirety of the interviews was recorded on a device by the interviewer. This was naturally agreed to by the interviewees beforehand. I decided to record the interviews, rather than just taking notes, since I felt that being able to listen to the interviews again afterwards can be a great asset for collecting empirical evidence. Listening to the interviews over and over is an important part in ensuring that no important responses from interviewees are forgotten or quoted incorrectly. This however means that everything said during the interview must be transcribed correctly so there will not be any misunderstandings and as mentioned earlier, this is a time-consuming process. The interviewees were very interested in participating, saying that this is an interesting topic. Because of this, the interviewees were very engaged and active during the interviews, and it was quite easy to spot their engagement and interest in the topic. As mentioned earlier however, some interviewees were not too familiar with this topic, which became troubling with some questions on the questionnaire and the discussion around said questions. Regarding this, the interviewees were

very open about their thoughts and knowledge around the topic, which makes the collected information a lot more trustworthy in my opinion.

All collected empirical evidence was anonymized and stored safely so only the interviewer will have access to it. The interviewees can of course also be granted access to their stored empirical evidence if they request this. After the interviews were conducted and fully transcribed, they were analyzed, and the most useful and relevant information was extracted. The analyzing process was also time-consuming due to the fact that the findings must be analyzed in the light of the theory featured in this study. To complete the analyzing process, the most relevant information will be presented in the findings section of this thesis. Finally, the information that will be presented in the findings section, will be reviewed and discussed in the light of the earlier research that has been presented in this thesis.

3.3 Anonymizing

When presenting my findings later in this thesis, I will be using codenames for the different interviewees to ensure they stay anonymous and to make it all around easier to understand which interviewee is mentioned. All interviewees work at elementary schools in Norway, ranging from first to seventh grade. This choice was deliberately made to get an insight of how multilingualism is used and treated in the different grades in a school system. Additionally, the interviewed teachers have all been teaching English for many years, and have therefore had many different grades, from first to tenth grade, which gives them tons of experience and memories to draw from during the interview.

As mentioned above, this study will use random anonymous names for the interviewees in order to ensure they stay anonymous, as it seemed easier to use actual names rather than referring to them as interviewee 1,2,3 and 4. The anonymous names for the interviewees were chosen at random, meaning that the gender of the name does not necessarily reflect the gender of the interviewee. In other words, an interviewee called Tony in this thesis, might be a woman or a man in real life. This is done to ensure they stay as anonymous as possible throughout the entire process.

The names I have decided to use for the interviewees are:

Interviewee 1 – Sascha

Interviewee 2 – Tony

Interviewee 3 – Kim

Interviewee 4 – Chris

Making sure that the interviewees feel safe with you storing their data and empirical evidence is essential to creating a good cooperation. Therefore, I made it a big priority to keep the data as safe as possible. In addition to this, it was also promised that the interviewees would not be able to be identified in any way by the reader of this thesis. This is the reason why I chose to give the interviewees names that are not specifically connected to their gender. These are just a few things to consider when conducting such a study.

3.4 Research ethics (things to consider when doing such a study)

Gathering findings for such a study is not always straight forward. There are always things to consider both before and while gathering the information. All these considerations also affect the time aspect when conducting such a study. Adams points this out when explaining semi structured interviews: "The process of preparing for the interviews, setting up the interviews, conducting the interviews, and analyzing the interviews is not nearly as quick and easy as you might think" (Adams, 2015, p. 493). There is a lot more to consider than the preparations for an interview, conducting it and finally analyzing it. One of the first ethical evaluations an interviewer needs to do, is consider how the collected empirical evidence will be stored, depending on how it was recorded. It is vital for a big study to ensure that the interviewees remain anonymous if this was promised to them. This means that all documents regarding said interviewees must be stored safely so no one other than the allowed people can access it.

I chose to only record the audio and store it on an external hard drive along with the transcribed document.

A different, yet important ethical research evaluation that plays a big role in this study is getting informed consent from all interviewees that participate. Informing the participating interviewees thoroughly is crucial for their understanding of the study they are participating in. This means that the interviewees need to be informed about the study's topic, reason, and range before they choose to participate. in addition, the interviewees must be informed about the recording of the interview and how the collected data will be stored and treated throughout the process of the study. Here it is important to clearly communicate that the interviewees can choose to end their participation in the study, as well as they have the right to have their collected data deleted at any

time if something provokes this. To respect the informed consent and to show the interviewees that they are taken seriously, they all signed a letter which included all the information about the study and what their participation means for them.

3.5 Methodic limitations

Any method chosen has its limitations that need to be considered before taking said method in use. I was very aware of the limitations a qualitative method and a semi structured interview comes with. Compared to a quantitative method, a qualitative method is most often restricted to a lot fewer participants, or interviewees. This means that choosing the right participants becomes a crucial part to a successful study. However, choosing the right participants is often hard, because the interviewer will not know how useful the participants are before having conducted the interviews. Furthermore, a qualitive method is also restricted by having fewer questions for the participants to answer. A quantitative method often has fewer, simpler questions that more participants can answer. Therefore, I believe that choosing a qualitative method limits the actual view of multilingualism among English teachers in Norway due to only a few English teachers acting as the voice of many. Due to this, I must stress that the responses from my interviewees are not necessarily representative for the entire English teacher community in Norway.

4   Findings

As mentioned, this study aims to investigate how elementary school English teachers view, treat, and use multilingualism in their teaching. In order to do this, the thesis will look into these English teachers' knowledge and experiences regarding the topic. This study is based upon the findings that were gathered through semi-structured interviews featuring four elementary school English teachers. Their responses, or findings will be featured in this section of the thesis.

As mentioned in section 3.3 the interviewees are all English teachers at elementary schools in Norway. An important factor for this study is that they all have plenty of experience as English teachers. All interviewees have taught multiple grades in English. Additionally, some of the interviewees have also worked at secondary schools (8-10 grade) in Norway from which they might draw experiences when answering. Another note that is important to mention, is that the interviewees were able to choose whether they wanted the interview to be in Norwegian or English. Therefore, three of the four interviews were conducted in Norwegian. This means that direct quotes from the interviewees will be presented in Norwegian and translated to English in brackets afterwards. I choose to do this in order to keep the direct quotation intact. However, one of the interviews was done in English, namely the one with Kim. Therefore, when a direct quote is presented from Kim's interview, it will only be stated in English.

The findings will be presented under subheadings in this chapter. The different subheadings include multiple research questions from the questionnaire. This is done in order to unify the similar research questions and their answers under one subheading, thereby making it easier to read and understand. However, the research questions featured under the subheadings might not have been asked in order during the interview but were united only after the interviews were done. When presenting my findings in this chapter, I will refer to the interviewees by their anonymous names that were mentioned in section 3.3. In addition to presenting the findings, they will also be analyzed in this chapter. The analyzing will go continuously throughout the chapter in an attempt to connect the findings with each other in a logical way. The findings will be elaborated on and discussed in chapter 5 of the thesis.

4.1 About the interviewees and their classes

A couple of questions on the questionnaire are focused on the teachers and their teaching style, as well as their classes and students, these questions will be featured here. An obvious first question regarding the topic of multilingualism is whether the interviewees are multilingual themselves or not. When asked whether they were multilingual themselves, all interviewees responded quite similarly. Interviewee two, named Tony in this thesis, responded that he was born and raised in Iceland and moved to Norway as an adult. Tony has full control over both the Norwegian and Icelandic language, in addition to the English language of course. The three other interviewees, Sascha, Kim and Chris all said they would not exactly define themselves as multilingual. Sascha mentioned that she grew up with a lot of Swedish family so the Swedish language had always surrounded her as a child which naturally made her learn the language in a way. However, this is not a language she uses often. Both Kim and Chris mentioned they know Norwegian and English, as well as some German. When asked what they mean when saying "some German", they quite similarly answer that this refers to them knowing words and phrases but would struggle to keep a conversation going in that language. Here it is interesting to acknowledge whether the interviewees think of themselves as bilingual or multilingual at all. Chris says that he would not define himself as multilingual, since his knowledge of the German language is very limited, and that he cannot keep a conversation going with someone. Funnily enough, when Sascha mentioned her proficiency in Swedish, she mentions that she would not call herself bilingual instead of multilingual because of this. This response shows that the term bilingual might be a bit "normal" to use in everyday conversations than the term multilingual. Sascha keeps referring to the term bilingual throughout the entire interview. Both Chris and Tony also switch to the term bilingual every now and then throughout the interview without being aware of it themselves. I did not ask any follow up questions on this, as I only realized it when listening to the interviews later. This however shows that the terminology regarding multilingualism might be difficult to understand, or quite new, since most people are not aware of the different terms and what they mean.

As mentioned before, all the interviewees have taught multiple grades from 1-10 in their teaching career. For me it was important that the interviewees thought back on older classes they had when answering the questions. However, it seemed more natural to them to mainly focus on their current class during the interview. Both Tony and Chris are currently teaching seventh grade in English, Sascha is teaching fourth, and Kim is teaching first grade.

A couple of questions on the questionnaire addressed the use of languages in the interviewees' English class. When asked how much of their English class is actually taught in English, or how much English is spoken in general in their class, most of the interviewees seemed to mostly agree on a certain percentage of how much they speak English in class. Sascha, who is teaching fourth grade mentions that about 75% of her class is English only. Additionally, she says that "når de jobber med for eksempel grammatikk og andre vanskelige ting kan det være lettest og best å ta forklaringen på norsk" (when they are working with for example grammar or other difficult things, it can be both easier and better to give the explanation in Norwegian). Both Chris and Tony who are teaching seventh grade answered that the percentage of the amount of spoken English in their classes is around 70-80%. Whereas Kim in first grade mentions it being between 25-30% in her classes. This shows how much it can differ between classes, but also teachers, how much English is spoken. It is natural that there is a lot less spoken English in first grade, but from these answers it looks as if the fourth graders have the same amount of English that the seventh graders have. This of course varies between all classes because some students are stronger learners and better in English than others.

Later, the interviewees were asked if they restrict languages in any way, meaning that certain tasks might only be done in certain languages, or that some tasks encourage the use of multiple languages the students might know. Unsurprisingly, all interviewees agreed that the students are expected to use only the English language in most tasks. Kim's quote confirms this "sometimes in specific tasks I say they can only speak English". In likeness to this, I asked Chris if students can to a certain degree choose what language they talk in in some situations. However, Chris mentions that some students might use other languages if necessary, in certain situations. A situation that Chris mentions is if two multilingual students with the same mother tongue struggle with a task they can work together using their mother tongue to solve the task, or they can explain tasks to each other if they struggle to understand it in Norwegian or English. However, such situations rarely happen since it is rare that two or more students know the same language, Chris mentions. In relation to this, Sascha mentions the following "for de som er flerspråklige så er jo engelsk ofte et tredje språk. Så da er det ofte kanskje litt viktig å skille de fra hverandre så det ikke blir uklart" (for those that are multilingual, English is a third language. So then it "might be important to separate those languages from each other so it does not become unclear). With this, it seems like Sascha means that using multiple languages in the English classroom might not benefit the students but have the opposite effect. On a follow up question with Kim, she interestingly mentioned the same problem: "When

learning English, it can become confusing when learning multiple languages that the students might forget what words belong to what languages and so on." It seems to be a common thought that using or learning multiple languages at once can confuse the individual and cause them to mix the words and phrases between the languages.

When Sascha was later asked a follow up question on whether students learn languages better if they are multilingual, she comes with a different, yet very interesting answer:

> "jo bedre et barn kan sitt eget morsmål, jo lettere er det å lære nye språk. Men det er et vanskelig spørsmål, det er nok ingen fasit. Det kan være begge deler, og dette kommer an på eleven og hva slags ressurser den kommer med.» (The better a child knows its own mother tongue, the easier it is to learn new languages. But that is a hard question, there is probably no answer. It could be, it depends on the student and what resources this student has from before).

Here Sascha challenges what she said earlier about the confusion that might come with multiple languages, but also states something new, namely that humans learn new languages easier if they have full control over their mother tongue. In likeness to this, Tony also mentions "vi vet jo at det bare er nyttig å kunne flere språk for å lære nye språk» (we know that it is useful to know multiple languages when learning new languages). It is clear that this is a shared opinion amongst most teachers and people. However, as Sascha mentions, there might not be a clear answer to this, but that it depends on the individual in question whether having a bigger linguistic repertoire is useful for language learning or not. This is also a very relevant question for teachers to keep in mind when creating activities for their classes, considering that some students benefit more from certain activities than others. Due to this, it is important to have thought about this beforehand if a teacher wants to use multilingualism in their class.

4.2 Use of multilingualism

 Since all the interviewees have taught English for many years, they naturally had quite a bit of past experiences to draw from. In this section I will present the interviewees' responses to questions regarding their usage of multilingualism in their teaching. It is important to keep in mind that some

of the interviewees do not have many or any multilingual students in the classes they are currently teaching. Therefore, some of their responses are in view of classes they have taught previously.

When asked if other languages their students know play a part in their teaching, the interviewees responded quite differently. Both seventh-grade teachers claimed that other languages their students know play a certain part in their English classes. In likeness to what Chris mentioned earlier, Tony also points out that his students can communicate in other languages if they both know them, for example if two students have the same mother tongue that is different from Norwegian. This way the students can help one another in class. Tony states that "Når en ikke forstår, kan en forklare til den andre på deres morsmål." (When one does not understand, the other can explain in their mother tongue). Additionally, Tony mentions that his students can use dictionaries to translate from their mother tongue or other languages they know into English if they need to. This seems like a good way of using the students' language skills for learning in the English classroom. Another positive side of such an activity or learning aid is that it does not take up any of the teacher's time besides the time it might take to acquire dictionaries from different languages.

Chris mentions an activity that he sometimes uses in his English classes as sort of a fun activity. Every student is allowed to write a short text about whatever they like, mixing any languages they know in it. This means that one word can be English, and the next German or Finnish as long as the sentences make sense. Chris says that such an activity "hjelper elevene å uttrykke seg på andre måter enn de vanligvis gjør" (helps the students express themselves in other ways than they usually do). Furthermore, Chris says that helping students express themselves is a very important part of the English subject, and "bruke språk som elevene er komfortabel med kan gjøre dette lettere og tryggere for elevene" (using languages the students are more comfortable with can make this easier and safer for the students). Such an activity is useful no matter what grade it is being used in. Students naturally feel more safe talking or writing in a language they are proficient in. This goes to show that multilingual activities are not only useful for learning English, but they can also be used to help students express themselves in a way that is more comfortable for them.

A different way to include languages in the classroom is something both Kim and Sascha mention. They both agree that other languages are mainly used when the students recognize a word in the English language that might be similar to a word in their mother tongue. This is a very good thing to take advantage of, Kim says, since first graders are usually very excited and motivated when they

recognize something from their mother tongue. Her students usually seem to be more active and engaged when some of the class is relatable to them and something they know from before. Such a way of including languages in the classroom might be more appealing to lower grades, since younger students might get more out of this than older students. However, such a way of including languages in the classroom might be more of a passive way of including them as this is not the main focus of an activity, but rather a side effect. In relation to this, both Sascha and Kim mention that they rarely use their students' mother tongue actively in class. Sascha believes that the focus should be on the English language only: "Jeg har fokus på bare engelsk om det er i engelskfaget." (I focus only on English in the English subject). However, Sascha also mentioned that the students' other languages can play a part if there is certain topic where their languages are relevant. In alignment, most of the interviewees mentioned that the topics they go through play a big part in whether other languages are included in the classroom. Chris mentions that topics like geography and different cultures make it a lot easier to come across and include other languages. Sascha mentions that in her school both the sixth and seventh grade usually have a "travelling project" where they are meant to describe their travels through different countries. Sascha goes on to explain this in detail and mentions that such a project is open for a lot of creativity, thereby leaving a lot of possibilities to include different languages from the different countries the students travel to. However, she also mentions that this might be a more multicultural activity than a multilingual one. Similarly, Tony mentions that it would be "kult at disse elevene kan holde foredrag om deres språk og kultur" (cool that these students can have a presentation about their language and culture). In likeness to what Tony mentions, Chris also mentions that he likes to give both his multilingual and multicultural students the possibility to tell stories of their language or culture if it differs from their classmates'. He claims: "Dette gjør elevene ofte mer motiverte og engasjerte" (This helps motivate and engage the students). As Chris mentioned earlier, it is important to help students express themselves in the English subject. Letting them tell classmates about something they are familiar and comfortable with, whether it be in groups or in front of the whole class, seems like a good approach to giving them a sense of appreciation and being seen. Additionally, this might also work in favour of the teacher since the teacher will get to know the student better, thereby possibly creating a better relationship with them which again might improve their learning in the future.

4.3 The multilingual teacher

This paragraph will mostly focus on interviewee Tony since he is a multilingual English teacher and because it might be positive for students' learning if the teacher is multilingual. Interviewee Tony was born and raised in Iceland, meaning he knows Icelandic in addition to Norwegian and English. During the interview I asked him whether he thinks this is positive for his students' learning. He had a quick think about it and came to the conclusion that he did think that it is positive. He says the main reason why he thinks that it is positive is because "Det å være flerspråklig engelsklærer er annerledes fordi det gir meg forståelse for hvordan det er å ikke forstå" (Being a multilingual English teacher is different because it gives me understanding about how it feels to not understand). Tony claims that he can easier help students in the English subject because he knows how it feels to learn a new language and the struggles that come with it. Additionally, he says that "Det hjelper meg med at jeg kjenner igjen at oi her er det hull. Hvilken del av det jeg forklarer er der det går i surr? " (It helps me with recognizing that there is something missing. Which part of what I am explaining is do you not understand?). Tony goes on to talk about how he might easier spot what part of an explanation a student does not understand. Figuring out what part the student is not understanding when learning something new can help the teacher explain it in a new way to avoid the part of the explanation that the student is struggling with. A part a student does not understand can be as simple as a word or a meaning the teacher uses. He also mentions that he feels he can be more direct with his students because he has been in the same situation they might be in. Everything Tony said about this topic makes me think that it can be a great asset for students if the teacher has been in their situation before, and therefore understand the struggles they might go through when learning a new language. This however requires that the teacher has enough time to use this asset in the classroom.

4.4 Challenges with different language use in the English classroom

Some of the interviewees also had responses that showed the challenges that might come with different language use in the English classroom. Three out of the four interviewees briefly mention the same thing that Sascha says in this quote: "Om de snakker språk jeg ikke forstår så kan det fort hende at de snakker om noe som ikke er relevant" (If they speak languages I do not understand, it is quite possible that they talk about something that is irrelevant). This seems to be a quite normal way of thinking, which might be why some teachers choose to exclude different languages in their

teaching. Furthermore, the interviewees wonder whether this type of thought might restrict their openness to language use in the classroom, which could potentially restrict the students' ability to express themselves. Something that none of the interviewees mentioned in relation to this, was whether this type of thinking is justified. This can of course be argued in many ways, something that we will look more into in section 5.4.

A different, but still quite interesting response I got from Chris was the fact that he was missing the collaboration between teachers. When he was teaching at a middle school where students learn foreign languages like Spanish, German or Italian he tried to work and cooperate with those teachers:

"Språklæring er likt på flere språk og om språklærerne samarbeider kan det være positivt for elevens utvikling i både engelsk og fremmedspråket eleven lærer." (language learning is the same in multiple languages, and if the language teachers cooperate, it can be positive for the students development In both English and the foreign language the student is learning).

He mentions that most teachers were not interested in cooperating with each other because they thought that their languages had nothing in common. This is something that Chris never got to do at his old school, but he now tries to cooperate with the different English teachers at his current school. However, he says that cooperating with English teachers is not the same as cooperating with foreign language teachers. This is mainly because the different English teachers do not teach the same students as one another in comparison to foreign language teachers who usually teach the same class as the English teacher. When I asked whether he had thought about cooperating with Norwegian teachers, who are also language teachers, he said he had not. Chris did not think that the English classes and Norwegian classes had a lot in common, and therefore it did not seem relevant to cooperate with Norwegian teachers.

Another type of challenge that came up during the interviews was the lack of available multilingual resources for teachers to draw from. I asked all interviewees whether they have a huge number of multilingual resources available to them, and if so, where these resources come from and how they can be used. All interviewees mention that there is a huge lack of such resources in the education system. Both Kim and Chris mention that they do not really search for such resources in the first place and that they therefore choose to stick to the book for the most part. Kim says that "I use

only the ones that are connected to the books we choose. In year 1 there are not a lot of resources like that." This seems like an answer that many teachers, not necessarily only English teachers, across Norway might agree on. It is quite normal for teachers to stick to the textbooks the school has available and use the resources and activities that are featured in said book. Sticking to the textbook might often be easier and requires a lot less time than trying to find resources on your own if they are not easily available.

4.5 The time aspect

Most of the participating interviewees mentioned that the aspect of available time plays a huge part when teaching English, no matter what grade. They all mentioned that this often means that the teacher must choose what to prioritize. It is mentioned that the teacher rarely has time to get to know different languages in order to use them in their classroom due to the lack of time. Earlier Tony mentioned that his students use dictionaries from languages they know to translate into English as a sort of activity. Furthermore, he also mentioned that this is an activity that does not take up a lot of his time during preparations or in class since it is such an easy activity to carry out. However, he also mentions that his current students are very proficient in both English and Norwegian, so there is rarely any use for such activities. "Jeg hadde nok ikke brukt tid på slike oppgaver og opplegg, men mer for moroskyld i ny og ne." (I would probably not spend time on such tasks and activities, but use them more for fun every now and then). He says this because as a teacher he would choose to not spend the little preparation time he has on creating and structuring such activities that are mostly for fun. This was a general statement made by multiple interviewees. As we have seen earlier, Chris uses a couple of small multilingual activities in his teaching every now and then, and it seems like he sees the usefulness of such activities and the effect it can have on his students. However, he also mentions that the time aspect can be a huge challenge to deal with:

"Selv om jeg ser nytten av slike aktiviteter velger jeg oftest å unngå disse fordi det er andre viktigere ting å fokusere på i engelskfaget" (even though I see the usefulness of such activities, I mostly choose to avoid them due to there being other, more important things to focus on in the English subject).

Not giving students fun and exciting activities and lessons due to there being too little preparation time is quite a challenge that should be dealt with in the future. However, it does not seem like an easy challenge to solve, especially in the English subject. Similarly, Sascha also mentions the time aspect as a problem, this is her statement:

"Engelskfaget føles veldig overveldende fordi det er så mange store temaer, men lite tid og det føles ofte vanskelig å komme gjennom alt i tide.» (In the English subject it feels very overwhelming because there are so many big topics, but so little time and it often feels difficult to get through everything).

It is clear to see that there are a lot of big topics even in fourth grade that require a lot of time, which again leaves less time for creative multilingual activities. This of course relates to any grade I believe, and the topics naturally get bigger the higher the grade is. Since most of the interviewees agreed on such statements it did not come as a surprise to me that they did not have too many activities they use or ideas for activities regarding the use of multilingualism in their classroom.

5 Discussion

The aim of this study is to investigate the potential that multilingualism might have as a learning resource in the English subject and English classroom. This chapter will discuss the findings from chapter 4 and review them in view of the earlier research and background that was presented in chapter 2 of this thesis. This chapter will be divided into different subheadings, much like chapter 4.

5.1 Multilingualism vs bilingualism

First off, I want to briefly touch upon the different terms that are used in this thesis. As was mentioned in previous chapters, the terminology around multilingualism is quite broad and often little understood. Most of my interviewees had a tendency to switch between the terms multilingual and bilingual during the interviews. Due to this, I felt it necessary to quickly mention why this might happen. As mentioned, Sascha was the only interviewee who continuously kept using the term bilingual, even though I kept using the term multilingual in my interview questions. Both Chris and Tony also used the term bilingual every now and then in the interview, but this seemed more like a "mistake" on their part. Personally, I believe that the term multilingualism is still quite new, and not many people are aware of it and what it actually means. Therefore, I think that many people today tend to stick to the term bilingual as this might be a more familiar term. A different reason why teachers might use the wrong terminology is because they do not have the necessary competence on the topic. Due to this I imagine that both teachers and individuals in general will be more aware of the different terminology and meanings in future years. This is because the term multilingualism is something that most individuals and especially teachers are becoming more aware of due to the increasing research around the topic and many individuals now referring to themselves as multilingual. Additionally, as was mentioned previously, the teacher study program has a bigger focus on multilingualism now more than ever, after becoming a master's degree. This ensures that future teachers will have more competence on the topic, which includes knowing the terminology and being able to use it correctly.

5.2 Reflections about languages

The first thing that plays a role in including multilingualism in the English subject, is the thoughts revolving around it, and other languages. Under this subheading we will discuss the different thoughts the interviewees in this study had around different languages in the English subject, as well as their thoughts about including them in their classroom and their teaching. This subheading draws quotations from different subheadings in chapter 4 in order to discuss them in relation to previous research as well as the curriculum. Naturally, it seemed logical and normal for most interviewees to focus on the English language in the English subject, and therefore they had not thought too much about the inclusion of other languages. As Sascha mentioned previously: "Jeg har fokus på bare engelsk om det er i engelskfaget." (I focus only on English in the English subject). As Cenoz & Gorter (2013) mention that it is quite normal for English teachers to think like this. This might be because they are in a way required to, and that the schools think that the more English that is spoken in English classrooms, the better. One can of course see the benefit of only speaking English in an English classroom and might argue that this is only positive, which might of course be true. Furthermore, Cenoz & Gorter (2013) discuss schools and teachers who implement monolingualism in their language teaching. This refers to teachers who only use the target language in their classroom, meaning that an English teacher will only speak English in class, because the more exposure you get to a language, the easier and quicker you might learn it. Additionally, this can be done to avoid including too many different languages in the classroom. Two of my interviewees, Sascha and Kim mention that using too many languages in the classroom might become problematic for the students because it might be confusing for them. Sascha mentions the following: "da er det ofte kanskje litt viktig å skille de fra hverandre så det ikke blir uklart" (then it might be important to separate those languages from each other so it does not become unclear). This shows that such thoughts about sticking to one language are quite normal in the education system and different schools, which might be natural due to it being a logical reasoning. Furthermore, this might have an impact on how motivated students are in class. If the teacher is very strict about using the target language only, students could feel less comfortable and might struggle to express themselves in a way they could if other languages were incorporated. This relates to what Kocaman & Aslan (2018) found in their study, namely that students tend to seek teachers who do not stick to only the target language. If a teacher sticks to the target language, it could affect the relationship between the teacher and students, since the students might tend to avoid communicating with said teacher unless they are required to. This might be negative for the

entire class, as students might not dare or feel comfortable enough to answer questions in class since they are required to respond in English, something that not all students can or want to do. This can affect the students' wellbeing and their learning outcome.

By comparison, we saw earlier that Chris mentions "bruke språk som elevene er komfortable med kan gjøre dette lettere og tryggere for elevene" (using languages the students are more comfortable with can make this easier and safer for the students). He strongly believes that letting students speak languages they are more comfortable with can be beneficial for the student, even though said student might speak less English in the English classroom. It is however very important that the student feels comfortable and safe in the classroom since this might affect their learning. Previously, Chris also mentioned that he believes working with the students' comfort and safety in the English subject is an important part of the curriculum, which it is. The curriculum namely mentions the following: "Through working with the subject the pupils shall become confident users of English so that they can use English to learn, communicate and connect with others." (Udir, 2020c). This shows that working towards a confident and comfortable student is a big part of the English subject, and something that will help them their entire lives. An approach towards such a confident and comfortable English student requires the usage of different languages in the classroom, and not solely focusing on English. If students speak a language they are not comfortable with, and do not have a language to retreat to, they will often feel restricted, anxious and reduced (Neeley, 2012, as cited in Aichhorn & Puck, 2017), which is not something any student should feel in school. Something I strongly believe in, is that building a good relationship and focusing on the students' wellbeing is essential to improving their learning outcome. It does not matter how much English the teacher, or the students speak in class, if they all feel anxious and uncomfortable by doing so. This will only create students that might fear coming to class, and once they are there, they will do anything the teacher asks of them in order to get out of speaking English. However, it is important to remember that all students are different and therefore require different approaches. Choosing to stick to one language might not necessarily be negative in many ways, but it might limit the possibilities both the teacher and students have in class compared to when they can rely on multiple languages.

A different, interesting point that came forth in the interviews is Sascha's thought around when to include different languages. She mentions the following: "når de jobber med for eksempel grammatikk og andre vanskelige ting kan det være lettest og best å ta forklaringen på norsk" (when they are working with for example grammar or other difficult things, it can be both easier and

better to give the explanation in Norwegian). This mostly relates to using Norwegian as a support in the English classroom, but can also be related to other languages if it is relevant for the class or individual students. It is often profitable for both the teacher and the students if one can rely on other languages when explaining something new. Kocaman & Aslan's study (2018) agrees with this statement. They found that most students who are learning a new language prefer that the teacher uses L1 language to explain new words or grammar rules (Kocaman & Aslan, 2018). Due to this, it might be beneficial to know words and phrases, or even grammar rules in different languages. Multilingual students might have an advantage by being able to draw from their knowledge in other languages when learning a new one. By this I mean that they can understand grammar rules in different languages and thereby apply them easier in a new language. This however requires a certain proficiency in other languages and the ability to understand the grammar in said languages. Considering these different thoughts on languages I think that there are many approaches to learning English that are effective. Some teachers choose to focus mostly, or only on the target language, while some might include other languages more frequently and rely more heavily on them when learning new words or grammar rules. There are of course also many different activities that teachers can implement in their teaching in order to draw on their students' abilities and knowledge they might have in other languages.

5.3 Multilingual activities

Implementing a multilingual approach in English language teaching might not be as easy as it sounds. Many teachers struggle with implementing this type of approach into their everyday teaching or when creating activities that revolve around their students' language knowledge. This section will look at the interviewees' responses addressing the way they implement multilingualism into their teaching, and hopefully reveal effective ways to do so in the future. Potentially, the easiest way to implement multilingualism in the English subject is to use creative activities that draw on different languages. Such activities can be implemented where the teacher sees fit and do not necessarily require significant preparation or time set aside during class. The interviewees in this study were not all that familiar with many multilingual activities for different reasons which will be discussed in a later section of this chapter. This however leads to less findings to draw from in this section. One activity that was mentioned really spoke to me as an effective one, partly because I have experienced this activity myself. I want to call this activity "mixed language stories" as this

quite easily explains what the activity features. Chris mentions that he sometimes gives his students a piece of paper, or their iPads, and lets them write a story regarding anything they want to. The only requirement in this activity is that the students use words or phrases from other languages they know or have heard of. It is totally fine to mix several languages into one sentence, as long as the words make sense together. Chris mentions that this activity: "hjelper elevene å uttrykke seg på andre måter enn de vanligvis gjør» (helps the students express themselves in other ways than they usually do). The curriculum states that the English subject shall help students develop their ability to express themselves in written English, whilst also helping them express their feelings, thoughts, experiences, and opinions (Udir, 2020c). Due to this, I believe that the activity mentioned by Chris can be seen as a quite effective and relevant way of achieving this goal. Furthermore, Chris mentions that this activity can be used in many different grades as there is no requirement of proficiency or correct grammar that the students need to follow. It is a nice way to let them express themselves, even if it is not necessarily related to the English language. However, this activity can potentially aid the students' understanding of the English language by helping them see connections between different languages and words that they had not seen before.

Another multilingual activity that English teachers can implement into their teaching is one that Heggernes (2019) calls for intercultural dialogue but is essentially also useful for the awareness of the linguistic repertoire that different students might have. Three out of four interviewees touch upon this activity. All three interviewees mention that certain topics play a bigger part for using multilingualism than others. Some topics also include many more intercultural themes than others. Such intercultural themes can be for example traditions or values in a culture (Heggernes, 2019). By connecting different topics to different languages in the classroom, one can achieve this so-called intercultural dialogue. The main essence of intercultural dialogue is that students shall communicate with each other about different cultures and traditions they might have, this of course also includes their languages. This can be done in different ways, for example through letting students have a simple presentation about the different languages they might know. Here they also include their culture, traditions and so on. As mentioned in chapter 2, one can divide the class into discussion groups either after an intercultural presentation by another student, or instead of doing such presentations. As Wegerif (2011) mentions, discussion groups can be a very effective way of communicating and learning, since students start to see things from other perspectives, which might give them new insight into topics, in this case traditions, values and languages their classmates know (Wegerif, 2011, p. 180). This however also relies on the teacher, and what sort of

discussion groups the teacher manages to create. For such an activity to be effective and help students learn, the discussion groups must be effective, meaning that the group should consist of students that work well together, or at least have a degree of familiarity with one another. Wegerif (2011) found that groups who do not work well together often tend to either compete with each other for the correct answer, thereby forgetting the discussion part, or the students tend to agree with one another no matter what is said, just to be nice to the other person (Wegerif, 2011, p. 180). This can be very problematic when doing such an activity in class as it might ruin the whole concept of intercultural dialogue and discussion groups. It is therefore very important to create well-functioning groups for such tasks in order to help students learn from each other and see things from new perspectives.

When touching upon this activity in the interviews, Tony mentions that it is "kult at disse elevene kan holde foredrag om deres språk og kultur" (cool that these students can have a presentation about their language and culture), meaning that he might support such an activity. One might think that only foreign students are able to contribute to this activity, but I believe that every student should have the possibility to present themselves and their background. Even though most students might come from Norway, many of them will still have a different linguistic background due to what they do in their free time. Many students nowadays watch anime or read mange which teaches them Japanese, many play video games which teaches them English and other languages, and most students listen to music or watch tv shows from other countries. All of this adds to a student's linguistic background which should be valued by the teacher. As Chris mentioned: "Dette gjør elevene ofte mer motiverte og engasjerte" (This helps motivate and engage the students). I agree that letting students talk about themselves and their background is usually really motivating as it makes them feel seen and valued for who they are. Additionally, I believe that this activity is an effective one also in the eyes of the CEFR. The CEFR mentions that recognizing learners as plurilingual, helps encourage them to see similarities and differences between languages and cultures. (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 30). This goes to show that such a discussion activity can contribute to seeing such similarities and differences.

5.3.1 Continual implementation

Compared to the activities mentioned above, there are also approaches to implementing multilingualism in everyday teaching in the English subject that do not require preparation time, something that might be very appealing to many teachers. Both Sascha and Kim mention such an approach which they frequently use in their teaching, and one that I believe is quite normal for most teachers to make use of in their classroom. They both mention that it is quite normal for their classes and their students to recognize and compare words when they are learning English. This includes recognizing words from Norwegian, but also from other languages or mother tongues they might have any knowledge in. Kim mentions that her first graders usually get very excited and motivated when they see a word they recognize from a different language. This can make it easier for the teacher to include the students' other languages and recognize them as multilingual beings. Haukås (2016) mentions that "It is easier to learn new languages because you see connections" (Haukås, 2016), which might relate to this approach of including languages. When a student sees a connection between a word or a phrase in English and a language the student already knows, it will automatically be easier to remember the word or phrase in English since they have something to remember it by. This also relates to what Kocaman & Aslan (2018) mention about students preferring to learn new words and grammar rules in a language they know from before. This approach of letting students work with the recognition of words and helping them see connections between words they know, and new words seems like both a fun and effective way of including multilingualism in everyday teaching. Additionally, this implementation of multilingualism directly relates to an earlier mentioned competence aim in the English subject curriculum. The curriculum states that students shall: "explore and describe some linguistic similarities and differences between English and other languages the pupil is familiar with and use this in one's own language learning" (Udir, 2020a). This makes me believe even more in this implementation of multilingualism, as well as making me want to use this approach myself in the future. However, the most positive and appealing side of such an implementation is that it requires no preparation time or that it takes up any time of the teaching. This is an approach that can be used whenever the teacher sees fit or the students recognize a word on their own. If a teacher is aware of this effective approach, the teacher can work on including this naturally whenever the students learn new words or phrases and might thereby help the students in new ways that are fun. Even though both Sascha and Kim teach lower grades I believe that this is an effective approach for higher grades that are

learning English. I believe that any student can benefit from relating new words and phrases to knowledge they have from before, as this might make it easier to remember it.

Another approach that one might implement into everyday teaching in the English subject, but potentially also other subjects, is to let multilingual students help each other with tasks and explanations. This is something both Chris mentions in section 4.1 and Tony mentions in 4.2. Chris mentions that two students who know the same language can potentially help each other with difficult tasks or meanings if one does not understand. This relates to what Tony mentions a little later on in section 4.2. Tony mentions the following: "Når en ikke forstår, kan en forklare til den andre på deres morsmål." (When one does not understand, the other can explain in their mother tongue). This is an approach that does not take up any of the teacher's time, as well as it is beneficial for multiple students. It is quite easy for the teacher to pair up students with the same mother tongue in order to let them cooperate with tasks they are given. This activity aligns with the activity shown in the study by Kjellin & Stenfors (2003). The activity that Kjellin & Stenfors use is to let students teach other part of the curriculum. This is of course not something that can be done here, but in likeness to Kjellin & Stenfors' activity, multilingual students can teach each other things one of them does not understand. I believe that the activity Kjellin & Stenfors (2003) talk about has a lot of potential if the teacher can adjust it to the multilingual students in the class. Additionally, allowing students to use their mother tongue in class might show them that the teacher values their linguistic background, something that can boost a student's confidence and self-awareness.

I briefly want to mention another positive effect of using multilingual activities. Having a multilingual approach or using multilingual activities in the classroom might of course benefit the multilingual students but might benefit the monolingual students as well. I argue this due to the thought that monolingual students might get motivated and inspired to learn more languages in the future if this is a normal and everyday approach that is practiced in the classroom.

There are however also potential challenges that come with such an approach. Letting students talk in a language the teacher does not have any competence in might result in that the students talk about irrelevant topics and do not focus on the task at hand, something that the teacher cannot control. Additionally, having multiple students in a class that speak the same language that is not Norwegian, or English is quite rare. Therefore, this way of implementing multilingualism in the class might be something that very few teachers can take advantage of, and thereby often forget about it once they have the possibility to utilize it.

5.4 Challenges of the multilingual approach

After having conducted the interviews, I was left with quite a surprising view on the topic. Most interviewees mentioned some challenges with multilingualism, some of them that I had not thought about before. Due to this I feel it is necessary to include a subheading in this chapter about the different challenges that come with multilingualism. One challenge that most interviewees touched upon was that they lacked linguistic competence themselves. This means that whenever students speak in a different language, the teacher will most likely not understand or be able to help at all. As mentioned earlier, most interviewees briefly mention what Sascha talks about in the following quote: "Om de snakker språk jeg ikke forstår så kan det fort hende at de snakker om noe som ikke er relevant" (If they speak languages I do not understand, it is quite possible that they talk about something that is irrelevant). With this quote Sascha states that not understanding the language that students communicate can be problematic since the teacher might not have any clue what they are talking about. This can lead to students talking about everything else than what they are supposed to. However, to take advantage of the last-mentioned activity in the section above, the teacher must let the students speak in a language the teacher does not understand. It is of course important in any teaching situation that the teacher trusts the student, as well as the other way around. If the teacher has enough trust for the students, letting them speak in different languages should not be a problem. I however choose to see this as a challenge for many teachers due to the fact that many not exactly lack this trust but might struggle to give the students the full responsibility for their learning and thereby being unable to help them. Additionally, I believe that many teachers might think that letting students speak a language that is not English in the English classroom is not ideal and will choose to avoid this if possible. Cenoz & Gorter (2013) also mention that teachers tend to avoid other languages that their students might know, even if it is the students' L1 language (Cenoz & Gorter, 2013, p. 592). Furthermore Cenoz & Gorter (2013) argue that this is not only the teacher's fault, but that many schools expect the teachers to do so, thinking that speaking English only is the goal they want to achieve. This of course is an important and relevant goal for the English subject, but not the only one. Making students feel comfortable might help them want to speak more English, thereby promoting their English skills in a different way. Similarly, Cenoz & Gorter (2013) also mention that some schools like to implement what they refer to as monolingual teachers (Cenoz & Gorter, 2013, p. 593). Such monolingual teachers only use the

target language in a foreign language classroom or an English classroom. This of course contributes to increasing the amount of English that is spoken by the students, but it also contributes to excluding other languages from the classroom. This is a concept in the education system that might and will most likely change in the next few years due to the increasing research on why this might not be the optimal approach for learning in the English classroom.

Another possible negative effect of not letting students work in a language of their preference is that the teacher takes away something that is safe and comfortable for them. This was briefly mentioned in the interviews, and relates a lot to what we have talked about previously with the importance of making students feels safe and comfortable to create a good learning environment where the students dare to talk a language they are not necessarily proficient in. Therefore, I believe it is important to not restrict language use in the classroom. The teacher will most likely not have control over what students are talking about when they are communicating in a different language when working on a task. However, it is important to trust that the students are working on what they are supposed to. Not letting them work in other languages takes away part of their safety and comfort in the classroom and might result in less motivated students.

Cooperating with other language teachers is also a big challenge, according to my interviewee Chris. This is not exactly a challenge that multilingualism brings, but more of a challenge in terms of being able to use multilingualism effectively as a learning resource. Chris talked about how he sees the value of cooperating with other language teachers, and he seems genuinely very interested in taking advantage of this himself. However, he goes on to talk about how he tried to cooperate with the other teachers when he worked in a secondary school, but few to none seemed interested at all. Due to this he did not get to try this out as much as he wished he could have. This aligns with what Haukås (2016) found in her study. Her interviewees also mentioned that cooperation between language teachers is non-existent in their workplace. However, the collaboration between language teachers can be very effective since the teachers will easier know what knowledge to draw from their students, Haukås (2016) writes. Knowing what the students are learning in other language subjects can make it easier for the teacher to adjust the learning that is going on in the English classroom. Chris mentions the following regarding this topic:

"Språklæring er likt på flere språk og om språklærerne samarbeider kan det være positivt for elevens utvikling i både engelsk og fremmedspråket eleven lærer." (language learning is the same in

multiple languages, and if the language teachers cooperate, it can be positive for the students development In both English and the foreign language the student is learning).

This is an interesting thought that Haukås (2016) also discusses. If the teachers manage to connect the learning that is going on in their subjects, it might benefit the student in different ways. Haukås (2016) mentions that students should learn to understand how knowledge in a subject can be useful both outside the subject or even in other subjects. Looking at the previously mentioned activities, seeing connections between languages can be a very effective way of learning and remembering. If students learn the same type of rules, words, or phrases in multiple languages at the same time, it might be easier to remember them since they can connect the different languages together. Therefore, I believe that creating similar lesson plans in language subjects through cooperation can be a great way of making the learning easier for the students. This however requires quite a bit of time from the teachers.

5.4.1 The time aspect

Something that has been mentioned multiple times in this study is the lack of time that teachers often face. Time is essential for many teachers, since there often is so little of it to go around. In addition to grading papers, texts and calls from parents, different challenges that come up everyday and much more, the teachers also have to prepare for their classes. Due to this, many teachers might choose to create simple lesson plans as they do not have enough time to make every lesson fun and creative. Almost all my interviewees mention that they lack time in preparations and in general, which leaves them little time to explore creative approaches like multilingualism. Tony mentions exactly this in his interview: "Jeg hadde nok ikke brukt tid på slike oppgaver og opplegg, men mer for moroskyld i ny og ne.» (I would probably not spend time on such tasks and activities but use them more for fun every now and then). This shows that for Tony at least, creative activities regarding multilingualism will not be the primary focus of his time, which is quite understandable. The same goes for Chris, who also mentions that other things that are more important:

"Selv om jeg ser nytten av slike aktiviteter velger jeg oftest å unngå disse fordi det er andre viktigere ting å fokusere på i engelskfaget» (even though I see the usefulness of such activities, I

mostly choose to avoid them due to there being other, more important things to focus on in the English subject).

Most English teachers will not have the time to focus on extra activities that most likely take a lot of preparation time. There are more important ways to use time efficiently as an English teacher, for example making sure that all students feel seen and acknowledged, something that is crucial to their learning. Furthermore, it is also a priority to have enough time for every single topic that the English subject features. Sascha mentions this in her interview:

"Engelskfaget føles veldig overveldende fordi det er så mange store temaer, men lite tid og det føles ofte vanskelig å komme gjennom alt i tide.» (In the English subject it feels very overwhelming because there are so many big topics, but so little time and it often feels difficult to get through everything).

This makes me believe that there is too little time for teachers to prepare for their classes since the subjects are so big and require the teacher to cover many topics in little time. For this reason, it might be hard to include multilingual approaches in the classroom, even if the teacher is interested in such approaches, there might not always be time to create or conduct multilingual activities in class. This of course also relies on what type of resources the teacher has available to them.

5.5 Multilingual resources

The resources that are available for teachers to draw from are also important to mention. In my interviews I asked the interviewees whether they use any specific resources in their multilingual learning, or if they know about any they could recommend. Most teachers tend to have a set of available resources that the school puts together for them. If teachers want to go move outside of these given resources, they must do so themselves. This means that they must use their own free time to find good and trustworthy resources, which many teachers do not have the time to do. Therefore, it is important that the schools or education system has some easily available resources for the teachers to access at any time. However, when asked whether they use any specific learning resources regarding multilingualism, all interviewees shook their heads, and said they do not have

or use any specific resources. This was quite surprising, but it shows the lack of available resources that feature multilingual approaches or multilingualism in general. I furthermore asked as a follow up question what type of resources the teachers tend to use and rely on. One common answer was what Kim mentions here: "I use only the ones that are connected to the books we choose." It seems like most teachers rely on resources that are connected to the specific English textbooks that the school uses. Most textbooks come with resources and activities inside, but also have a website that is connected to the textbook. The resources in the book and on the website are mostly the same however, so if the authors of the book choose to not focus on a specific topic, like multilingualism, it will not be featured at all. This often makes it hard for the teacher to focus on multilingualism if there are not any resources or activities that focus on it. This relates to what Haukås (2016) found in her study: "During a hectic workweek that allows little time for exploring new approaches and materials, teachers primarily rely on course textbooks." This shows that the available resources play a big part in whether teachers choose to include multilingualism in their classes or not. Naturally, as Haukås (2016) also mentions, the choice of what resources and activities to use is also closely related to the time aspect that was mentioned in the previous subheading. Choosing to stick to the resources and activities featured in the textbook saves a lot of time during preparations and is therefore a very attractive choice for many teachers across all subjects. However, finding multilingual resources is becoming increasingly simple as the number of such resources increases. A relatively easy website to find is this document featured on fusecontent: https://fuse.education.vic.gov.au/Resource/LandingPage?ObjectId=4a6d004f-2067-48db-8652-696515dd7e4d. This document features a list of multilingual resources that teachers can look into and take advantage of in their classes. I believe that more schools, and hopefully, textbook authors will take such multilingual resources more into consideration in the coming years, thereby making it easier for teachers to take advantage of them.

A different multilingual aspect I want to mention in this subheading, is the multilingual teacher as a learning resource. As mentioned in section 4.3, interviewee Tony is a multilingual teacher. Tony is raised in Iceland and thereby knows Icelandic in addition to Norwegian and English. Being a multilingual teacher might be positive for English teachers, or language teachers in general. It is not necessarily only the knowledge of multiple languages that are an advantage for multilingual teachers, but also the emotions and thoughts connected to it. Tony mentions in the interview that: "Det å være flerspråklig engelsklærer er annerledes fordi det gir meg forståelse for hvordan det er å

ikke forstå» (Being a multilingual English teacher is different because it gives me understanding about how it feels to not understand). Tony claims that he can easier understand how the students feel when they are learning something new in the English subject, but do not understand it. This comes from him having to learn Norwegian as an adult where he often did not understand and can therefore relate to that feeling. Understanding how the students feel in certain situations can be a very positive feature as a teacher. Some students might struggle a lot more with learning specific words, phrases or rules in a language compared to other students. As Tony mentions in the interview: "Det hjelper meg med at jeg kjenner igjen at oi her er det hull. Hvilken del av det jeg forklarer er der det går i surr?» (It helps me with recognizing that there is something missing. Which part of what I am explaining is do you not understand?). It can potentially be difficult for the teacher to understand why the student is struggling with certain things, something that can make it even more difficult for the teacher to find alternative ways to explain it. Having been in that same situation before can give the teacher a different perspective on the situation and might help the teacher find alternative ways to approach it. An important aspect of being a language teacher in my opinion, is to respect and understand the students' struggles. It is important to give students time, motivation and support if one wants them to succeed.

Possibly one of the most important aspects of the multilingual approach, is the multilingual students and possibility that learning new languages is easier if the individual knows different languages beforehand. Haukås (2016) mentions multiple examples of this being a true statement. Haukås mentions one of her interviewees who recently learned Spanish and claims that her previous knowledge of other languages were of great assistance when learning Spanish. This can be due to the high level of background knowledge of other languages, but possibly also because the other languages the interviewee knows are closely related to Spanish. Either way, it is quite clear to see that having a bigger linguistic repertoire is usually positive when learning new languages. This is also reflected in the findings that were received from the interviews. Sascha mentions that:

> "jo bedre et barn kan sitt eget morsmål, jo lettere er det å lære nye språk. Men det er et vanskelig spørsmål, det er nok ingen fasit. Det kan være begge deler, og dette kommer an på eleven og hva slags ressurser den kommer med.» (The better a child knows its own mother tongue, the easier it is to learn new languages. But that is a hard question, there is

probably no answer. It could be, it depends on the student and what resources this student has from before).

There is of course no clear answer to whether this is true, but as Sascha mentions, it most likely depends on the individual in question. This of course relates heavily to the earlier mentioned activity in section 5.3.1 about continual implementation. As mentioned previously, Haukås claims that "It is easier to learn new languages because you see connections" (Haukås, 2016), this relates to seeing connections between languages students know and a language the student is currently learning. Furthermore, the CEFR mentions that one should allow students to use their linguistic resources when necessary, as well as encourage them to see similarities between different languages (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 30). Encouraging multilingual students to use their linguistic background in class can be an effective way to motivate and help them. This also goes for students that are not multilingual, because most students have knowledge to a certain degree in another language due to activities outside of school. Encouraging any student to use this knowledge is important when choosing to implement multilingualism in class.

Additionally, having a big linguistic repertoire is not only useful when learning a new language but can also be helpful when trying to make sense of another language in a conversation or text. Haukås' interviewees mention that they "actively used their linguistic repertoires to make sense of unknown languages" (Haukås, 2016). This can be also be true for students who struggle in the English subject, but have other languages they can rely on and connect the English language to. I cannot stress enough that helping students to see such connections between languages is a great way of learning and understanding a new language and is something that should be implemented and valued in all classrooms. Helping students see connections and similarities between languages is also mentioned in LK20. A competence aim mentions that students in tenth grade shall: "explore and describe some linguistic similarities and differences between English and other languages the pupil is familiar with and use this in one's own language learning" (Udir, 2020a). This competence aim takes it a bit further, and states that students should use this in their own language learning. By this I believe the LK20 means activities like the one that was presented previously in this thesis where students connect words from different languages to one another. To further show the students that being multilingual is a valuable asset, the LK20 mentions that students: "shall experience that the ability to speak different languages is a great asset for learning, in school, and in

society in general." (Udir, 2020d) in its central values. With such focus on multilingualism and different languages in general, I believe that the future of language learning is in good hands, and that multilingual students will be even more appreciated in the future.

5.6 My experiences

Finally, I briefly want to mention my own experiences growing as a multilingual student in relation to this thesis. First off, I want to say that growing up as a multilingual was not anything that made me feel different or special. I did not use my first language a lot after I moved to Norway, only when communicating with my family at times. However, being German was and is still a part of me that makes me stand out from the others around me at times. Both my friends and teachers were amazed by my ability to talk German, and if anything, it has only a positive effect on my life. Seeing multilingual individuals as who they are makes them feel seen and special, something that is very important for their self-esteem. Personally, I felt very valued whenever someone appreciated my nationality and linguistic background in school. This is the reason why I believe that multilingualism is so important and requires more focus. Furthermore, it was way easier for me to have good relationships with the teachers who saw me for who I am and valued my linguistic background. This leads me to my interviewees in this thesis. It was very interesting to see that I could relate to many of the responses from my interviewees. Many of their thoughts around multilingual students and how to include their languages in class reminded me of my old teachers. I think this quite obviously shows that the same thoughts from ten years ago regarding multilingualism are still sticking around to this day, both the positive and negative ones. I think that this is because the curriculum has not had any specific focus on this topic the last ten years, and therefore the teachers have not needed to adjust their thoughts about it. Furthermore, both research and schools have not focused on this topic as much, thereby not creating any opportunities for teachers to change their thoughts and interest on this topic. As mentioned multiple times already, this will most likely, and hopefully, change in the coming years since both new research and the curriculum have a bigger focus on multilingualism now than ever.

 Secondly, I want to touch upon the mentioned activities, both by me and my interviewees in this thesis. The previously mentioned activity by Chris and me where the students write a text or story mixing any languages they know, was not new to me when Chris mentioned it in the interview. I remember one of my elementary school teachers using this activity quite frequently in class.

Furthermore, I remember we had this activity in one of our English classes in my teachers study as well. I was really when one of my interviewees mentioned this activity, as I really enjoyed myself and know how useful and fun it can be for the students. Even if it might seem confusing at first for both the teacher and the students, I think it is a cool activity once you get the hang of it, and it helps students be more aware of what languages and words they actually know. Both of the continual activities mentioned in section 5.3.1 are also activities that I remember from when I was in elementary school. We were three Germans in my elementary school class, and we used to work together on some tasks where we were allowed to use our L1 language. I remember that using our L1 language often made it easier to work with the task since we could communicate in multiple languages and use German words when explaining to each other, something that was beneficial for us. In addition to this, tasks that were related to traditions were often more interesting since we had different traditions to relate to than other classmates. We could discuss German traditions like different foods, holidays or music for that matter, something that gave us the edge on some tasks. Due to all the reasons mentioned above I strongly believe in supporting multilingualism, not only in the English subject, but in schools in general.

6 Conclusion

This study's purpose has been to research how multilingualism is currently used as a learning resource in English classrooms in Norwegian elementary schools. To achieve this purpose, the study interviewed four English teachers to reveal their thoughts, feelings, and experiences on and around the topic of multilingualism. This final chapter will briefly restate the findings from this study.

The interview guide covered a couple of different areas regarding multilingualism. The first one that was briefly discussed in this thesis was the different terms that multilingualism relates to. This thesis found that the terms bilingualism and multilingualism often get confused with one another, mainly due to the lack of knowledge what the terms actually mean. The definitions that this thesis stuck to were quite simple: bilingualism meaning that an individual has knowledge in two languages, while multilingualism refers to an individual that has knowledge in three or more languages. Furthermore, the findings showed that most English teachers are very open towards other languages in the classroom, but that some teachers try to focus on English as much as possible. This seems natural since it is the English subject, but it restricts the possibility to use other languages in the classroom. Focusing heavily on English ensures that the students get tons of input, which improves their English skills, but can also make the students uncomfortable if they feel forced to speak in English at any given time. Letting students use different languages in addition to English can boost their self confidence and make them feel comfortable and safe, something that is very important when speaking a language one is not fluent in. This is important to consider since uncomfortable students will not be wanting to speak English, and thereby will not learn English. The thesis found that some teachers might choose to restrict different language use in some ways for different reasons. Reasons for this could be that the teacher does not understand the languages that are used by the students, which can lead to potential conversations that are not school related. One might also think that students will not learn anything if they speak in a language that is completely irrelevant to the subject. This however depends on the trust between the teacher and the student. The teacher should trust that the students can work using different languages because this might increase their learning if they work well together in languages they both know. If students work using different languages, they might understand the given task differently and thereby solve it in ways they could not have using only English or Norwegian.

In addition to giving students the freedom to work in different languages, the teacher can also use prepared activities or continual implementations to promote multilingualism in the classroom. This thesis mentions a couple of activities that teachers can use in their classroom. One activity that was mentioned in an interview was one that I called mixed language stories. Mixed language stories is a quite simple activity where the teacher hands out pieces of paper and pens, and tells the students to write a story using words from any languages they know and mix them in sentences. This is a fun activity that helps students remember what languages they know and lets them take advantage of some foreign words they might know. I experienced this activity myself in elementary and was very fond of it. The activity lets students express themselves in ways they might not be used to or be able to, using just one language. Additionally, it helps the teacher see the potential in the students, as well as seeing them for who they are, and valuing their linguistic background. The second activity is called "Intercultural dialogue" where students have conversations or presentations about their languages, traditions, and values. Afterwards students discuss in groups, sharing their background with each other. This way students often get new perspectives via their classmates, and they learn a lot about each other. Additionally, students will feel seen and appreciated for their background, which is very important for their self-esteem.

I briefly also want to mention the two ways to continually implement multilingualism in the classroom. One way of doing this is to continually let students connect new words they are learning to words they know from other languages and helping them see the connections between them. This way students will easier remember new words if they have something to connect them to. The second continual implementation is to let students work together and help each other in different languages. If students struggle with a task it can often be easier to try working on it in a language they know better than English. It is however rare that two students in the same class speak the same language that is not English or Norwegian, which makes this approach even more valuable when the opportunity occurs.

There are however also challenges that come with multilingual approaches. The lack of time plays a big part in this. English teachers generally struggle with the lack of time as it is and implementing multilingual approaches would take up even more time that the teacher does not have. Furthermore, the lack of available resources regarding multilingualism requires the teacher to use even more time on finding resources and then preparing activities. Many teachers decide to stick to the textbook as there are few other resources available. Such textbooks rarely feature any multilingual approaches, which makes implementing them even more difficult.

Finally, I want to say that after having discussed and considered the pros and cons of multilingualism as a learning resource, I believe that there is a bright future for this in the next few years. This however requires that teachers are educated on the topic and have a general interest in using multilingualism in the classroom. Furthermore, it is important that teachers have enough available preparation time, as well as resources that feature and focus on multilingualism, as this is becoming more and more normal in every class across Norway.

7 Annexes

Interview guide

Hi and welcome to my interview! This interview will cover multilingualism as a learning resource in EFL (English as a foreign language) classrooms. You will remain anonymous in the collected data and publication of this project. Additionally, you have the possibility to read through this interview guide before attending the interview.

Which grades do you teach?

Are you multilingual yourself? E.g., do you know some words or phrases in another language?

Do students' other languages play a part in your classes?

How much of your English class is taught in English?

How much of your English class is taught in Norwegian?

Can students use different languages if they want/need to, and for what reason?

Do you restrict other languages in any way? E.g., when doing tasks together students can only speak English?

Do you use any games or activities that encourage different language use?

Do you have any specific resources that might encourage multilingualism in your classes?

What are your experiences with multilingual students in your classroom? e.g., have you had many?

Do you wish to include other languages more frequently than you currently do?

Are you interested in taking part in the research project "How do teachers use multilingualism as a resource for learning in the English classroom?*"*?

This is an inquiry about participation in a research project where the main purpose is to shine a light on how teachers use multilingualism in their everyday teaching. In this letter we will give you information about the purpose of the project and what your participation will involve.

Purpose of the project

The purpose of this project is to explore how teachers use multilingualism as a resource in their everyday teaching since multilingualism is becoming increasingly normal for many students. The project will look at how teachers implement multilingualism in their English classes and how this can possibly be improved. This project is a master's thesis.

Who is responsible for the research project?

Universitetet i Sør-Øst Norge (USN) is the institution responsible for the project.

Why are you being asked to participate?

You have been selected to participate in this project because you are an English teacher in the grades 5-10 and your opinion on this topic is important for future research, and to improve multilingual students' learning ability in school.

What does participation involve for you?

If you choose to take part in the project, this will involve your participation in an interview. The topic for the interview will be multilingualism, your experience and how you work with this on a daily basis. This interview will take approximately 30-40 minutes and I will record the interview and take notes.

Participation is voluntary

Participation in the project is voluntary. If you chose to participate, you can withdraw your consent at any time without giving a reason. All information about you will then be made anonymous. There will be no negative consequences for you if you chose not to participate or later decide to withdraw.

Your personal privacy – how we will store and use your personal data

We will only use your personal data for the purpose(s) specified in this information letter. We will process your personal data confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation (the General Data Protection Regulation and Personal Data Act).

- Both the student and the supervisor are responsible for the project, and therefore also have access to and are responsible for the security of your personal data.
- Your personal data will be anonymized with a code or letter so you will not be recognizable.
- You will not be recognizable in the publication of the project.

What will happen to your personal data at the end of the research project?

The project is scheduled to end August 1st, 2022. All data will be kept anonymized until the master's thesis has received a passing grade in case the data will be needed for something. After this all data will be deleted for good.

Your rights

So long as you can be identified in the collected data, you have the right to:

- access the personal data that is being processed about you
- request that your personal data is deleted
- request that incorrect personal data about you is corrected/rectified
- receive a copy of your personal data (data portability), and
- send a complaint to the Data Protection Officer or The Norwegian Data Protection Authority regarding the processing of your personal data

What gives us the right to process your personal data?

We will process your personal data based on your consent.

Based on an agreement with Universitetet i Sør-Øst Norge (USN), NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project is in accordance with data protection legislation.

Where can I find out more?

If you have questions about the project, or want to exercise your rights, contact:

- Student Maxime Munch: Mail: maximemunxh@gmail.com, tlf; 93484374.
- Supervisor Cathryn Bronwyn McWilliams: Mail: Cathryn.B.McWilliams@usn.no, tlf: 92082855.
- NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS, by email: (personverntjenester@nsd.no) or by telephone: +47 55 58 21 17.

Yours sincerely,

Project Leader   /supervisor

                                        Student Maxime Munch

Cathryn Bronwyn McWilliams

Consent form

I have received and understood information about the project "How do teachers use multilingualism as a resource for learning in the English classroom?" and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give consent:

☐ to participate in an interview.

I give consent for my personal data to be processed until the end date of the project, approx. August 1st, 2022.

(Signed by participant, date)

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