The Gamer, the Surfer and the Social Media Consumer

Vocational students’ English use in and out of school

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Abstract

This study investigates what characterizes the in- and out-of-school use of English for upper secondary students (16- and 17-year-old), who read significantly better in English than in Norwegian. The students were identified as Outliers, based on a profile developed by Brevik, Olsen, and Hellekjær (2016). The study is part of the Vocational and General students’ Use of English (VOGUE) project, led by Associate Professor Lisbeth M. Brevik.

To investigate this research question, 281 students at a large vocational school completed national reading tests in Norwegian and English, and five students who matched the Outlier profile (scoring below 20% in Norwegian, and above 60% in English) participated in my MA study. This is a mixed methods study, which collected a large amount of qualitative data (interviews) and quantitative data (survey and logs) among these Outliers over four months (September 2016 to February 2017), aiming to understand how they had developed their English reading proficiency.

The Outliers' explanations and their use of English in and out of school suggested that they had chosen English to be a greater part of their spare time activities and interests, than Norwegian. They used English for social media activities, listening to music, watching TV-series and movies, reading the news and other texts online, and gaming. The Outliers revealed being exposed to and using English through everyday participation in the Norwegian society, at the same time as they learned English at school. Based on these findings, I identified three profiles to explain their English reading proficiency: the Gamer, the Surfer and the Social Media Consumer.

The findings of this MA study indicate that these Outliers' extracurricular English use can be used to explain why they are markedly better readers of English than Norwegian, although Norwegian is their first language. Based on the Outliers own explanations, I argue that it is important for teachers in vocational studies to learn about their students' use of English both in and out of school. Such knowledge could provide important information about how vocational students develop their English skills. Such knowledge might contribute to helping teachers design vocationally oriented English instruction that is experienced as relevant by vocational students who might identify with the Gamer, the Surfer or the Social Media Consumer profiles identified in this MA study.
Sammendrag

Denne studien undersøker hva kjennetegner bruk av engelsk i og utenfor skolen blant videregående elever (16 og 17 år), som leser betydelig bedre på engelsk enn på norsk. Elevene ble identifisert som Outliers, basert på en profil utviklet av Brevik, Olsen og Hellekjær (2016). Studien er en del av Vocational and General Students' Use of English (VOGUE) prosjektet, ledet av førsteanamanensis Lisbeth M. Brevik.

For å undersøke dette fullførte 281 elever på en stor yrkesfagskole nasjonale leseprøver i norsk og engelsk, og fem elever som passet Outlier-profilen (scorer under 20% i norsk og over 60% i engelsk) deltak i min studie. Dette er en blandet metodestudie, som gjennom fire måneder (september 2016 til februar 2017) samlet inn stor mengder kvalitative data (intervjuer) og kvantitative data (undersøkelser og logger) blant disse Outlierne, med sikte på å forstå hvordan de hadde utviklet sine engelske lesekunnskaper.


Funnene fra denne masterstudien viser til at disse Outliernes bruk av engelsk utenfor skolen kan forklare hvorfor de er betraktelig bedre lesere av engelsk enn norsk, selv om de har norsk som morsmål. Basert på Outliernes egne forklaringer, argumenterer jeg for at det er viktig at lærere i yrkesfagstudier har kjennskap til elevers bruk av engelsk både i og utenfor skolen. Slike kunnskaper kan gi viktig informasjon om hvordan yrkesfaglever utvikler sine engelskspråklige ferdigheter. Dette kan bidra til å hjelpe lærere til å utforme yrkesrettet engelskundervisning som kan oppleves som relevant av yrkesfaglever som identifiserer seg med profilene Gameren, Surferen eller Sosiale Medier Brukeren identifisert i denne masterstudien.
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After five years as a student at the University of Oslo, I am not saying thank you, and see you soon! The last year has been long, exciting, exhausting, and not at least educational. I am thrilled to have been allowed to participate in the work I have done, with all the people it included. First of all, a big thank you needs to be given my supervisor, Lisbeth. Thank you, for all the help and support throughout this long process, I would not have been able to do it without you. Thank you for always providing me with careful comments and for engaging in my thoughts and ideas, for always rapidly responding to my e-mails, and for being the positive person that you are. Thank you for including me in the VOGUE project, and for inviting me to come with on presentations to share my work with others. I have really enjoyed working with you.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

While taking my classes in Practical Pedagogic Teaching (PPU) and reading texts about different types of teaching and different types of students, I was left with the feeling that I knew a lot about students in lower secondary school and in general studies, but very little about vocational students. Moreover, I felt prepared to plan and carry out teaching in English for general studies, but I did not feel prepared or able to do the same for students in vocational studies. I experienced a lack of research and texts in our curriculum about vocational students. Because of this, I decided that the student group I wanted to look at in my MA (master) was the vocational students.

As I was interested in learning and discovering more about the vocational students, I was introduced to an article by Lisbeth M. Brevik, *The Gaming Outliers: Does out-of-school gaming improve boys’ reading skills in English as a second language?* (Brevik, 2016a). In this article, Brevik had interviewed five boys in vocational studies about their use of English in and out of school. After reading this article, I first of all wanted to see if her findings were valid for more students by replicating her study. In addition, I wanted to build and extend her design by following the students’ use of English in and out of school over four months. As Brevik’s (2016a) research article had indicated that in a small group of vocational students, that read significantly better in English (L2) than in Norwegian (L1), pointed out a possible connection between out-of-school activities (especially gaming) and reading performance in English among these students, I was curious to investigate this further.

In the spring of 2016, as part of my MA course in Teaching English (EDID4010), I performed a small pilot study with three vocational students, and the topic of this study was their use of English outside of school. In this pilot study, I learned that the students used English throughout their day, and that they often chose and preferred to use English when they took part in different activities after school. This sparked my interest, and in combination with Brevik’s (2016a) study, is the reason for my choice of topic for this MA study. I am interested in identifying why some vocational students are good English readers while at the same time being poor readers in Norwegian. By collecting data across four months (in September, October and January), my aim has been to understand these vocational students’ English use in and out of school.
1.1 Prior research

To the best of my knowledge, no master thesis has studied upper secondary school students’ use of English out of school. There are however, six master theses’ that have researched L2 reading instruction and reading strategies in secondary school. Four master theses focus on lower secondary (Bakke, 2010; Sibbern, 2013; Skogen, 2013; Hjeltnes, 2016), and two theses from upper secondary school (Faye-Schjøll, 2009; Johansen, 2013).

In upper secondary school, Faye-Schøll (2009) argues that teachers lack knowledge about reading instruction, pointing to findings showing that there is little focus on reading in class with only a limited amount of reading being done. She points towards the need for more knowledge development among teachers on reading and reading strategies in order to help develop students’ reading comprehension. In contrast, Johansen’s (2013) study, examining the use of reading strategies in one general studies and one vocational studies class, argue that there is in fact a strong focus on and knowledge about reading strategies, both among teachers and students, and especially vocational students. Her concluding remarks point out that reading strategy instruction is important in upper secondary school.

In lower secondary school, Bakke (2010) looked at teachers’ attitudes towards reading and how they taught reading in class in order to investigate how reading is taught in English. Her research shows that teachers believe it is important to teach reading in general although reading is not taught systematically or consistently. She points out that this could be because of a lack of knowledge about what practical and adequate reading instruction is and how to carry out such instruction in the classroom (Bakke, 2010).

Skogen (2013) found differences in the level of reading proficiency, motivation for reading and reading strategy use in different classes. Also, she found that teachers differed in the teaching of reading and the use of reading strategies; as the choice of text used in class and its difficulty level affected the extent to which the students were challenged when reading (Skogen, 2013).

In another line of study, Sibbern (2013) interviewed teachers and school leaders about their use of the results from the national reading test in English. She found that none of the
teachers used the reading test results to help improve the students’ L2 reading proficiency, and concluded that there needs to be more work done to ensure that these results are used to help the students benefit from the text.

Finally, Hjeltnes (2016) looked at the quality of teaching when working with text in the classroom, investigating the relations between text work in the English lessons, students’ views on their English instruction and their results from the national reading test. Her findings show that higher quality teaching occurs when working with texts in class for a longer time, and that the teacher used first language (L1) to support his students in their text comprehension, even though the students in this class were proficient readers. She concludes that teachers should engage in dialogues with the students to learn how they perceive reading instruction to improve the high quality of teaching in text-related activities.

Based on this review of prior MA studies, there seem to be few studies about reading in English at an upper secondary level in Norway, and none of them include the students’ out-of-school reading activities. As the presented MA theses show, they have researched reading and testing in school. Moreover, only one of them (Johansen, 2013) has studied reading among vocational students.

### 1.2 English as a school subject in Norway in vocational studies

In Norway, English is taught as a compulsory subject from Year 1 to 11; elementary school (Years 1-4), middle school (Year 5-7), lower secondary school (Years 8-10) and upper secondary school (Years 11-13). In upper secondary, which is voluntary, the students choose between general and vocational educational programs. In upper secondary, English is taught in Year 11 for general programs, and the same course is taught in both Year 11 and 12 in the vocational programs. The national curriculum states that as students become more aware of strategies that help them understand text, it will be easier for them to acquire knowledge and skills (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research [KD], 2006, 2013). This concept emphasizes the importance for students in upper secondary school to be able to have
knowledge of subject-matter related to their educational program, in addition to knowledge about literature, culture, and society in English-speaking countries (Brevik, 2016a). The national curriculum also emphasizes a focus on communication when learning the language, and the Norwegian students should learn to use language both in written and spoken communication, both in and out of school (KD, 2006, 2013; Rindal, 2014).

At upper secondary school, vocational students normally attend two years at school, followed by two years as a trainee in a company. At school, the students receive a general introduction to their chosen vocational field and the opportunity to choose one craft or field to specialize in. This specialization commonly takes place during their second year at school. The teaching consists of common core subjects, such as English, and vocational subjects, and the students are introduced to theoretical aspects of their vocational field, as well as practical training (KD, 2006, 2013).

In 2011, UDIR initiated a project called FYR (Fellesfag, Yrkesretting, Relevans), aiming to make vocational students see the common core subjects (mathematics, Norwegian, English and science) as relevant particularly for their future occupation. For the English subject, this means that the teaching is to be adapted to the vocational orientation the students have chosen and to their experienced use of English. English competence is considered an important skill, as the students might encounter work situations that require them to speak English. The professions in which the students will work may have offices or partners located around the world, and the students need to be able to communicate in English. Therefore, FYR is concerned with making English skills, like reading, writing, speaking and listening, relevant to vocational students (UDIR, 2011).

In the project, relevance deals with not only making the topics within a subject relevant for the students, but also the learning methods used and the learning contexts, and that these are transferrable for both a professional practice and adulthood. The teaching should build on the students’ understanding, experiences and abilities, and contribute to development of new skills for the students (UDIR, 2016). In this sense, helping the students link the different learning methods and learning contexts to out of school contexts is crucial for helping the students transfer their good abilities and skills in one topic or context, to other areas.
1.3 English in Norway

In addition to the specific focus on English in vocational studies, English is used a lot out of school in Norway. Today English is the most used language in the world, and as much as a quarter of the world’s population is either fluent or competent in English. English is spoken as a first language, second language or foreign language throughout the world (Crystal, 2012). Norway has had close relations with the English-speaking world for centuries due to business and shipping, and the internationalization of business, education, knowledge, vacations, and service and goods has contributed to much exposure to English for Norwegians (Simensen, 2011).

Today, English has a prominent role in the society in contexts such as business, media, education and extracurricular activities, and it is no longer only practiced in domain use (Rindal, 2014; Simensen, 2011). Because of the prominent role the English language plays in the Norwegian society, Norwegian children are massively exposed to the language, especially through the media, but also when reading on the Internet, watching TV and listening to music (Brevik, 2016a; Rindal, 2014; Graedler, 2002). Many young people also frequently travel and are exposed to speaking English with both native and non-native speakers of English (Graedler, 2002; Rindal, 2014). English is considered to be an essential skill in Norway; as in the rest of Scandinavia, and most Norwegians are familiar with the language (Crystal, 2012; Graedler, 2002; Simensen, 2011).

Additionally, when people with different linguistic backgrounds interact, English functions as a default language (lingua franca) for communicational purposes (Crystal, 2012). Crystal (2012) modified the distinction between English being a foreign language and a second language, arguing that this distinction is less relevant in today’s society than it was previously. He explains that in countries, where English was “only” practiced as a foreign language earlier; English is now more frequently used and no longer considered a foreign language (e.g., as in Scandinavia and the Netherlands). In Scandinavia, the English language is esteemed an essential (Crystal, 2012), and the Norwegian Directorate for Education states in the English curriculum that “English is a world language” and stresses that in order to be able to communicate internationally, students need to acquire proficient English skills; strengthening that argument that English in an essential (KD, 2006, 2013, p. 2)
From Year 1, English is taught alongside Norwegian in school, and should not be considered a foreign language. The national curriculum put much emphasis on learning English, as Norwegians are users of English, often on a daily basis, and it is not unreasonable to predict that media will continue to affect the L2 learners of English in Norway in the years to come (Rindal, 2014). Further, Rindal (2013) argues that as a result of improved English language proficiency and an increase in out-of-school exposure, the English language does not feel like a foreign language to Norwegians. Brevik (2016a) writes that, although the cultural and educational environment English is taught in school is characterized by the majority of students having Norwegian as their L1, these learners of English as an L2 “encounter English on a daily basis, in and out of school” (p. 5).

1.4 Research question

In this master thesis I therefore focus on vocational students and their use of English in and out of school. Based on the need for studies among this group of students, the overall research question being pursued is: What characterizes the in- and out-of-school use of English for upper secondary students (16- and 17-year old) who read significantly better in English than in Norwegian? In order to investigate this research question, I have formulated three research questions:

RQ1: What are these students’ views on English and Norwegian at school?
RQ2: To what extent and how do they read in English out of school?
RQ3: How do these students explain their English proficiency over the course of four months?

The first research question (RQ) aims to compare the vocational students’ views on English and Norwegian at school in general. RQ2 aims to identify their use of English out of school both in general and on a daily basis. The purpose of this question is to investigate how the students participated in English language use activities, and to consider whether and how they used English and Norwegian differently. RQ3 deals with the students’ metacognitive awareness about their use of English. This question focuses on the students’ own explanations. The question attempts to gather information from the students themselves about
their reading proficiency at two points in time, first in an interview in September, and then in a second interview four months later, to see if the students provide any new or different explanations or elaborate more on their reading proficiency compared to the first interview.

To investigate these RQ’s, I was invited to participate in the ongoing project Vocational and General students Use of English in and out of school (VOGUE); using some of the project data, and collect some additional data for this MA study. VOGUE investigates the link between students’ use of English in and out of school by combining students’ reading scores, questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations. It relies on quantitative and qualitative data from students and teachers at 90 upper secondary school. The project is positioned at the Department of Teacher Education and School Research (ILS) at the University of Oslo and led by Associate professor Lisbeth M. Brevik. In addition to myself, four master students are currently doing master theses related to the VOGUE study, playing a crucial role in gathering and analyzing data.

1.5 An outline of the thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters, in addition to this introduction chapter. Chapter 2 presents the theoretical framing for the study. Chapter 3 gives a detailed account of the methods used in the thesis. In Chapter 4, the findings of the study are presented and these are discussed in light of relevant theory and prior research in Chapter 5. Finally, Chapter 6 is the conclusion including implications and suggestions for further research.

1 http://www.uv.uio.no/ils/english/research/projects/vogue/
Chapter 2: Theory and prior research

In this chapter I will present the theoretical framing for my MA study. In my thesis the main focus is on the activity of reading in and out of school, and I have therefore chosen a theoretical framing that includes the context in which the reader is reading. I will first present the active learner based on Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory (2.1), before I present the RAND Reading Study Group’s (2002) model for reading comprehension (2.2). After the theoretical framing, I will present previous research (2.3).

2.1. Sociocultural Learning

I have chosen to first shortly present the active learner based on Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory, to illustrate the learner’s role in his or her own development of reading comprehension. A fundamental role in the process of cognitive development in Vygotsky’s theory is social interactions; that learning and comprehension is achieved with the help and support of others (Daniels, 2005; Derry, 2008). Learning through a sociocultural context involves collaboration between the learner and others. In the classroom this collaboration would involve other students and the teacher; meaning is then facilitated through communication and the goal of the teacher is to support the students to become a more independent learner (Claxton, 2007). Outside the classroom, collaboration could include peers in social networks, whether physical or virtual ones. In other words, the learner is not solemnly responsible for his or her own learning (Daniels, 2005). In these learning contexts, the Vygotskian learner plays an active role in learning.

Based on this view, the Vygotskyian learner is not a passive receiver of information, but actively involved in his or her own learning, making sense of it both personally and culturally (Brevik, 2015; Daniels, 2005; Derry, 2008, 2013). A classroom that promotes an active learner is not practicing the idea of a one-way process from teacher input to learner output (Brevik, 2017). As seen in the following quote, the teacher in a Vygotskian classroom promotes active student participation and is an active participant in helping the student learn and develop;
The teacher ... has become the director of the social environment which, moreover, is the only educational factor. When he acts like a simple pump, filling up the students with knowledge, there he can be replaced with no trouble, at all by a textbook, by a dictionary, by a map, by a nature walk ... When he is simply setting forth ready-prepared bits and pieces of knowledge, there he has ceased being a teacher. (Vygotsky, 1997, p. 339)

In line with this quote, Claxton (2007) argues that teachers should promote active learners, and engage their students in dialogues to teach them how to reflect on their own learning process (e.g.; developing knowledge about how to regulate one's own learning). In this manner, the Vygotskian learner is able to relate meaning-making in the classroom with his or her own individual consciousness by actively participating in the learning environment. This also enables the learner to create a personal relation between the learning activity inside the classroom and activities outside the classroom. In this way, the Vygotskian learner is able to reposition himself or herself in new practices (Brevik, 2015), in order to make sense of concepts and ideas in the world in a continuous movement between the personal and the cultural (e.g., Daniels, 2008).

As the aim of my study is to investigate the use of English in and out of school, I have chosen to use the RAND Reading Study Group (hereafter: RAND) model (2002). This model provides a theoretical framework for reading comprehension, incorporating the activity and context of reading, as well as the text and reader. The first two elements of the model (activity and context) are important for my MA study in order to be able to identify what makes students good readers of English, and at the same time poor readers of Norwegian, as I assume, based on previous research, that this is not only explained by the text or the reader alone. The RAND (2002) model emphasizes the importance of different activities and contexts to work with text; multimedia and electronic texts are becoming increasingly more important (p. 28). This model allows me to investigate reading as and educational activity both inside and outside the classroom.
2.2 Reading in a sociocultural context

In my MA study, I am not referring to the skill of learning to read, but rather to the concept of reading to learn, which is often referred to as reading comprehension. As I am researching vocational students' uses of English in and out of school, I am using the RAND (2002) reading model, since this model connects reading as an activity with the sociocultural context. The term *reading comprehension* is defined by RAND (2002) as follows:

> the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language. It consists of three elements: the reader, the text, and the activity or purpose for reading [and] how these elements interrelate in reading comprehension, an interrelationship that occurs within a larger sociocultural context that shapes and is shaped by the reader. (p. 11)

This means that *reading comprehension* is both a cognitive and social process in which a reader extracts information from the text and constructs meaning based on themselves as readers (Brevik, 2015; Duke, Pearson, Strachan, & Billman, 2011). This meaning making takes place in a sociocultural context, which integrates the reader, the activity, and the context (RAND, 2002). Even though the RAND definition is from 2002, this understanding of reading comprehension is still in use.

The RAND definition is in line with the PISA definition of reading literacy as, “understanding, using, reflecting on and engaging with written texts, in order to achieve one's goals, to develop one's knowledge and potential, and to participate in society” (OECD, 2010, p. 37). These definitions underline that reading comprehension is dependent on all four elements of the RAND model; reading comprehension depends not only on the text, but also on who the reader is, which activities the reader participates in, and the social and cultural context the reading occurs in. This concept is relevant for my MA study because it includes various types of text, whether introduced by a teacher or chosen by the student, and whether it is read in or out of school, in line with the notion of the active Vygotskian learner. This is illustrated in Figure 2A below.
The four elements in the RAND (2002) model, the text, the reader, the activity, and the context are described in detail below.

### 2.2.1 The text

The text is the *what* in the RAND-model, comprising what the students read. This includes the type of text or which specific text the reader is working with. Not only do different types of text have different content, but also different features, and the features of a text significantly influence the comprehension of the text (RAND, 2002). As the reader reads a text, he or she constructs representations of the text at hand. This means that the information extracted from the text influences comprehension. However, meaning needs to be constructed from the text as well, as it does not exist in the text alone; hence students should have knowledge about how to monitor their own understanding and apply strategic efforts in order to construct meaning (RAND, 2002).
Furthermore, due to the expanding use of computers and electronic texts, the definition of text has been broadened to include electronic and multimedia documents, as well as conventional printed texts (RAND, 2002). Digital text requires different or additional reading skills than traditional text, which might be challenging for the reader. Electronic texts present challenges in terms of reading non-linear hypertexts, but can also provide extra support through hyperlinks to definitions, explanations and direct translations of words in the text (RAND, 2002). For instance, reading electronic texts demands that the reader is able to find whether the text is relevant and reliable (RAND, 2002), and that the reader masters skills and techniques for working with a variety of texts.

2.2.2 The reader

For the reader to construct meaningful representation of the text, the readers needs relevant knowledge (both world and domain knowledge) and to be able to use the appropriate cognitive skills needed to understand the text (RAND, 2002). If one of these elements for constructing meaning comes up short, the other levels may compensate; for example, if a nonnative speaker of English struggles to understand the words being used, general domain knowledge about the topic could help the reader still make sense of the text (Goldman, Snow & Vaughn, 2016). It is not only the meaning of the text that makes comprehension, but also constructions of representations done by the reader. The surface code (wording of the text), the text base (idea units representing the information in the text), and the mental models (information is processed for meaning) are examples of such representation of a text done by the reader (RAND, 2002).

To the act of reading, the reader brings his or her cognitive abilities (like attention, memory, critical analytic ability), in addition to motivation (the purpose of reading, interest in content, self-efficacy as reader), various types of knowledge (like vocabulary, domain and topic knowledge, linguistics, knowledge of specific comprehension strategies), and experiences. Depending on the text being used, a reader’s comprehension of the text calls on all of these skills (RAND, 2002).

In order to help the students become independent readers and learners, Goldman et al. (2016) writes that most students “need structured opportunities to acquire the knowledge and skills
required to meet these content, text, and task challenges” that they will encounter as they become older. An element in teaching reading for understanding is to let the students purposefully engage with and actively process multiple forms of text (e.g. traditional verbal, digital, and dynamic visuals) (Goldman et al., 2016). This theme, within the field of reading for understanding, deals with active, purposeful and engaged reading, which reinforces the importance of an active learner (Claxton, 2007).

A reader’s prior or domain knowledge combined with the content of the text affect comprehension, in addition to the text’s vocabulary, linguistic structure, style and genre (RAND, 2002). In order for a reader to not experience a text as too difficult, such factors need to be matched to the reader in terms of knowledge and experiences. Goldman et al. (2016) writes that if we connect a student’s prior knowledge to new tasks and illustrate concepts and vocabulary relevant to the new topic, this will support the students when learning new content knowledge from text and develop reading comprehension. One way of working towards this could be to introduce and repeat concepts and vocabulary relevant to the topic and task, and to deepen students’ understanding of why these elements are relevant to the topic (Goldman et al., 2016). Moreover, connecting prior knowledge with new learning is also valuable for deepening the students’ understanding of new information and new topics (Goldman et al., 2016), which is one characteristic of a good reader (Carlson et al., 2014).

Depending on the text being read, the purpose for reading the text, the author’s intentions, and society and time in which the text is written will influence the reader’s interpretations and comprehension of a text (Bernhardt, 2011). For my MA study, this point is relevant in order to combine the texts being read in and out of school, and the reader in terms of their own interests in and knowledge about the topic.

2.2.3 The activity
Activity deals with the purpose or reasons for why the reader is reading a text. The activity of reading may include more than one purpose, and it involves operations to process the text being read, as well as consequences of participating in the reading activity (RAND, 2002). Before reading, a reader can either be externally imposed (like completing a school assignment) or internally generated (e.g., wanting to learn how to do something, wanting to learn vocabulary to complete a gaming assignment, learning more about a topic or
completing an assignment of their own choosing). As the purpose is influenced by motivation, interest and prior knowledge, the initial purpose can change throughout the activity (RAND, 2002). Externally mandated purposes, if accepted by the reader, can inform the reader about how to read a text and how to solve the task at hand. On the other hand, if the reader does not accept the purpose, this might conflict with the internally generated purposes and may cause incomplete reading comprehension. For example, a student might not read a text purposefully if he or she does not see the relevance of the activity, and in this manner not comprehend the text fully. By providing an explicit purpose for reading, the students can approach text intentionally; seeking information or considering a controversy relevant for the task, and evaluating if they had sufficient information to for example answer a guiding question (Goldman et al., 2016).

While reading, the purpose for the activity influences the reader as he or she processes the text. This is important, as the different activities may influence comprehension, for example reading as part of a test, or reading at home by choice (e.g., on the Internet or in games) (RAND, 2002). Reading activities also produce different consequences. Consequences of reading activities can be increasing the reader’s knowledge, learning how something is done (application), or being involved (engagement) in the reading (RAND, 2002). The reading activity can lead to increased knowledge for the reader and better understanding of a topic (like reading about the functions of a tool or how an item is built), or the student could learn target vocabulary (Anderson, Wilson & Fielding, 1988; Day, Omura & Hiramatsu, 1991). The reader’s personal purpose for reading is often an important part of the application (Brevik, 2017); building something (like a bicycle) or preparing a meal (using a recipe). Engagement as a consequence helps the reader stay involved in the reading activity, for example when reading a novel of interest or reading instructions in online games (Brevik, 2016a). Therefore, teachers should aim to support or facilitate student engagement with text, and one way of achieving this goal is to establish an explicit purpose for reading, which asks the students to do more than only answer questions about the text or to pass a test (Goldman et al., 2016).

Knowledge, application and engagement can all be seen as direct consequences of the reading activity, and they may have long-term consequences. The reader can acquire knowledge (or application) through reading for enjoyment, and bring this new knowledge
into the next reading experience (RAND, 2002; Goldman et al., 2016). Examples of this could be learning new vocabulary, a new skill or discovering new interests. In other words, different reading activities can result in reading and development of knowledge (RAND, 2002).

As one of the elements the reader brings with him or her to the act of reading is motivation, and the act of reading should attempt to complement this and add to it. One way to motivate readers to read is to give them freedom to choose and select text that they want to read for themselves (Day & Bamford, 2002). This is one principle within extensive reading programs. By allowing readers to choose, and to stop reading a text if they find it to be too difficult or not of interest, the reading activity could be experienced as something personal and could help create more independent readers. Because extensive reading gives the reader this kind of freedom, it opens up for them to spend a great deal of time being exposed to reading. Moreover, extensive reading helps encourage and develop fluency, as the texts are often within the readers’ comprehension level and linguistic ability, the readers have a personal interest for the text, and it is for general purposes (Day & Bamford, 2002; RAND, 2002).

The activity of reading always takes place in a sociocultural context; whether the activity is a school assignment, a test or gaming. Depending on the activity at hand, the context changes; a test or school assignment could be in a classroom context, while gaming could in an out of school context, like a reader’s own bedroom or a friend’s house. The sociocultural context of reading will be presented in the next section below.

2.2.4 The sociocultural context

As already mentioned, the context of reading is not limited to the classroom. Both in and out of school, adolescents have different understandings of and experiences with reading, which are based on varying sociocultural environments (RAND, 2002). For the reader, both the culture and the community influence social interactions and interpretations of information in which the reading activity takes place. Therefore, there is a close link between learning and reading comprehension on the one hand, and historical and cultural activities on the other. Kintsch (1994) points out that because of the sociocultural influence on each individual reader, he or she interprets texts differently. In other words, the sociocultural context influences how readers might develop different comprehensions of a text.
RAND (2002) views learning as cultural and historical activities that adolescents engage in through social interaction. As these interactions take place in varying sociocultural contexts, it could represent how a “specific cultural group or discourse community interprets the world and transmits information” (p. 20). This sociocultural context in which an adolescent first acquires knowledge is one factor that could explain how a student comprehend and understand a text, and how different students with different backgrounds acquire reading comprehension differently (RAND, 2002). Moreover, having knowledge about the various sociocultural contexts in which students engage could give valuable information about how they acquire reading comprehension.

Young people learn languages for in social and out of school contexts (Barton & Potts, 2013). These contexts might be physical or virtual, relating to the person’s connectedness to various situations in and out of school (Gee, 2017). An increasing number of social contexts provide the opportunity to practice language skills, to observe the language use of others and to negotiate language use at the same time as they are practicing their own skills. While watching TV-series and movies, searching the Internet and participating in online games, they encounter different types of texts in different contexts (Day & Bamford, 2002; Barton & Potts, 2013; Brevik, 2016a), which means that the purpose of the activity might change depending on the text, the reader, and/or the context (RAND, 2002).

For my MA study, the context in which the students engage in English use is an essential element in understanding and explaining their English proficiency. At the same time as the students encounter English in a classroom context, they also practice English out of school. The use of digital texts is increasingly more used not only in the school context, but also very much, if not even more, in out of school contexts (Barton & Potts, 2013; Day & Bamford 2002; RAND, 2002;).

### 2.2.5 Summary of the sociocultural view of reading

Vygotsky linked learning to both language and social interactions (e.g., Brevik, 2015; Daniels, 2008). His theory, in line with sociocultural theories of learning, emphasizes that learning occurs in social interactions with their peers and/or adults (RAND, 2002). This means, that the students in my MA study might read texts in the company of others, in or out
of school, based on their own choices or school assignments. The students might comprehend text through receiving support from others, being challenged by the text or task at hand, and in this process develop reading comprehension (RAND, 2002). Hopefully, the students experience learning and a development of knowledge as a result of reading, as well as consequences of application and engagement.

2.3 Other studies linking in and out of school uses of English

In a Norwegian educational context, Brevik (2016a) is, to the best of my knowledge, the only study that has looked at the connection between reading results in school and reading out of school in English in vocation studies. She emphasizes the need for a more detailed picture and more information about vocational students’ use of and competence in English (Brevik, 2016a). In other words, there is a need for more studies investigating this connection, and also researching the out-of-school uses of English over time, providing richer and more detailed data. This is what my MA study aims to do.

Brevik (2016b) presents three myths about English among vocational students, which she argues needs to be nuanced; (1) vocational students are weaker readers than students in general studies, (2) vocational students are “theory weak”, and (3) the vocational students’ use of English in their spare time is not relevant in a school context. Her study however, identified a group of students who were poor readers based on results in the national reading test in Norwegian, and simultaneously good readers based on the results in the English reading test. Based on this unexpected profile, she labeled these “Outliers”. The Outlier group was identified from a national sample of 10,331 students, and included 463 students (16-year olds) in Norway. Some of these Outliers explained their English reading proficiency by their out-of-school uses of English; explaining that they spent an average of three hours or more a day on online gaming (Brevik, 2016a). Additionally, the study highlights that the students spent a lot of time watching English language movies and TV-shows, and listening to English music (Brevik, 2016a).
Also, in a new study, Brevik and Hellekjær (forthcoming) have investigated reading proficiency, strategy use and motivation for English among the Outliers. The study found that the Outliers used relevant reading comprehension strategies and that they demonstrated metacognitive awareness towards the use of such strategies. Among the participants, the boys outnumbered the girls, and more students attended a vocational program than a general program. Also, the study found that the Outliers had a high interest for reading in English, and were motivated for doing well in English at school (Brevik & Hellekjær, forthcoming).

Other studies about the use of English for extracurricular activities have focused on the specific uses of different tools in learning and teaching (Alvermann, Hagood, Heron-Hruby, Hughes, Williams & Yoon, 2007; Silseth, 2011; Sundqvist & Wikström, 2014; Vasbø, Silseth & Erstad, 2014;), or the possible benefits of incidental language learning outside of the classroom (d’Ydewalle & Van de Poel, 1999; Sylvén & Sundqvist, 2012; Winke, Gass & Sydorenko, 2010).

First, in an American context, Alvermann et al. (2007) performed a study of adolescent readers’ views about themselves as readers. Alvermann et al. (2007) discovered that, even though these readers had all scored in the lowest quartile of a reading test, they did in fact identify themselves as readers in out-of-school activities. The students reported mostly to engage in activities such as playing video games, searching the Internet, listening to music and talking on the phone, as well as reading texts in the form of Internet sites, song lyrics, billboard advertisements and digital games (Alvermann et al., 2007). The study reports that the reasons for reading after school was often explained as “[I] heard about it and it sounds interesting”, or because “someone made me/I had to” (Alvermann et al., 2007, p. 44). Nonetheless, these readers voluntarily spent approximately 30 minutes or more reading after school every day.

As subtitles in the same language as in the film or program could help students understand the visual presented to them, different studies have investigated possible benefits of using subtitles in language learning (d’Ydewalle & Van de Poel, 1999; Winke, Gass & Sydorenko, 2010). These studies argue that subtitles can be used as a bonus to support language learning and help students connect auditory and visual segments of information. d’Ydewalle and Van de Poel (1999) investigated how watching subtitled television programs in a foreign language
contributed to incidental foreign-language acquisition among Dutch-speaking children (8-12 year olds). By looking at how both foreign and native languages were presented through television channels, they argue that subtitles could be a useful tool to acquire new forms of language both visually and audibly. Their study found that for the use of subtitles to be most useful in language learning, the L1 and L2 should be linguistically similar (d’Ydewalle & Van de Poel, 1999). In a similar vein, Winke, Gass and Sydorenko (2010) investigated the use of subtitles among L2 learners while they were watching videos in L2. They found that using subtitles in videos helped the students achieve better vocabulary recognition and overall comprehension. Winke et al. (2010) point out that subtitles could make the learner more aware of unfamiliar words as they appear on the screen simultaneously as they are spoken. Overall, the study argues that using L2 subtitles while watching a video or film in the L2 is more beneficial than not using the subtitles during the activity (Winke et al. 2010).

In a Swedish context, Sundqvist (2009) investigated the relationship between teenager’s use of English out of school and their learning outcomes. She writes that TV-series, film and music are easily accessed by students and requires less effort when students are involved in these types of text. Other activities the students often engaged in were online video games, surfing the Internet and reading books, newspapers or magazines. These activities proved to improve the vocabulary acquisition and the development of the students’ English skills, and overall supported the notion that “extramural English functions as a pathway to progress in English” (Sundqvist, 2009, p. 75).

Moreover, Sylvén and Sundqvist (2012) investigated the possible relation between incidental language and formal L2 learning and playing of digital video games. They found that there were a correlation between digital game playing and English proficiency, and that the students who participated in at least 5 hours of gaming per week, scored high on vocabulary measures (Sylvén & Sundqvist, 2012). Also, the study pointed out that the boys scored higher than the girls on L2 vocabulary tests, and that the boys spent significantly more time participating in online gaming than the girls did.

Sundqvist and Wikström (2014) further investigated the relation between out-of-school digital gameplay and in-school L2 English vocabulary measures and grading outcomes among school students (15- and 16-year-olds). By comparing test scores from frequent
gamers (at least 5 hours spent gaming each week), moderate gamers and non-gamers, they saw that the frequent gamers showed the strongest results in test measures of vocabulary (Sundqvist & Wikström, 2014). However, the non-gamers also performed well in the tests, and most of the non-gaming participants were girls. The frequent gamers, who were boys, had high scores in the use of polysyllabic words, showing that they were able to produce advanced vocabulary. This study also suggests that the gamers participating in this study seems to have benefitted from gaming.

In a Norwegian study about game based learning, Silseth (2011) looked at how students learned about a conflict through gaming in class. Silseth (2011) highlights the importance of teacher support during the learning activity, as well as the importance of bridging the topic to an out-of-school context (Silseth, 2011). The students needed teacher support and benefitted from classroom discussions to understand the real purpose of the activity and to gain an understanding of the conflict they were working with. Silseth (2011) writes that “in order to understand GBL (game based learning), and learning in school more generally, an important future task is to analyze how different learning trajectories intersect and become relevant in education” (p. 82). The study points out the importance of teacher knowledge and experience with online games when using it in class.

Along the same lines, Vasbø, Silseth and Erstad (2014) studied the use of a social media platform in an educational setting. The students (13-14 year olds) engaged in different activities on the social media platform; they participated in chat rooms and collaborated on assignments, and the results showed great diversity in the level of engagement among the students (Vasbø et al., 2014). They used the media platform for both school-related and out-of-school tasks and communication. The platform enabled the students to connect out-of-school knowledge with everyday knowledge, often through dialogue (written chat). Additionally, by using the social networking site for school tasks (e.g., blog post assignment, and chat between students) the teachers had the opportunity to learn about their students’ learner identities (Vasbø, et al., 2014).

For my MA study, the RAND reading model (2002) and Vygotsky’s concept of the active learner, emphasize that reading comprehension takes place in a sociocultural context. In other words, a student does not only develop reading comprehension at school, but it is rather
achieved through integrating three elements in this context; the text, the reader, and the activity (RAND, 2002). Prior studies have investigated the use of English in extracurricular activities, and found that students’ out of school uses of English provide possible explanations of their L2 English proficiency. Since the aim of my MA study is to look into both in- and out-of-school uses of English among vocational students, investigating the use of English both in a school context and an out-of-school context. In the next chapter, I will present and explain my research methods in order to investigate the students’ English use.
Chapter 3 - Methods

In this chapter I explain the methods I have used in order to examine my main research question, *What characterizes the in- and out-of-school use of English for upper secondary students (16- and 17-year old) who read significantly better in English than in Norwegian?* First, I introduce the study context (3.1) and my research design (3.2), before I present the participants (3.3), the data collection (3.4) and the data analysis (3.5). Finally, I address the research credibility (3.6) of my study by discussing the reliability, validity and generalizability, as well as ethical aspects regarding my MA study.

3.1 The study context

This study is based on two recent studies conducted by Lisbeth M. Brevik; *The complexity of Second Language Reading: Investigating the L1-L2 Relationship* (Brevik, Olsen, & Hellekjær, 2016) and *The Gaming Outliers: Does out-of-school gaming improve boys’ reading skills in English as a second language?* (Brevik, 2016a). In the first study, she identified an Outlier profile for 4.5% of the 10,331 participating students in Year 11; students who were poor readers in Norwegian as their first language, scoring below 20% in the Norwegian national reading test, and at the same time good readers in English, scoring 60% or more in the English national reading test. In the second study, she interviewed five students with this Outlier profile at a large upper secondary school in Norway. All were boys in vocational studies, and all of them explained their English reading proficiency by their out-of-school uses of English; most prominently by gaming in English more than three hours a day on a daily basis.

As mentioned in the introduction (Chapter 1), the aim of my study is to build on these two studies, replicate and test the results found in Brevik’s (2016a) study and investigate the following three RQs: (1) *What are these students’ views on English and Norwegian at school?*. (2) *To what extent and how do they read in English out of school?*, and (3) *How do these students explain their English proficiency over the course of four months?*. To investigate this aim, I was invited by Brevik to participate in her ongoing project Vocational
and Genera Students’ Use of English in and out of school (VOGUE); using some of the project data (test scores, survey and interviews), and collecting some additional data for this MA study (logs and follow-up interviews).

### 3.2 Mixed methods design

My MA study is linked to one of the VOGUE schools, in which I have collected quantitative data (test scores, surveys and logs), and qualitative data (interviews). For the current study, I have therefore chosen a mixed methods (MM) approach in line with the following definition:

> Mixed methods research is the type of research in which a researcher or team of researchers combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (e.g., use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, inference techniques) for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration. (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner, 2007, p. 123)

Throughout my study, I have collected and analyzed different types of data mentioned above, and combined the results to produce findings where the sum is greater than what either approach can produce on its own (Creswell, 2014; Johnson & Christensen, 2012).

My main research question, What characterizes the in and out-of-school use of English for upper secondary students (16- and 17-year old) who read significantly better in English than in Norwegian? is suitable for MM, because I combine quantitative and qualitative data sources to investigate this question; (1) quantitative test data to identify students who read below the 20% intervention benchmark in Norwegian and simultaneously above 60% in English, (2) quantitative logs to register how they use English in and out of school over a period of two weeks, and (3) quantitative survey data and qualitative interview data to ask the students about their in and out of school uses of English across four months.

In an MM approach, the quantitative and qualitative data can be collected sequentially in phases (Johnson & Christensen, 2012), which is what I have done. As a result, the research design of my MA study consists of three phases (see Figure 3A), in which I collected the
reading test results, the survey data, and the first interview in Phase 1 (September 2016). I then collected the student logs in Phase 2 (October 2016), and the second interview in Phase 3 (February 2017).

As shown in Figure 3A, my MA study combines the results from national reading tests, with data collected from a survey, a student log and two interviews. While I participated in the collection and analysis of the test results, the survey, and interview I for the VOGUE project; the student log and interview II comprise additional data collected for the purpose of my MA study. In addition, I was allowed to add a set of questions to the student survey for my MA study. Thus, in the course of four months, I collected five sources of data on the participants’ in- and out-of-school uses of English. The participants and the data collection procedures will be elaborated in detail below.

Figure 3A. The research design in three phases. Data collection and analysis of vocational students’ in- and out-of-school uses of English.
3.3 Participants

In order to replicate and test the results found in Brevik’s (2016a) study, the selection of participants in my MA study had to be done in the same manner. Since I was invited by Brevik, who is my main supervisor, to collect data for my MA study as part of her research project, I did not contact the school myself. Below, I first describe the choice of school and identification of participants for the VOGUE project (sections 3.3.1 – 3.3.3), and then the procedures I used to identify the participants for my MA study among these (section 3.3.4).

3.3.1 Choosing a school

As mentioned, the Outlier profile was originally identified as those who had scored below the 20% intervention benchmark in the Norwegian national reading test, and above 60% in the English national reading test for Year 11 (Brevik et al., 2016). In the original study, the majority of the Outliers were boys in vocational studies (40%) and boys in general studies (26%), with the minority being girls in vocational studies (18%), and girls in general studies (16%) (Brevik et al., 2016). In her follow-up study, all the Outliers were boys in vocational studies, who explained their English reading proficiency by their out-of-school gaming (Brevik, 2016a).

Based on these findings, Brevik was interested in recruiting a new school in which the majority of the students studied vocational programs. In addition, she was interested in a school that focused on English reading, in order to see whether such in-school reading would influence the students’ English reading proficiency.

Brevik invited an upper secondary school in western Norway to participate, based on the school’s study programs and reading focus. The school offered three vocational study programs, and one general studies program with the majority of the students attending the vocational programs. The school had an ongoing reading project, aiming to improve their students’ reading skills. Every morning each student spent 20 minutes reading at school. They were allowed to read any text they wished, as long as it was in either Norwegian or English, and not homework. The school was willing and able to participate in the VOGUE project and to conduct both reading tests for all their Year 11 students. They also approved the collection of data for my MA study.
3.3.2 The National Reading Tests

As in Brevik’s (2016a) study, the national reading tests conducted at the participating school formed the starting point for the participant selection for my MA study. The strategy for choosing participants in the present study is called purposeful sampling, and is based on selecting the participants that are best able to inform and give valuable information on the topic of the research question (Creswell, 2014). Since the Outliers participating in my MA study are participating both in the quantitative and the qualitative data collections, it is called an identical sample (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). The participating school provided Brevik and me with the scores from the Norwegian and English tests.

At the beginning of each school year in upper secondary school (Year 11), students can participate in national reading tests. Since 2010 these tests have been conducted in both Norwegian and in English (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training [UDIR], 2010a, 2010b). In 2015 both tests became voluntary, meaning that each school could decide if they wished to participate (Brevik et al., 2016). The tests are based on the competence aims from the national curriculum from Year 10 (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research [KD], 2006, 2013).

These tests are designed to provide teachers with indicators on individual students’ reading proficiency early in the school year by identifying areas of strengths and weaknesses. This information is intended to guide the students’ development and reading comprehension. For both tests, the frameworks (UDIR 2010a, 2010b) describe the two main constructs they are to measure; a language construct corresponding to the decoding aspect of reading, and a reading comprehension construct measuring how students find explicitly stated information, understand main points, and reflect and make inferences based on information in the texts (Brevik et al., 2016). Table 3B provides an overview of the construct and their operationalization in the two tests.
Table 3B. Test construct for the two national reading test (Brevik & Hellekjær, forthcoming, reprinted with permission).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>L1 test (paper)</th>
<th>L2 test (digital)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tasks require the reader to recognize words.</td>
<td>Separate words in word chains (max 75 points)</td>
<td>Add missing words to sentences (max 5 points)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reading comprehension (RC) Tasks require the reader to (a) find explicitly stated information, (b) understand main points, and (c) reflect and make inferences based on information in the text.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Texts in the RC part</th>
<th>Fact and fiction</th>
<th>Two long texts (1,300–1,700 words)</th>
<th>11 shorter texts (40–300 words)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Total points For each reading test Max: 109 points Max: 28 points

Note. L1 = Norwegian. L2 = English. RC = Reading Comprehension.

3.3.3 Identifying Outliers

At the participating school, 281 students in Year 11 participated in both tests. Based on Brevik (2016a), we identified students with the Outlier profile in a 3-step process:

Step 1: Each of us identified the students that scored below the intervention benchmark (20%) in the Norwegian national reading test. We both identified 40 students who fit this criterion.

Step 2: Among the 40 students, each of us separately identified those students scoring 60% or more on the English reading test. We both agreed that this applied to 22 of the students.

Step 3: All 22 Outliers were invited to participate in the VOGUE project; 21 of these were willing and able. We explained that participation entailed using their test results, answering a survey, and participating in Interview I (Brevik, in progress).
3.3.4 Selecting participants for my MA study

After the Outliers had agreed to participate in the VOGUE project, I asked if they would also be willing to participate in my MA study, which meant filling in an online student log for two weeks (10 school days), focusing on their in- and out-of-school uses of English and an additional interview. 18 of the Outliers agreed, while only 11 of them ended up answering the log. Of these, five answered eight of the ten days, while the remaining six answered only once, twice or three times. The answers given in the log make up the final step of narrowing down the group of participants for my MA study. Since there was such a clear divide in the amount of days the Outliers spent answering the log, I chose to focus on the five that filled in the log for eight to ten days. These five Outliers, who consciously gave their answers in the log, make up the participants for my MA study (see Table 3C).

Table 3C. Participants in my MA study: background information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students (pseudonyms)</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Study program</th>
<th>First language (L1)</th>
<th>Previously attended an English-speaking school</th>
<th>Test results in English (L2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natalie</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>ADA</td>
<td>Norwegian</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>68 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Espen</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>ST</td>
<td>Norwegian</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>89 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hans</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>ST</td>
<td>Norwegian</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>89 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sondre</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>TIP</td>
<td>Norwegian</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>68 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karsten</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>ST</td>
<td>Norwegian</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>61 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. L1=first language (Norwegian), L2=second language (English), ST=Service and Transport (vocational study), TIP=Technical and Industrial Production (vocational study), ADA=Art, Design and Architecture (general study).

3.4 Data Collection

As already illustrated (Figure 3A), the data collection process for my MA study consists of three different phases. In Phase 1, I collected data from the reading test, the survey and
Interview I. In Phase 2, I collected data from the student log, and finally in Phase 3, I collected data from Interview II. In the following, I will describe these five data sources separately.

### 3.4.1 Survey

The Outliers in my MA study first participated in the survey (see Appendix A). The survey consisted of the same 12 questions used in Brevik’s (2016a) study, in addition to eight questions that were added for my MA study, and piloted by myself during the spring of 2016. These additional questions are clearly shown in Appendix A. The Outliers were given the survey questions orally, before the interview. I used the survey as a structured interview guide (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015), which I filled in based on the students’ answers to the 20 questions: the students’ background information (5 questions), their motivation for reading (4 questions), whether they participated in online gaming (4 questions), their use of Norwegian and English out of school (3 questions), and the school’s reading project (4 questions).

As the survey is part of the quantitative data collection of my MA study, the questions are close-ended and written in a clear and precise manner. This forces the participant to choose an answer (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011; Johnsen & Christensen, 2012). Each Outlier was asked the same questions orally, and as I read all the questions out loud from the survey, all questions were spoken in the same manner. Because all the participants were asked the same questions and given the same answer options, the answers can be compared (Johnsen & Christensen, 2012).

By going through the survey with the participants in this manner, I learnt a little about each student’s out-of-school uses of English, and this knowledge created the starting point for the open-ended interview I conducted immediately afterwards.

### 3.4.2 Interview I

After the survey, I conducted a semi-structured interview with each of the five participants (Creswell, 2013). One question in the survey was open-ended (number 16) (see Appendix A), asking the students to explain their views on their English skills. I used this as the opening question in Interview I, asking each student the same opening question, in addition to “Do you believe you are a better reader in English or in Norwegian?” The questions that followed
The aim of the interview was to ask them to elaborate on their English reading proficiency and their use of English in and out of school. Interview I is part of the qualitative data collection of my MA study, and much of the conversation was based on their answers in the survey. Because the survey consisted of close-ended questions, Interview I allowed me to ask the Outliers about their opinions and thoughts regarding the topics from the survey in more depth. The participants were therefore asked open-ended question throughout the interview. I was interested in hearing about their own opinions and views about their skill level in English, and asking open-ended questions allowed me to get this kind of information (Cohen et. al., 2011; Johnsen & Christensen, 2012).

Each student was interviewed for 5-10 minutes and was audiotaped. When conducting Interview I, I was able to get an impression of who each Outlier was, and to ask specific questions about their use of English for personal interests both in and out of school. The interviews were conducted in Norwegian for the students’ ease, and transcribed and translated into English immediately afterwards.

### 3.4.3 Student logs

As Phase 1 took place at the beginning of the school year (September), I followed up on the Outliers’ answers in Phase 2 by collecting a log over 2 weeks a month later (October). The main purpose of the student log was to gather information about what the Outliers read in English both in and out of school on a daily basis. I wanted the Outliers to write down what kind of activities they participated in, where they read in English (in or out of school) and give some details about the texts they read and the contexts in which they read. The student log consisted of 13 questions (see Appendix B) and took approximately 5 minutes for the students to fill in each day. The questions were based on what the students had read during their 20-minute reading session each morning at school, in which language they had read, whether the texts they had read were related to their study program, and their use of English out of school the previous day. After each reading session at school, the participants were given five minutes by their teachers to fill in the log at school. The students filled in the log digitally through a link that was e-mailed to them individually. The log was created using the University of Oslo’s Nettskjema, which is a digital tool for “designing and managing data
collection using online forms and surveys” (UiO, http://www.uio.no/english/services/it/adm-services/nettskjema/, 09.01.17). I logged on to the online form each day to check the Outliers’ participation and answers.

3.4.4 Interview II

The second round of interviews was conducted with the same five participants in February 2017, four months after the first interview. This choice was made to investigate whether the students had changed their views about their English reading skills and habits in and out of school. I was curious to see if they would change any of their prior explanations, or if they could add more to their thoughts and explanations from the surveys, Interview I or the logs. Since the students then had participated in the school’s reading project for a longer period of time, I also wished to discover to what degree they felt that this project had influenced their English reading skills.

Each interview lasted approximately for 10 minutes. Similar to Interview I, Interview II consisted of open-ended questions, focusing on the Outliers’ own reflections and thoughts about their uses of English in and out of school. The interview guide for Interview II was based on the students’ answers in Interview I, combined with their answers in the logs. Interview II was also semi-structured (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015), and the interview guide consisted of four areas for discussion: (1) English use outside of school, (2) English at school, (3) the reading project and finally, (4) Do you believe you have chosen English as a bigger part of your spare time activities than Norwegian? Similar to Interview I, the second interview was conducted in Norwegian for the students ease, and all of the interviews were audiotaped. Immediately afterwards, I transcribed and translated them into English.

3.5 Data analysis

I analyzed the data related to each phase before collecting and analyzing data in the next phase. Therefore, the data analysis process included five steps, in which I read each data source separately and also compared information across the data sources. This is illustrated in Table 3D. Since I used the test data only to identify the Outliers (see 3.3.1), these are not part of this data analysis process.
Table 3D. Data analysis to examine why these Outliers are better readers of English than Norwegian, Steps 1 and 2 are based on Brevik (2016a).

<table>
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<tr>
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<td>Qualitative: Synthesized the findings from Steps 1-4 to identify profiles for each Outlier. Compared the three profiles to find differences and similarities.</td>
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*Note. L1 = first language (Norwegian). L2 = second language (English).*

This process is described in more detail below.

*Step 1: Survey (quantitative analysis)*

In Step 1 (September 2016), I analyzed the surveys by summarizing the answers for each question. By doing this frequency analysis, I got an overview of their use of English and Norwegian in and out of school. The survey consisted of six different categories, and the process of analyzing the answers from the survey corresponded with the different categories. Since the first category collected personal information like name, class and age and this information is already presented in Table 3C, the answers in the remaining five categories were sorted and summarized in Excel and presented as bar charts.
Steps 2 and 4: Interviews (qualitative analysis)
Since I conducted identical analyses in Steps 2 and 4, only four months apart (September 2016 and February 2017), I present these steps of analyses together. For each step, I thematically analyzed the answers and the transcripts from the interviews in three categories: (1) use of L1 and L2 at school, (2) use of L1 and L2 out of school, and (3) explanations for being good L2 readers. Interviews I and II were transcribed in full; listening through the audio recordings and writing down what was being said, including every comment made by the students and myself. At some points, I had to listen to the segments several times in order to hear what was being said. By stopping the recording and listening to the segment several times, I was able to get the correct phrasing when I transcribed. According to Derry et al. (2010) this is a good strategy to make sure to catch the important elements of the recording. Their answers were presented as transcribed dialogs.

Step 3: Student logs (quantitative analysis)
In Step 3 (October 2016), I analyzed the logs by summarizing the answers from each Outlier for each question. This frequency analysis gave me an overview of the Outliers’ reading habits during the reading sessions each morning at school, and gave me explicit and detailed information about their use of English out of school. The questions in the student logs were separated into three categories; (1) four questions about the reading sessions at school, (2) four questions about out-of-school gaming, and (3) one question about the Outliers’ out-of-school use of English in general. The coding of the different log answers was done in an Excel spreadsheet. I registered each student’s answers to the different questions, summarized them and searched for patterns in their use of English in and out of school. The answers were presented as pie charts.

Step 5: Comparison across data sources (qualitative analysis)
As a final step, I synthesized my analyses from Steps 1-4 to identify profiles for each Outlier in Step 5 (February 2016). I then compared the profiles to find differences and similarities. The profiles were compared to find differences and similarities. One profile is based on Brevik (2016a): the Gamer. Additionally, I have identified two other profiles: the Social Media Consumer and the Surfer. These are presented as pie charts and narratives in Chapter 4, and discussed in Chapter 5.
3.6 Research credibility

In this section, I discuss aspects of reliability (3.5.1), validity (3.5.2), and generalizability (3.5.3) for my MA study, before I discuss important ethical considerations (3.5.4).

3.5.1 Reliability

Research reliability deals with the accuracy, consistency and credibility of research results, and is often concerned with if the results can be reproduced at another time by other researchers (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015; Johnson & Christensen, 2012). Nonetheless, to fully replicate research in which people are involved will not occur, as for instance the atmosphere or the utterances will not be identical. I will discuss two matters of consistency and regularity in my MA study, which I have done to strengthen the reliability of my data.

Reliability of results is seen in replication over time showing similar results. I have addressed this twice in my study; first, in my replication of Brevik’s (2016a) study, and second in my collection of data at three points in time (phases 1-3). By replicating Brevik’s (2016a) study, I found that the Outlier profile exists also at the school I studied, and that the test data, survey and Interview I provided the same kind of findings one year after Brevik’s study (2016a). Then in my study, the survey formed the topics for discussion in the first interview, as Interview I elaborated on the survey topics (September). Then the answers from Interview I were supported by the student logs one month later (October), and then confirmed in Interview II (February). The repetition of opinions, beliefs and use of English among the Outliers suggest reliability of results regarding the students’ answers.

The mixed methods approach enabled me to re-use the categories in an orderly manner in all phases of my data collection. Furthermore, I was able to modify the answers from the survey and Interview I when creating the student log, and to modify the results from the student log when creating the interview guide for Interview II. The four data collection situations also contain the same categories, making it easy to compare, code and later analyze the results compiled throughout the data collection process. Using the same categories across these data collection situations are more reliable, especially since comparing data across time, situations, and perspectives is a challenge (Creswell & Clark, 2011).
Internal reliability looks at whether two or more researchers make the same observations or interpretations and code what they see in similar ways (Johnsen & Christensen, 2012). This applies to my study as the data in Phase 1 was collected and interpreted by myself and my supervisor. In Phases 2 and 3, all quotes, answers and numbers collected in the data collection process were interpreted and analyzed by myself, but also discussed with my supervisor. We both looked at and interpreted the data on our own, before we met up and talked about the interpretation of the data and what it reflected to make sure that we agreed upon the inferences drawn.

3.5.2 Validity
In research, validity refers to the correctness of results and if the results found can be trusted (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015; Maxwell, 2013). In mixed methods research, validity “involves employing strategies that address potential issues in data collection, data analysis, and the interpretations that might compromise the merging or connecting of the quantitative or qualitative strands of the study” (Creswell & Clark, 2011, p. 417). I have chosen to address validity questions in my study through multiple validities; covering the combination of survey answers, two separate interviews and a student log as data in my research. Multiple validities refer to all validity threats my study might face, related to quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods results (Johnsen & Christensen, 2012).

First, the collection of two different data sources at the same time in Phase 1 (survey and interview) to answer my RQ’s strengthened the validity through triangulation. In addition, I used member checking (Creswell & Miller, 2000), at the end of both Interview I and Interview II, when I summarized my interpretation of each Outlier’s use of English outside of school, and their views on English as a school subject, and asked them to confirm or dismiss my interpretations. Additionally, in Interview II, I presented each Outlier with the profile I had identified to describe them, and asked if they agreed. Also, asking the students about their logs, the reading project and their continued use of English out of school in the second interview, allowed me to member check my interpretations of their previous answers and by doing so, the Outliers had the opportunity to add nuances to my interpretations.

I was also conscious of reactivity when conducting the survey and both interviews. Reactivity
is explained as how the researcher’s presence might influence the participants while being observed or interviewed (Johnson & Christensen, 2012; Maxwell, 2013). For the present study, I needed to consider if the students adjusted their answers, in the survey or the interviews, to what they believed I was expecting or searching for. If the students did adjust their responses this would compromise and disrupt the data (Brevik, 2015). However, during the survey the students seemed to choose the answer that they found to be most accurate for them, since their survey answers matched their descriptions of their English use in both interviews and the log. Across both interviews, I got the impression that the students were not influenced by me. They seemed to give honest descriptions and explanations when asked a question, particularly as they in some cases they even disagreed with my interpretations and explained why. During an interview, it is important to not use words or formulations that are leading or forcing the participant into answering in a certain way (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015), and I was careful not to do this while performing the interviews. This is also a validity issue regarding the survey; keeping in mind that words might mean different things to different people (Cohen et. al., 2011).

3.5.3 Generalizability

Generalizability deals with if the findings can be transferred to other interview subjects, contexts and situations (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). As the students in this study only represent a very small group of students at one upper secondary school in Norway, the results cannot be generalized to other upper secondary school students in Norway. However, this group of Outliers might represent some students in vocational programs in upper secondary school with the Outlier profile, i.e. scoring below 20% in the Norwegian national reading test and above in the English national reading test. This interpretation is strengthened since the Outlier profile was originally found among a national sample of 10,331 students (Brevik et al., 2016). As a value of qualitative research lies in the particular descriptions and statements from one specific context, qualitative data is not directly generalizable (Creswell, 2014).

3.5.4 Research ethics

The Norwegian Social Science Data Service (NSD) approved this project, both as part of the VOGUE project and for my study specifically. The data collected throughout this study has been handled according to their guidelines. The school gave me access to the reading test result, but withheld all names until I had narrowed down the group of students that fit my
criteria and they had consented to participate in Phase 1. All the students that were asked to participate gave their voluntary consent before, during and after the data collection processes (e.g., Brevik, 2015; Creswell, 2014). All five chose to participate throughout the entire data collection process. The students were interviewed without their teacher or any other member from the school present, and they were informed that they could withdraw at any time during the study. Additionally, to ensure anonymity, the students’ names have been changed, and while conducting the interviews, their names were not mentioned on the audiotape.

3.7 Short summary

In this chapter I have described the mixed methods and research design of my MA study. Through quantitative data (test scores and survey) and qualitative data (Interview I) collected in collaboration with the VOGUE project, and qualitative data (logs and Interview II) specifically collected for my MA study. I have illustrated and explained the analysis process for my findings, and accounted for the research credibility of my MA study by discussing the reliability, validity, generalizability and research ethics. These methods have contributed to answering my research questions. In the following chapter, I present the main findings based on these data.
Chapter 4 - Findings

In this chapter, I present the findings for each research question separately, before I discuss these in the following chapter.

When I first met the five Outliers in September 2016, I found it important to ask them if they agreed that they were more proficient readers in English than in Norwegian. I wanted to discover whether their impression of themselves as readers matched their test scores, as all five scored below the 20% intervention benchmark in the Norwegian reading test, and between 61% and 89% in the English reading test. Throughout this chapter, I refer to them as five individual Outliers, using the pseudonyms Natalie, Espen, Hans, Sondre, and Karsten.

In the survey, Espen, Hans, Sondre, and Karsten acknowledged that they considered themselves better readers in English than in Norwegian. Natalie, however, believed she was only “a little better in English”. They may have given these answers based on the explanation they received for participating in my MA study, but their views of themselves as better readers of English were strengthened throughout the four months of data collection. In the following sections (4.1 – 4.3), I will elaborate on this by presenting the findings for the three research question separately.

4.1 What are the Outliers’ views on English and Norwegian at school? (RQ1)

Aiming to understand the Outliers’ reading scores in English and Norwegian, I found that all five shared similar views on English and Norwegian as school subjects, and also that they believed participating in the school’s reading project was beneficial. I identified their interests in Norwegian and English as school subjects (4.1.1), whether they found it easy or difficult to read school texts in either language (4.1.2), and what they read in which language during their daily reading sessions at school (4.1.3). For this, I used the answers from the survey, Interview I, and their logs.
4.1.1 English and Norwegian as school subjects

In the survey, each Outlier gave an account of their views on Norwegian and English as school subjects. Figure 4A shows that while Sondre, Hans, and Karsten acknowledged being quite interested in English, Espen and Natalie said they were somewhat interested. Compared to their interests in Norwegian as a school subject, all five answered that they were only somewhat interested. Although English seemed to be more interesting than Norwegian for the Outliers, neither of them were very interested in English either, which was somewhat surprising considering their English reading proficiency as shown by their test results.

![Figure 4A](image)

**Figure 4A.** The five Outliers’ views on Norwegian and English as school subjects.

Nevertheless, Since the Outliers had shown good English skills on the reading test, I wanted to address their metacognitive awareness concerning their classroom participation and English skills. I asked them if they saw themselves as resources in the English classroom. It should not come as a surprise that all of them said they understood close to everything being said and taught in their English classes, and that none of them seemed to struggle during English lessons. Although they said there were words they occasionally did not understand, the English language did not seem to be a barrier to any of them. Despite this, they revealed that they did not participate very much in the lessons, as elaborated by Sondre in Interview I:
**Excerpt A: Sondre on being active in class (Interview I)**

*Interviewer:* And how about you, during English class? Are you active?

*Sondre:* No, I am not that active, but I know most of it.

*Interviewer:* So you understand what is being said, and you follow it, but you choose to not be very active?

*Sondre:* Yes.

Hans, however, slightly nuanced this picture in his interview, saying that, “I do not participate, but I often hold back […]. I feel like maybe someone else can say things instead”. Throughout their interviews it became clear that although they might participate in some situations, none of them saw themselves as resources in their English classes. However, even though the Outliers did not see themselves as resources or actively participating in the classroom, their English reading test results suggested that they understood what they read in English, and therefore I wanted to examine their own views on reading at school.

### 4.1.2 Reading English and Norwegian school texts

Using the data from the survey, I looked further into the students’ views on reading school texts in English and Norwegian.

![Graph showing the five Outliers' understanding of school texts in English and Norwegian.](image)

**Figure 4B.** The five Outliers’ understanding of school texts in English and Norwegian.
Figure 4B shows that four of the Outliers found English to be easy and Norwegian to be quite easy, except Natalie who found both English and Norwegian school texts to be quite easy, and Espen who found texts in both languages to be easy to understand. Based on their test results, these answers are not unexpected, as I would have expected them to find English texts to be quite easy to read. However, it was unexpected that the Outliers did not find Norwegian texts to be more difficult, seeing as they scored below the 20% intervention benchmark in the national reading test in Norwegian.

Combining these findings, there seems to be a connection between the Outliers’ views on Norwegian and English as school subjects on the one hand (Figure 4A), and their reported understanding of school texts in the two languages on the other (Figure 4B). Since the texts they referred to were texts they were asked to read in their school lessons or as homework, these texts are separate from the school’s reading project. In the reading project, the students were allowed to read any text of their own choice, in either English or Norwegian, as long as these were not assigned as homework. Therefore, in order to identify a more complete picture of their reading at school, and their choices of language in doing so, I looked into the reading project in more detail.

4.1.3 The Reading Project

As a part of the survey, I asked the five Outliers what they had read during the reading project so far in the school year (September 2016), and whether or not they believed the project helped them improve their English reading skills. Then, in their logs they described their reading choices in the reading project each day for two weeks (October 2016). Since the students spent 20 minutes every morning reading, I was curious to see what they actually read, and in which language. I later returned to the same questions in Interview II (February 2017).

First, in September, Karsten was the only Outlier reporting to have read the news in both English and Norwegian during the reading sessions. Karsten and Sondre had also read factual texts in English and Norwegian, and Karsten had additionally read about his personal interests in English. All four boys revealed that they had spent time on Facebook, more often in English than Norwegian. With the exception of Sondre, they all said that they had read a
book during the reading sessions; Natalie, Karsten and Espen had read books in Norwegian, while Karsten and Hans reported to have read an English book.

When I compared their answers to the October logs, I saw that all five Outliers had in fact read a book in either English or Norwegian during these reading sessions (see Figure 4C). Specifically, Hans read the English novel *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* for four days. Although Sondre did not report having read a book in September, it is clear from his log that he read a Norwegian book about football records in October. Natalie, Espen and Karsten also read books in Norwegian in October, like they reported to have done in September. However, although Karsten had read a book in September, his log showed that he did not read any English book in October. Reasons for this could be that Karsten had finished his English book before the log started.

![Figure 4C](image)

**Figure 4C.** The five Outliers’ reading during two weeks of the reading project, based on their logs.

From looking at Figure 4C it is clear that during the two week log entries, the students read fewer texts in English than in Norwegian during the reading sessions. In addition to reading books, the logs showed that three of the Outliers read in English on the Internet during the reading sessions in October, in line with what they had reported a month before. Their logs
further showed that Sondre was the only one who reported reading on Facebook, in contrast to September when all four boys had reported to spend time on Facebook during the reading sessions. Karsten read online news about Donald Trump, while Natalie read homework online, although she was not supposed to do so during the reading project. Finally, Espen and Hans reported not having read anything during the 20 minutes reading sessions for some of the days in October, due to their work placements in their vocational program.

In February (Interview II), I asked the Outliers once more about their reading choices during the reading sessions. At that time, all five said that they had spent time reading texts online, and that the majority of these texts were in English. Additionally, all of them had finished reading their first book in Norwegian, but Natalie was the only one who had started reading a new novel in English. She said, “we were given parts of the book to read as homework, but I really liked it and found it interesting, so I wanted to keep on reading!” Sondre had not found a new novel to read after finishing his book about football records, and therefore only read online texts at that point. These texts were mostly in English, but some were also in Norwegian. Hans and Karsten both told me that they had started reading a novel in Norwegian, and Espen read a comic book in Norwegian. When I asked Espen about his choice of reading material, he said, “I don’t think that there are so many English books at school, and I usually read in Norwegian, so I just chose that.” Interestingly, Hans and Karsten expressed the same views as Espen, revealing that they chose to read a Norwegian book because they could not find any interesting ones in English at the school library.

Finally, as the goal of the schools reading project was to improve the students’ reading skills, I was curious to learn if the students believed the project helped them achieve this goal. Natalie said, “I believe it helps a little, but not that much. […] I feel like I am reading a little faster and maybe also being a little better at concentrating while reading.” Karsten gave a similar explanation and added that, “reading pace and understanding words and such have improved, I think.” All five Outliers seemed to agree that reading for 20 minutes each morning was a good opportunity for reading, and acknowledge that since they got a lot of practice, they felt their reading skills had improved. However, the Outliers did not specify which language they referred to when explaining their views about possible benefits from the reading project. Still, there was a general belief among the Outliers that participating in the reading project was beneficial.
In this section, I have aimed to identify how the Outliers’ views on English and Norwegian at school, based on the survey, their logs, Interview I and Interview II. While the five Outliers seemed to share similar views on the two school subjects, all of them expressed a greater interest for English. Based on these findings, it is nevertheless difficult to explain why these Outliers performed better on the reading test in English than the one in Norwegian, as their views on the two subjects and languages did not differ a lot. Aiming to understand the reasons for this difference in reading proficiency, I will turn to the Outliers’ use of English out of school.

4.2 To what extent and how do the Outliers read in English out of school? (RQ2)

Aiming to identify the Outliers’ English reading proficiency, I asked the Outliers to elaborate on why they had become such good readers in English. Interestingly, all of them argued that it had to do with their use of English out of school, rather than their English use in school. When analyzing their answers from all the sources (the survey, interviews I and II, and the logs) this impression was strengthened.

The first time I met the Outliers, in September 2016, it became apparent that they felt they read more in English out of school than they did in Norwegian. Based on their explanations in the survey, I was interested in comparing these explanations to their daily uses of English in the spare time, as expressed in their two-week logs. Hence, in Figure 4D, I have compared their answers from the September survey with their October logs. As is illustrated in this figure, the Outliers’ general use of English (survey) resembles their daily use of English (log). All five Outliers reported using English out of school every day.
Figure 4D. The five Outliers’ reading in English and Norwegian out of school in general (survey) and daily (logs). Note. * = only in the log. ** = only in the survey.

Figure 4D clearly shows that the Outliers used English to a larger extent than Norwegian out of school. I will now describe the different categories in Figure 4D in more detail, and explain the different categories that I have used.

*Reading (Facebook, news, magazines/comics, books):* The Outliers reported to participate in different reading activities each day, by reading different types of texts in English and Norwegian; news articles either online or in printed newspapers, and status updates on Facebook. The bar chart further shows that none of the students spent time reading books in either language out of school, only Natalie read a magazine – and then in Norwegian. Although their reported use of Norwegian and English out of school seemed to expose them to large amounts of text in both languages, English seemed to be their preferred language for reading out of school.

*Listening (TV-series/movies, music):* As shown in Figure 4D, all five Outliers also reported that they listened to English music, and watched English language TV-series and movies out
of school a lot, and in this sense were exposed to large amounts of the English language. While all of them revealed that they usually watched these series and movies without subtitles, Sondre and Hans never used them. When using subtitles however, Natalie, Karsten, and Espen used Norwegian ones, while Natalie and Espen also used English subtitles. Figure 4D also shows that while all five Outliers listen to music in English, they do not listen to music with Norwegian lyrics at all. All five confirmed this in their logs.

**Gaming:** All five Outliers reported using English as their only language of communication in online gaming. Gaming is different from the students’ other uses of English because they combine different skills; reading (instructions and written chat), listening (chat), speaking (chat), and writing (chat). These different functions allowed the students to choose how actively they wanted to participate in the gaming activity, and also which language they wanted to use, which clearly was English based on the survey as well as their logs.

**Other:** The “Other”-category was an open question in the survey. When I asked the students what other situations they used the two languages for out of school, the one activity that they mentioned using Norwegian for, was communicating with others via text messages. In English, the Outliers explained that they used English when reading on the Internet, but also for communicating, either by talking to people face-to-face or over Skype. Karsten and Hans specifically stated that they used an online program to do so, or had face-to-face conversations with their Norwegian-speaking friends in English. Karsten, Hans and Sondre also reported using English for “other” activities in the log; Karsten added that he spent time on a social video platform and community for gamers ([www.twitch.tv](http://www.twitch.tv)), Hans had spoken English to friends on Skype and visited a web page where one can learn programming, and Sondre reported using English for something other than the listed activities in the log, but he did not write exactly what he used English for.

Figure 4D illustrates several out-of-school activities that all five Outliers used English for on a daily basis; listening to music, watching TV-series/movies and reading on Facebook. Other activities that also scored high among at least three of the Outliers were reading the news and on the Internet in English. These findings are identified in the survey and the logs. In line with what the Outliers explicitly claimed in Interview I, this extended use of English in out-
of-school contexts indicates that their use of English is linked to their English reading proficiency.

4.3 How do the Outliers explain their English proficiency? (RQ3)

Based on the information I had gathered from the survey, Interview I, and the student logs, I asked the students again in Interview II (February 2017), about their general use of English. I was curious to discover if the students used English in other situations or contexts than the ones they had already talked about and how they would explain their English proficiency four months after I asked them the first time. As I will elaborate below, all five Outliers confirmed my interpretation and added nuances to their previous explanations. Based on the Outliers’ explanations across all the data sources, I have identified three different student profiles for the five Outliers in my MA study; the Social Media Consumer (Natalie), the Surfer (Espen), and the Gamer (Hans, Sondre, and Karsten). In Interview II, I told them about my interpretation of their use of English and asked them to comment on the profiles I had identified. Thus, I wanted to ensure that the Outliers could identify with the profiles themselves, which would strengthen the relevance of the profiles. In other words, these profiles illustrate the Outliers’ own views of why they read markedly better in English than in Norwegian.

4.3.1 Outlier profile I: Natalie - a Social Media Consumer

In Interview I, Natalie argued that her proficiency in reading English was due to her exposure to the English language, especially through watching movies and TV-series:

**Excerpt B: Natalie - Watching and listening to English (Interview I)**

*Natalie:* I think it is probably because I watch movies and TV-series online, spend time on YouTube and listen to people speak English. I think that is why.

*Interviewer:* So it is a lot [of exposure to English], like watching and listening to things?
Natalie: Yes, most likely.

Interviewer: Do you think that because you may be more interested in English than Norwegian, that you use it [English] more in your spare time?

Natalie: Yes.

Interviewer: Do you feel like you have chosen English to be a bigger part of your out-of-school activities than what Norwegian is?

Natalie: Yes, I think so.

Based on Natalie’s in- and out-of-school uses of English, she separates herself from the other Outliers on several accounts; she is the only girl, she attends a general studies program as opposed to the vocational programs, and she reveals herself to be a consumer of English rather than a producer. This might seem obvious since all the Outliers are consumers in terms of being good readers of English, but as I will explain below, the others are also producers. Being identified as a consumer of English is in line with her uses of English in and out of school.

At school, she read on the Internet in English in half of the reading sessions, and during English class she described herself as passive; meaning that she mostly listened during class, and did not participate much in the activities, according to herself. In her spare time, she listened to English music, watched English TV-series and movies, and read English texts on Facebook on a daily basis.

When comparing Natalie’s answers from the survey with her log, her descriptions of her English use outside of school were largely confirmed. In the survey, she answered that she used English for Facebook, online games, TV-series and movies and music. All activities from the survey matched the log, with the exception of online gaming. However, this was explained by Natalie in Interview I:

**Excerpt C: Previous gaming habits (Interview I)**

*Interviewer:* And you also said that you played online games?

*Natalie:* Yes, at least a little.

*Interviewer:* Yes, because you said you played for less than three hours [a day]?

*Natalie:* Yes.
**Interviewer:** So then you use it [English] a little? But gaming up to three hours a day is a lot?

**Natalie:** I do not do it that much, at least not now, maybe before.

**Interviewer:** Did you play more online games in lower secondary school?

**Natalie:** Yes.

She spent more time on online games when she attended lower secondary school, and in upper secondary school, she did not have the same gaming habits, which was confirmed in her log. In other words, Natalie stands out as the only Outlier in the current study that did not play online games out of school. Her uses of English in out-of-school contexts separate her from the other Outliers. The main purpose of her out-of-school uses of English seemed to be in relation to social media; reading texts on Facebook or other social platforms (27%), watching TV-series or movies with Norwegian, English or no subtitles (32%), and listening to music with English lyrics (41%). This is illustrated in Figure 4E.

![Figure 4E](image)

**Figure 4E.** Natalie: A Social Media Consumer. English uses out of school.

According to her log, she did not spend any time reading the news or other texts online, and she did not seem to use English for any other activities than the three illustrated in Figure 4E. Natalie read, watched and/or listened to the English language, which is why her participation in these activities can be described as being a consumer of English rather than a producer.
4.3.2 Outlier profile II: Espen - a Surfer

This Outlier profile is based largely on Espen’s English use out of school. In the survey, Espen answered that he used English when reading the news and Facebook, and he used English for online gaming, TV-series, movies, and music. These activities were confirmed in his log. The log also added information about him spending time on several of these activities each day. He was exposed to English, by choice, every day and in a variety of forms. In Interview I, Espen explained this:

**Excerpt D: Espen - Watching, listening, reading, gaming in English (Interview I).**

*Espen:* In gaming, when I watch TV-series, spend time online or other stuff like that, most things are in English.

*Interviewer:* Do you think that the way you have used English outside of school has helped you get better in English?

*Espen:* Yes.

*Interviewer:* Why do you think it has helped you?

*Espen:* I get a lot of English. More than if I had only used English at school.

*Interviewer:* Do you feel you have more benefits from using English out-of-school than you do in school?

*Espen:* Yes, most of what I do is in English.

*Interviewer:* And what do you do in English in your spare time?

*Espen:* Online gaming, I watch TV-series, YouTube or am on Facebook. Most is in English.

Throughout this interview, Espen made it clear that he felt his use of English in his spare time had helped him improve his English skills. He said that for him, it had been beneficial to participate in out-of-school activities and contexts where he practiced his English skills. He argued that he learnt more from this than what he did in his English class at school. Espen actively participated in different activities and therefore comes across as a producer of English; engaging as much in reading activities as he does speaking, listening and writing. As a Surfer, Espen is able to get in contact with a large group of people and to practice his different English skills. Espen elaborated on this in the interview, as shown in the extract below:
**Excerpt E: Contact with a bigger group of people (Interview I)**

*Interviewer:* Everything you read and spend time on online is in English?
*Espen:* Yes.

*Interviewer:* Do you like to use English out of school?
*Espen:* Yes.

*Interviewer:* Why do you prefer English to Norwegian in these contexts?
*Espen:* I can get in touch with a lot more people, and that is nice. It isn’t really that many Norwegians on for example YouTube and such. Most people are American or English I guess, so that is much more exciting.

His explanations from Interview I also support this Outlier profile, as it illustrates his diverse uses of English in various activities.

![Figure 4F](image)

**Figure 4F.** Espen – A Surfer: English uses out of school.

In Figure 4F his many different uses of English as a Surfer is clearly illustrated. The two main uses of English are music (22%) and TV-series and movies (22%). Next, is his use of English related to social media (Facebook) (21%). These three uses of English in Espen’s spare time are similar to Natalie’s Social Media Consumer profile. However, what separates his profile from Natalie’s is the various uses of English in addition to these three. As a Surfer,
Espen also uses English when reading on the Internet (19%), for participating in online gaming (11%), and for listening to and reading the news (5%). Since Espen uses English for so many different purposes, it is hard to pinpoint one main use of English for him. As a Surfer, he participates in a variety of activities when practicing and developing his English skills.

Although he also spent time on online gaming, what separates him from the Gamer-profile is the amount of time he spent gaming per day. He spent far less time than the Gamers; four out of eight logged days only. While gaming, Espen wrote in his log that he skimmed the instructions or the text that appeared on the screen, and that the text was in English. When he used the written chat function he wrote both in English and in Norwegian, but he spoke in Norwegian only when he participated in an oral chat room.

In Interview II, when I asked him if he would characterize himself, based on his use of English out of school, as a Gamer or a Surfer, he clearly stated that he was a Surfer. In Interview II he said, “I spend much more time on the computer than on PlayStation. […] I’m online, on social media, listening to music, watching films and TV-series, and such.” He sought authentic language situations, which was reflected in all the data I collected from him; the survey, the log, and both interviews.

4.3.3 Outlier profile III: Hans, Sondre, and Karsten - Gamers
The final three Outliers all fit the Gamer-profile: Hans, Sondre, and Karsten. Although they also used English when reading the news, being on Facebook, and on the Internet in general, in addition to watching TV-series and movies and listening to music with English lyrics, they stand out as gamers since all of them reported that they participated in online games for several hours every day after school. Additionally, they actively participated in the game by using the written and oral chat functions.

Figure 4G is based on the answers from the logs and illustrates the amount of time the Outliers spent gaming on average each day. They spent from one to nine hours almost every day gaming, according to their logs.
Figure 4G. Time spent on online gaming out-of-school on a daily basis (Hans, Sondre, and Karsten). *Note.* The numbers used for this pie chart was collected through the student log, based on the number of hours each student reported spending on online games each day during the two weeks (10 school days).

Figure 4G shows that the Outliers spent 1-6 hours a day, equally divided between 1–3 and 4–6 hours. In the first week of the log, Hans only participated in two hours of gaming. However, the second week of his log showed that he played a minimum of three hours each day, and on one of these days he played up to eight hours online, participating in three different games (Arma 2, Amra 3, and Squad). With the exception of two days, Sondre spent at least five hours each day gaming; participating in a different game each day. Along the same lines, Karsten spent approximately four hours each day playing online, participating in the same online game each day. Similar to Hans’s one long day of gaming, Karsten reported on each of the two Tuesdays in the log, to have played as much as eight hours. This indicates that the three Gamers were exposed to at least one hour a day, and sometimes up to eight hours of English gaming activities, in either a written/reading sense or in an audio/talkative form.

The Gamers specified the language they used while gaming, with English as the most frequently used language among the three Gamers. However, Norwegian was also used in chat functions with other Norwegians. To illustrate the differences in language use while gaming, see figure 4H below.
Figure 4H. Language used while gaming (Hans, Sondre, and Karsten)

Figure 4H shows that the main language used for communication while playing online games was English 69% of the time. Most of the games that they played were in English, and therefore the instructions and the text on the screen were also in English. What is interesting, is their use of English and Norwegian when using the written and oral chat functions. While Sondre chose to use Norwegian for both chat functions, he occasionally used English in the written chat. Karsten used a combination of English and Norwegian, although he used English the most. On the occasions that Karsten chose to use Norwegian, it was mostly related to the written chat. Finally, Hans only spoke or wrote in English while gaming. In his log, he did not report using Norwegian while gaming at all, which might be related to the information that the students simply do not play any online games that are in Norwegian. I will now go more into detail about the individual use of English for each Gamer Outlier and what characterizes them.

Hans: A Gamer

Although Hans explained his English skills by online gaming in Interview I, I discovered that he spent even more time in conversations in English than the other Gamers did. It seemed that he was quite an active user of English in his spare time.
Excerpt F: Hans - Writing, speaking, and gaming in English (Interview I).

Interviewer: Do you agree that you are a better reader in English than in Norwegian?
Hans: Yes
Interviewer: Why do you think that is?
Hans: Because I spend time talking to other people from England, the USA, and other countries.
Interviewer: How have you got in contact with these people?
Hans: I have played [online] games, so I have met and talked to them while gaming.
Interviewer: And you only speak English?
Hans: Yes, we only speak English.
Interviewer: You say that you do online gaming, do you only use English when you play online?
Hans: It is all in English.
Interviewer: Both written and spoken?
Hans: Yes.
Interviewer: Do you feel like it is easy to communicate in English then?
Hans: It is easy.
Interviewer: Why do you think so?
Hans: Maybe because I speak English and use English so much in my spare time that it gets easier at school.

Hans revealed that online gaming was the main reason he had contact with people that he engaged in English conversations with. He also stated very distinctly, that communication was in English only. Although Hans reported using English for four main purposes out of school; reading the news online, reading on the Internet, watching TV-series and movies, and listening to music, he did not spend time on Facebook, in contrast to the other Outliers. He also added in his log that he had used English once while talking to his friends on Skype, and once on an online web-page where one can learn programming. Hans’s uses of English directly related to his spare time activities by using English to communicate with friends and learn more about his interests. This varied use of English made me question whether he was a Gamer or a surfer, similar to my uncertainty concerning Espen. Hans spent less time gaming
than the other two Outliers, and therefore it could be argued that he would rather resemble a Surfer. However, when I asked him in Interview II what best described him, he said that he was definitely a gamer because, “I spend much more time gaming than I do surfing online.”

Hans’ answers from the survey and the interviews were supported through his answers in the log. Hans filled out his log for nine days, and for six of these, he spent at least one hour playing online games.

Figure 4I illustrates that for three of the six days Hans spent gaming, he skimmed through the instructions (22%), and on the remaining three days he read most of the instructions (21%). All the text on the screen was in English. He added in his log that he used the oral chat function five out of six days (36%) and the written chat function three out of six days (21%). When he used the chat functions, he only communicated in English.

During Interview II, Hans again stated that he felt English was a bigger part of his spare time activities than Norwegian. He confirmed that he practiced English while talking to friends, reading his news feed online and listening to music. Hans added that he read books in English out of school saying, “I also read books in English, mostly fantasy books.” These books were
often *Harry Potter* novels that he either ordered online or bought in bookstores. Nevertheless, he identified with the Gamer profile.

**Sondre: A Gamer**

Similar to Hans, Sondre’s log showed that he used English for several activities each day. Over the course of his nine days filling in the log, Sondre read in English on Facebook and on the Internet, he watched TV-series or movies, and listened to music in English almost every day. In addition, he read the news in English, and also used English for other activities. However, in Interview I, Sondre claimed that his good English skills mainly was due to his gaming habits; arguing that being engaged in gaming and being exposed to English through this activity developed his English skills:

*Excerpt G: Learning English from online gaming (Interview I).*

**Interviewer:** And for you, what is the main reason: is it the gaming or is it something else?

**Sondre:** Yeah, it is from gaming that I have learned the most English.

[…]

**Sondre:** I do a lot of gaming, and watch movies and TV-series, so I have learned English from gaming and stuff. […], and I talk a lot with English people too when I am gaming. I also talk with Norwegians, but I do know English better.

Sondre gave the impression that he was often exposed to English in out-of-school situations, either through a more passive role by watching TV-series and movies, or a more active role by participating in online gaming either with English-speaking or Norwegian peers. In his log, Sondre reported spending time gaming every day for several gaming activities (see Figure 4I). This is consistent with his explanation about his English proficiency in the interviews.
Figure 4J. Sondre’s gaming activities based on the log.

Figure 4J illustrates that the nine days Sondre spent gaming, he reported that only one day not to read any instructions (3%), for two days he read most of the instructions (7%), and for the remaining six days he skimmed through the instructions (21%). All the instructions on the screen were in English. Every day he participated in online gaming he reported that he used the written chat function; writing in Norwegian every single day (31%), while also writing in English four of the days (14%). Additionally, Sondre used the oral chat function for seven of the days, however, when he used the oral chat function he spoke in Norwegian only (24%). Sondre seemed to prefer Norwegian when communication with others while gaming. This is surprising, seeing that he himself explained that his English proficiency was due to online gaming. However, if the other players that he communicated with also spoke Norwegian, this could be a reason for his choice of language. Nonetheless, Sondre only reported playing English games with English instructions, and he did use English for written communication half of the days, which seems to support his own statement about gaming being the main reason for his English proficiency.

Karsten: A Gamer

In line with Hans and Sondre, Karsten also appeared to be a gamer. When I asked Karsten to explain his English use during Interview I, he said that he read a lot online in English in his spare time. He struggled to remember other uses of English out-of-school, but when I
reminded him of some of his answers from the survey, he started talking about his online gaming. He stated that he preferred English to Norwegian when playing online, and felt it helped him improve his English skills.

**Excerpt H: Karsten - Reading, speaking, and gaming in English (Interview I).**

*Karsten:* I read a lot online and talk.
*Interviewer:* In English?
*Karsten:* Yes.
*Interviewer:* Do you use English for anything else in your spare time?
*Karsten:* Hm, no, can’t remember.
*Interviewer:* You told me that you spend time gaming and use English while you do so. Do you think that this has helped you improve your English skills?
*Karsten:* Yes.
*Interviewer:* Explain, please.
*Karsten:* Well, I spend a lot of time doing that [gaming]. And I read a lot because I feel like that helps me to pronounce [words], and then I talk about it because I feel like that also helps me.
*Interviewer:* Do you feel that you get to practice your English while gaming?
*Karsten:* Yes.
*Karsten:* [I have learned] words and stuff like that, for when I am writing, and how to construct it [sentences].
*Interviewer:* Do you feel like you have learned new words from participating in online gaming and using English out of school?
*Karsten:* Yes.

Karsten’s log answers showed that he used English for several different activities each day. His use of English was varied, but his main activities for using English were reading on Facebook, listening to music and online gaming. In addition, he read other texts online, watched TV-series or movies, read English texts and comments, and watched English language videos on an online web page called [www.twitch.tv](https://www.twitch.tv). This is a social video platform and community for gamers, video game culture, and the creative arts ([https://www.twitch.tv/p/about](https://www.twitch.tv/p/about)). Karsten filled in the log for the full ten-day period, and he reported having spent time on online games every single day during this period. In his log, he also wrote that he spent at least three hours playing each time he gamed.
Figure 4K. Karsten’s gaming activities based on the log.

Figure 4K shows that for seven of the ten days spent gaming, Karsten skimmed the instructions (28%). In addition, he read most of the instructions that appeared in the game two of these days (8%). All the text was in English. Nine of the days he played, he used the written chat function in English (36%), and on four of these days he also used the written chat in Norwegian (16%). He reported using the oral chat function three of these days; twice in English (8%) and once in Norwegian (4%).

Even though Karsten spent more time gaming than Hans and Sondre, they all actively participated in gaming activities almost every day during the week. All three Gamers argued that because gaming allowed them to use English in general and especially for reading, their English proficiency has benefitted from their participation in gaming. It is clear that gaming is an interest for them and that practicing English is a part of this activity.
4.4 Chapter Summary

In this chapter I have analyzed the survey, the log and the two interviews to answer the three research questions. In my analysis of RQ1, I found only a small difference between the Outliers’ reading activities in English and Norwegian at school, and even though all of them said that they understood English school texts a little better than Norwegian, they seemed to read more texts in Norwegian during the reading project at school. In my analysis of RQ2, I found that the Outliers spent a lot of time reading English texts and being exposed to the English language in general out of school. Their explicit answers suggested that their out-of-school use of English explained why they were good readers of English and simultaneously poor readers of Norwegian. Analyzing RQ3, I identified a more detailed picture of each Outlier’s use of English. The student profiles contributed to the explanation of how and why the Outliers used English in their spare time. Finally, these profiles suggest how their uses of English might have contributed to their English reading proficiency. These profiles were also supported by the Outliers in views that their English proficiency is due to their practice and use of English in their spare time.
Chapter 5 – Discussion

In this chapter, I discuss my main findings in light of the theory presented. First, I discuss the Outliers’ extensive use of English out of school, which seemed to explain their English reading proficiency (5.1), and then I discuss the relevance of the fact that they demonstrated metacognitive awareness of this connection (5.2).

Before I conducted my MA study, I believed that only a very small group of students fit the Outlier profile, and that gaming would be the only explanation provided for their English proficiency, similar to Brevik’s (2016a) findings. Now, because of this MA study, I have confirmed that there are in fact more students that fit this Outlier profile. My research has provided more detailed and in-depth data about the Outliers’ uses of English out of school; offering information about the different uses of English out of school on a daily basis for two weeks, and also over a four-month period of time. My findings indicate that the reasons for the development of these Outliers' English proficiency are complex; they practice their English skills every day as they choose to use English in their extracurricular activities.

5.1 The relevance of using English out of school

The Outliers, who participated of my study, are all Norwegian L1 speakers (see Table 3C). They had mainly learned formal English through ten years of primary and lower secondary education at school. In addition, they had grown up in Norway, and since the Norwegian society is characterized by a lot of English through television, film, music, news and the social media (Brevik, 2016a; Rindal, 2013, 2014), the students have received a great deal of input in English from the sociocultural context they has grown up in. In other words, they had been exposed to extracurricular English, while simultaneously learning English at school in several contexts. This dynamic between learning English at school and getting input from English in their everyday life is by no means surprising, but nevertheless intriguing. Although this description could be exactly the same for the Norwegian language, these students brought with them the English language they had learned in school and chose English as their preferred language out of school to further their personal interests. They actively adopted
English as part of their leisure activities in the virtual reality (Gee, 2017), both explicitly and implicitly. The Outliers’ detailed explanations over four months suggest that English is relevant to them – more so than Norwegian.

Although English is a fundamental element of schooling in Norway as in many areas of the world, the importance of acquiring language through implicit input should not be underestimated. Prior research has demonstrated the benefits of implicit learning through exposure to stimulus that is typically found outside of the language classroom (e.g., Brevik, 2016a, Sletten et al., 2015; Sundquist & Wikström, 2015). On top of being beneficial for the learning of English as the second language, the presence of linguistic stimulus outside of the classroom is beneficial with regards to motivating language learners. Language students gain motivation through being exposed to implicit language input because of a variety of reasons, not least as they engage in personally meaningful activities; being better able to self-regulate the level of language difficulty that they meet, which is not always possible in the classroom (Day & Bamford, 2002).

The Social Media Consumer and the Surfer spent more time watching TV-series and films, both with and without subtitles. The use of subtitles in movies and television in the L2 is one example of beneficial language exposure, which the Outliers’ revealed to use to a certain extent. TV programs or movies often have subtitles, which could be useful for new language learners in order to acquire new language forms (d’Ydewalle & Van de Poel, 1999). For learners watching a film in the L2, it could be more beneficial to use L2 subtitles rather than no subtitles at all (Winke et al, 2010), however, some findings might suggest that caution should be used while encouraging language students to use subtitles as a means of language acquisition. All the Outliers in the present study revealed watching TV-series and movies without subtitles, while Natalie, Karsten and Espen were the only Outliers who reported using either English or Norwegian ones, even though all five Outliers reported not having any difficulties understanding English either in or out of school.

Another example of language input, is the active use of computer games as a fundamentally important source of input in English. Much like in Brevik (2016a), who found that upper secondary students explained their English reading proficiency by their extensive online gaming, previous studies have also found a positive connection between playing online
videogames and developing English proficiency in the second language (Sletten, Strandbu, & Gilje, 2015; Sylvén & Sundqvist, 2012; Sundqvist, 2009). The Gamer profile in my MA study is consistent with the findings in these studies. The strongest argument amongst prior research, however, appears to be that computer games serve as a strong motivational factor, as players encounter situations where they are forced to use their second language, but in a much less formal and restricted setting than the classroom context (Silseth, 2011). In her study, and similar to my MA, Brevik (2016a) also found this to be the case with the Outliers reporting that online computer games provided strong motivational factors for them to improve their English reading abilities.

Unlike playing online video games, or watching a TV program or film, reading is one type of input that did not seem to present strong motivational factors for the Outliers in my study. Nevertheless, Hans and Karsten did read books in English during their reading project, and all the Outliers believed the reading project helped them become better readers in general. They did not, however, attribute the reading of books the same weight as their chosen activities in the virtual reality out of school (Gee, 2017). In fact, they did not report reading books at all out of school. Engaging in reading activities outside of the classroom, such as reading a novel, a magazine, a newspaper, or an online article, has demonstrated to have considerable benefits, even in the acquisition of the first language. Prior studies have, for instance, linked reading at home with benefits such as greater vocabulary knowledge and academic attainment (Anderson et al., 1988). Reading in the second language has also been proven to be of great benefit in relation to gaining better L2 proficiency, greater awareness of the L2 vocabulary, and – as with L1 reading – better academic achievement (Day et al., 1991; Sundqvist, 2009). However, reading requires an effort on the reader’s part to engage in the reading activity, much in line with the notion of Vygotsky’s active learner (Claxton, 2007), and it can be a difficult manner of gaining input for language learners who experience difficulties with reading (RAND, 2002). For the Outliers in this study, they do not seem to struggle when reading in the L2, but it might be so in the L1, since they scored below the 20% intervention baseline in the L1 national reading test. The benefits of reading, however, are clearly considerable, and language learners should be given the adequate tools to be able to access this form of linguistic input outside of the language classroom. This highlights the importance of encouraging language learners to read as much as possible (Day et al., 1991).
5.2 The relevance of reading English in and out of school

The five Outliers read a lot of text (RAND, 2002), this is evident from looking at their survey answers and student logs, and they all support these answers both in Interview I and II. What is also clear from talking with the five students is that they understand what they read and that they enjoy reading. At school, they explain that they read different kinds of text both in class and as homework, and that the types of texts read as part of the reading project varied. Their mostly read types of text during the reading project were books and novels, followed by texts read on the Internet. Additionally, the five Outliers read many texts in the out-of-school context. Most of these texts were digital and visual ones, like TV-series or movies, Internet (Facebook), musical lyrics, and online games.

When it comes to the Outliers’ as readers (RAND, 2002), it is clear that it is their own interpretation and understanding of the text that is most important. How the Outliers choose to interpret a text influences their understanding of the text, as well as the motivation to continue reading (RAND, 2002). These Outliers read the most in out-of-school contexts, and an important part of the reading activity is the choice of topic or text. They choose to read about something that they find interesting, motivating or have passion for, and it seems that to have the opportunity to choose their own text contributes to extensive reading (Day & Bamford, 2002).

It seems that, when the Outliers have decided to be readers in an activity, they are actively engaged. As they are not only allowed to choose the type of text or topic for themselves, they seem happy to read and have reading be its own reward, seeing that there are no teacher-given tasks or assessments connected to the reading project or them as readers (Day & Bamford, 2002). In Silseth’s (2011) study, the students brought with them their personal motivation for gaming, but still needed help to understand how the information presented in the game was relevant for them in the physical reality. The student profiles provide information about the Outliers’ uses of English out of school, which indicates the relevance of the different ways in which the students communicate when they engage in their own interests. Such awareness about the Outliers’ communicative skills and interests could help teachers create English instruction that meet the needs and interests of their students (Sundqvist & Wikström, 2015).
Natalie, as a Social Media Consumer, spent time reading digital texts mostly on Facebook, reading lyrics to songs and music while listening to it, and read subtitles both in Norwegian and English while watching TV-series and movies out of school. In school, she read online texts in English, and occasionally in Norwegian, and a Norwegian fictional novel. What is interesting to see is that during Interview II, Natalie pointed out that since she had finished her Norwegian novel, she had now started reading an English one instead. Additionally, she still read English and Norwegian texts online at school. By having the opportunity to choose texts and topics based on her own interests it could help Natalie become a more independent reader and further develop her reading fluency (Day & Bamford, 2002; RAND, 2002). In order to encourage students to engage in reading, they need engaging texts. In addition, it is important that the teachers or the school provide a wide range of engaging reading materials available to the students (Day & Bamford, 2002). Even though the Social Media Consumer, Natalie, said that she had started reading a novel that was previously used as a text in her English class, both she and the Gamer, Sondre, expressed that they could not find any interesting texts in the school library, indicating that the school might not provide a wide enough range of text or topics for the students to see the purpose for reading them.

As a Surfer, Espen spent time using English in several different contexts. In line with Sundqvist’s (2009) findings, Espen spent time practicing English in what he found to be the easiest and most enjoyable contexts; watching TV-series and movies, and listening to music. However, he did not only read on social media, or spend time surfing on the Internet, he also spent time reading the news. As pointed out in the Surfer profile, he sought authentic language situations and engaged in his use of text. These activities (surfing the Internet and reading news) are beneficial for both vocabulary acquisition and development of English skills (Sundqvist, 2009). Therefore, Espen is practicing and developing his English skills while participating in his interests in a virtual reality out of school (Gee, 2017). The Surfer also has to adapt his reading techniques and strategies to the text; making decisions about which texts he wants to read, and through hyperlinks he can be led to different texts. This is similar to the Social Media Consumer, having to decide if they find the text in front of them interesting, or whether or not to stop reading.
As Gamers, Hans, Sondre and Karsten, mainly read instructions and chat conversation while gaming. When participating in written chats, they primarily used English. Also, both Karsten and Hans read texts in online forums and chat groups about topics related to gaming. The Gamers seemed to prioritize gaming over reading books, magazines or news both in and out of school, thus being exposed to large amounts of L2 text (Sylvén & Sundqvist, 2012). Participating in online video gaming has shown to be beneficial for vocabulary acquisition and gamers show knowledge and use of more advanced vocabulary on written tests (Sundqvist, 2009; Sundqvist & Wikström, 2015; Sylvén & Sundqvist, 2012). These studies indicate that the Gamers might have been engaged in activities that benefitted their vocabulary acquisition. They spent several hours each day participating in gaming, which they chose because they found it interesting (Alverman et al., 2007; Day & Bamford, 2002). The reading activity is taking place in a virtual reality, in and out of school (Gee, 2017), and through participating in the games, they had to adapt to the virtual and sociocultural context in which they were engaged, and alter their communication and reading strategies to the situation at hand (e.g. skimming the text, engage in discussions about the mission, read full instructions) (Silseth, 2011).

Based on the types and amounts of texts that the Outliers were exposed to both in and out of school, they have confirmed my belief based on prior studies (e.g., Brevik, 2016a; Sletten, Strandbu, & Gilje, 2015; Sundqvist & Wikström, 2015), that they spend much time reading in English, and especially digital text, and that this activity is beneficial for their development as L2 readers.

The activity (RAND, 2002) seems different for each Outlier as they have their own personal interests and goals for reading the texts they choose. Since they are exposed to the English language in school as well as out of school, and based on their out of school activities, the Outliers seem to have chosen to use English on a daily basis. This is important information to understand why they are poor readers of Norwegian and simultaneously good English readers. However, while the Gamers seem to choose activities in which they produce text, the Social Media Consumer mainly seems to be exposed to English language input. Again, their choices of activities seem closely linked to their interests (Day & Bamford, 2002), which in some way could be connected to activities at school as well.
Silseth (2011) argues that gaming makes the participants practice several different reading techniques and strategies; like skimming the text, reading it carefully, or skipping parts of the text to go through the game quicker. These strategies depended on the task they were solving and what purpose the students had while they were involved in the activity (Silseth, 2011). Interestingly, the Outliers acknowledged that they used such reading strategies while (skim) reading the instructions in the game. Gamers also have to make quick decisions based on their own reflections and knowledge of the game, if they do not, they will lose (Brevik & Hellekjær, forthcoming). As mentioned by the Outliers in my study, they did not only read the instructions in the games, but also participated in both written and oral chats while playing. In other words, the Gamers indeed seemed to practice their communicative skills while using English out of school, which is one important aspect and goal of English teaching in school as well (Rindal, 2014). The question is how to connect these two realities.

The sociocultural context influences how a reader experience and understand the reading activity (RAND, 2002), and this could explain why the Outliers read different types of text in English. It could seem that the different contexts, in which the Outliers practice English, is experienced as different from when they use English in a school context. As they themselves chose to spend much time on reading out of school, the activity of reading in itself does not seem to be a problem, but it might rather be the context in which they have to read. As Vasbø et al. (2014) found that students used social media for both school related and non-school related topics, and that such a media related context opened up for development of friendships and networks, as well as the opportunity to reflect on oneself and the world. Additionally, Silseth (2011) points out another form of sociocultural context using an online game as a resource in class. What all the Outliers have in common is that they have all chosen to read in English, voluntarily, in their spare time and as they are freely choosing the text and topic to engage in, they engage in different contexts, especially in the virtual world.

Young people are participating in an increasing number of social contexts, which provides opportunities to practice different language skills, observe language use of others and negotiate language use while practicing their own skills; in other words, young people are learning language for themselves in social and out of school contexts (Barton & Potts, 2013). When reading digital text or participating in a digital activity (like gaming), a possible consequence is the development of new social relations in a digital context (Barton & Potts,
2013), and this is the case for Karsten. He explained that he enjoyed practicing English out of school as it opened up for a bigger network and to get in contact with people, and this was mainly a consequence of participating in online gaming.

It could be argued that there is a notion that students who participate in online gaming achieve lower grades at school, especially in mathematics and Norwegian (Sletten, Strandbu & Gilje, 2015). It also seems to be a negative notion of online gaming as an activity, as argued by Brevik (2016b). However, investigating the effects of online gaming on English proficiency has indicated that having poor grades in English at school is not explained by time spent on online gaming (Brevik, 2016a; Sletten et al., 2015).

Finally, the RAND (2002) model defines reading comprehension as a combination of the text, the reader and the activity as three elements dependent on each other taking place in a sociocultural context. When explaining their English reading proficiency, the Outliers in the present study consequentially referred to the out-of-school contexts in which they were exposed to the English language, through either written or spoken text. Due to their focus on where they practiced English when talking about their use of the language, these contexts could offer explanations to help understand the Outliers' L2 reading proficiency.

The English language plays a significant role in the Norwegian society and is used in business, education and everyday life on a daily basis (Crystal, 2012). As learning the English language is an important goal emphasized by the educational authorities (KD, 2006, 2013), these students receive English teaching regularly throughout their school years. In addition to exposure to English in an educational context, these Outliers encounter the English language through music, social media, TV-series and movies, and the Internet. This extracurricular use of English becomes very clear from analyzing the Outliers’ answers across the survey, the student log and both interviews. However, even though these students have received very similar teaching and education in English in school, they might not share the same references or experiences. This is also the case with the different experiences they bring with them from home. The outliers have grown up in different families, and hence they have all learned to read and acquire knowledge in different ways. This context of learning influences the students’ choices of strategies, participation and ways of learning (RAND, 2002). In the present study, I have illustrated these different in the three Outlier profiles.
The three main contexts in which the Outliers used English, by either listening, watching, reading, writing or speaking in English, were; the social media or the Internet (e.g., Facebook), TV-series and movies, and music. All of these contexts mainly exist as virtual realities they connect to out of school (e.g., Gee, 2017), and considering the Outliers’ explanations about their reading proficiency, one could argue, that the Outliers have developed their English skills mainly in out-of-school contexts.

Additionally, the Outliers do not refer to their practice of English in school when explaining their L2 proficiency. The school context does not provide us with explanations of why these students read what they read, or why they practice English they way they do. Even though the students believe that the reading project is beneficial for their development of reading skills, this does not offer an explanation of the findings in my study, simply because they read very little in English during these reading sessions. It seems like the explanation of their reading proficiency lies in the types of activities they engage in in their spare time. This assumption is also supported by the Outliers' explicit explanations throughout the four-month data collection process.

5.3 Metacognitive awareness among the students

The focus of both Interview I and II was to talk to the students about how they used the English language outside of school and what kind of interests they had where English was used. As anticipated, based on the survey answers and Breviks (2016a) study, the Outliers were quite skilled at expressing their views on their English reading proficiency. This should not come as a surprise, as these Outliers have demonstrated that they are actively engaged in their own language learning through out of school contexts (Barton & Potts, 2013; Day & Bamford, 2002). Moreover, this adds to the importance of students being actively involved in their own learning and development of comprehension (Brevik, 2015; Daniels, 2005; Derry, 2008).

During the interviews, all five Outliers were good at explaining what they used English for, and how they used languages in and out of school. This allowed me to engage in good
conversations with the Outliers, and in this dialogue the Outliers illustrated metacognitive and communicative skills about their English proficiency. As argued by Claxton (2007), teacher engagement in such dialogues help the students reflect on their own learning process, and promote active learners. This could help students learn to transfer their good skills from one context and practicing these skills in another context (Brevik, 2015). And as found by Brevik and Hellekjær (forthcoming), students, particularly those attending vocational programs, demonstrate metacognitive awareness about their use of strategies during English lessons when they are given the opportunity to do so.

If teachers engage in a dialogue with their students about what they like to do in their spare time or how they use language in assignments, they could learn more about students’ interests and use of language in out of school contexts. This could enable the teachers to help engage the students in their own learning process; being active learners (Claxton, 2007; Brevik, 2015), and provide the teacher with valuable information about how students solve tasks in other contexts than school. Having knowledge about students’ extracurricular language experiences in different contexts could enable the teacher to help their students develop their comprehension in other language domains that are not easily accessed in out of school contexts (Sylvén & Sundqvist, 2012). In other words, student participation and their being active learners could provide valuable information that could help teacher design and plan their teaching. This way, through student engagement in their own teaching, it might be easier to make the English subject feel relevant to them, which is stressed in the FYR-project (UDIR, 2016). By incorporating the students’ interests and problem-solving skills in out of school contexts with school assignments and an in school context, English could be experienced as more relevant for the vocational students, and possible also facilitate a contexts which promote an active learner.

In addition, when I asked my participants if they saw any advantages of using English outside of school to develop their performances in English in the classroom, they gave several examples. They believed that using a lot of English outside of school had helped improve their English skills in general, supporting the argument made by the Outliers in Brevik’s (2016a) study. They stressed the fact that since they were constantly watching, reading, writing and speaking English in their spare time, their English improved and this helps them at school as well (Barton & Potts, 2013).
It is hard to say with certainty that students see clear links between using English in their spare time and their school achievement. The Outliers in Brevik’s (2016a) study did not see any connections between their out-of-school English uses with their use of English in school. Similar to these Outliers, the participants in my MA study did not see direct connections between their English uses out of school with their English use in school. However, they express awareness of and state clearly, that practicing English a lot and often has been positive for them. Teachers could help raise their students’ awareness about their language use, by pointing out the possible benefits of linking the students’ virtual and physical realities and ask them why it would be relevant to them to develop as English readers and even help them see the possible language learning opportunities that they engage in in out of school contexts (Sylvén & Sundqvist, 2012).

In order to try to help students transfer their good skills from one context to another, and in this sense help them become better learners (Brevik, 2015, 2016; Claxton, 2007), I believe it is important to try to incorporate the students’ interests in teaching, and to listen to them about how they learn. I will therefore talk about the implication of my study and how teachers could incorporate this in their own teaching.

5.4 Linking the findings to the vocational school context

Since the basis of my MA study has relied on a set of quantitative test results, I would like to now link the out of school activities and contexts discussed previously in this chapter with in school activities and contexts. I therefore, want to discuss instruction and learning in school through the principles of the FYR-project, and specifically how teachers can use knowledge about students’ out of school interest, as well as language use and problem solving out of school, to incorporate such knowledge in their existing teaching and further improve their teaching.

One key question that needs to be raised based on my findings is; How can we draw on students’ interests to make teaching English relevant for them? As the FYR-project is concerned with making the English subject feel more relevant to vocational students (UDIR,
2014), and the FYR-report looked at the vocational orientation of common core subjects in school (Stene, Haugset & Iversen, 2014), answering this question could provide teachers with valuable information when designing and planning teaching that is meant to be vocationally oriented and experienced as relevant.

In the FYR-project, the Y is related to the vocational part of the project description, more specifically vocational orientation. Among other things, it deals with the choice of topics and learning methods used in teaching, and aims to give examples from the vocation to motivate the students, and to emphasis the need for vocational orientation in teaching (UDIR, 2016). Since the students were allowed to read what they choose for themselves, one question in the log asked the students if they thought the text they had read during the reading session had anything to do with their vocational program, and also to give reasons for their answer (see Appendix B). Interestingly, with the exception of one day in Hans’s log, every Outlier said “no” each day of the log. None of the Outliers believed that the texts they read in the reading session were related to their vocational program. In his log, Sondre explained that it was not about his vocational program because “it is a text about football” or that “it had nothing to do with TIP”, and similar to Sondre, Espen said, “it is not about service (ST)”. On the one day that Hans wrote that what he had read was “maybe” relevant, was the day he spent time reading a power point in the reading session. As he did not provide any explanation to why he thought so, it is possible that this was vocationally oriented because it was related to homework or other schoolwork.

As the FYR-report found that vocational orientation occurred in various degrees during the lessons, it also points out there seems to be a focus on vocationally oriented teaching among teachers, but that does not automatically mean that the students experience what they do as vocationally oriented or that they choose to work with text or tasks that is vocationally oriented themselves (Stene et al., 2014). As all the Outliers found that none of the texts they read during the reading sessions were relevant or about their vocational program, it indicates that the Outliers does not incorporate the vocational aspect in their own choice of text. The Outliers seem to choose texts based in their personal interest. Therefore, to better be able to make vocational orientation feel relevant for the students, knowledge about their interest and how they work with language out of school could be helpful. Yet, since my study does not
include classroom observation, the students’ answers do not mean that vocational orientation does not take place.

As it is clear that the Outliers do not choose to read texts about their vocational program in either the reading session or out of school, it should be easier to make vocational students experience the English subject as more relevant in their every day use, as stressed by the FYR-project (UDIR, 2016). They have all chosen to use English in out of school contexts, which is evident looking at the findings presented in the previous chapter. However, like the Outliers participating in Brevik's (2016a) study, none of the Outliers in my MA linked their out of school uses of English with their use of English in their vocational programs. The Outliers' English use is primarily relevant to their communication with friends and extended networks out of school, especially through the social media, to their personal interest, like gaming, and to keep themselves informed about news or other topics, accessed online (Barton & Potts, 2013). On the other hand, the school context is of importance. The students expressed a general interest for English as a school subject and demonstrated great understanding of texts, which supports the importance of making the common core subjects more relevant for vocational students, and help vocational students feel that common core subject are relevant for them (UDIR, 2016).

Whether students experience the teaching of a topic or subject as relevant is, among other things, influenced by a teacher’s educational skills (Haugset & Stene, 2016). In order to help teachers succeed in making a subject relevant for their vocational students, information about students’ interest could be helpful. By having knowledge of students’ interests, the teacher could build on this in class and this way helps make the topic or subject more relatable (Day & Bamford, 2002).

In other words, the Outliers are not only acquiring and developing knowledge and skills at school, but this learning process is for the primarily a part of their out-of-school activities. They continuously develop their reading skills in out-of-school contexts, and they do so voluntarily. I suggest finding a way to associate these interests with teaching elements in order to better help students transfer their proficiency from one context to another and support them in being active learners (Brevik, 2015, 2016; Claxton, 2007).
Chapter 6 - Conclusion

I this thesis, I have studied what characterizes the in- and out-of-school use of English for five upper secondary students in vocational studies (16- and 17-year old) who were identified as Outliers due to their reading significantly better in English than in Norwegian. More specifically, I have investigated these Outliers’ own views on English and Norwegian at school (RQ1), the extent to which the Outliers read in English out of school (RQ2), and how they explained their English proficiency (RQ3).

6.1 The contribution of my MA study and future research

My MA study builds on and elaborates previous research among vocational students in upper secondary school (Brevik et al., 2016; Brevik, 2016a). First, through the research done in this MA study, an essential contribution to the research field and the VOGUE project is that it confirms that this Outlier group of students exists (i.e., students who scored below 20% in the national reading test in Norwegian and at the same time above 60% in the national reading test in English). In this study, I have identified Outliers at more schools and among several students than those included in the two original studies (Brevik et al., 2016; Brevik, 2016a), including girls, which indicates that Outliers can also be found at different study programs than only vocational ones. These Outliers have an atypical language profile, and there is a need for further research into this student group. In light of the Report no. 28 to the Storting (KD, 2016), this finding is of relevance, as the report asks schools and teacher to encourage development of transferable language competences in future school practices. I believe that it is important that this group of Outliers, that are poor readers in L1 but at the same time good readers in L2, is recognized by teachers and school leaders, as well as higher educational instances.

Interestingly, the difference in activities seems to be related to gender. In her study, Brevik (2016a) found five vocational boys who fit the Outlier profile. The participant selection in my study included five students; one girl and four boys. These studies were conducted at one school each. However, in a nation-wide study (Brevik & Hellekjær, fortcoming), the majority of the Outliers were also boys. In this study, there were also boys in general studies with the
Outlier profile, and a minority of girls in general studies and vocational studies. Moreover, when I identified all the Outliers at the participating school, Natalie was not the only girl in this group, although, she attended a general studies program that is vocationally oriented. This could mean, that there is a group of girls in upper secondary schools that fit the Outlier profile. More research is needed on this Outlier profile among groups of girls in vocational as well as general programs, and it would be interesting to investigate if girls in general and vocational studies share the identified Social Media Consumer-profile with Natalie.

Another contribution of my research is the time aspect of my study. In the previous studies (Brevik, 2016a; Brevik et al., 2016), data were collected at one point in time. In this study, I followed the Outliers over a period of four months; from the time they conducted the national reading tests and immediately afterwards participated in the survey and Interview I (September 2016), through the collection of student logs each day for two weeks (October 2016), and finally, when they participated in Interview II (February 2017). One interesting finding is that the Outliers offered similar explanations for their English reading proficiency for each data collection situation, with more details each time I asked them to explain their English proficiency, which supports the credibility of my findings.

A third contribution is the data collected in the student logs. Since the students filled in the log over the course of two school weeks, their answers portray their daily use of English, both in and out of school, emphasizing the relevance of their interest in and use of English in extracurricular contexts. The logs confirmed the picture created by the Outliers in the survey as well as Interviews I and II. The logs provided detailed data about the Outliers’ out-of-school use of English, which further supported the impression that they had chosen English as a major part of their spare time.

A final contribution is the three student profiles I identified; the gamer, the surfer, and the social media consumer. During the second interview, the Outliers were asked to confirm or dismiss my interpretations of their student profile, which they confirmed and elaborated on. These profiles are based on the Outliers’ extensive use of English in out-of-school contexts, and provide an insight into how their English use connects to their personal interests. These profiles could provide teachers with valuable information about students’ preferred language use and problem solving in out-of-school contexts, which could be used in school contexts.
when working with new topics or helping them develop their reading comprehension. It might enable teachers to help raise their students’ awareness about possible benefits of their out of school English use (Sylvén & Sundqvist, 2012), thus helping them expand their knowledge and language-learning potential.

I believe it is necessary to do more research investigating this student group, and to look further into explanations for their high reading proficiency in English. If it is possible to use the out-of-school interests of students in English instruction, I believe we should try to examine how this can be done and to what extent the Outliers find this to be of relevance for their English development. By attempting to incorporate the students' strengths into the teaching of English, we would perhaps show the students how to transfer these skills to other practices, and contexts they might face in the future, which would make an interesting study. While this should be relevant for all students, it is particularly relevant for students in vocational studies, and in line with the future aims of the FYR-project now that the national initiative ends and local initiatives take over. In line with Brevik (2016a), I hope future research could identify how and why vocationally oriented teaching in English builds on the students’ strengths and not only design instruction aimed at their weaknesses.

6.2 Implications for teaching

As mentioned above, my argument is that we should look at how students communicate when they are not in a school context, and attempt to create tasks and lessons that build on their competence, for example by asking the students to communicate in a similar manner as they do in out-of-school contexts. Based on my findings, I find it important to create tasks and structure the English teaching in ways that take advantage of the students’ interests and skills. Since the Outliers in the present study express that they do not find the English subject difficult, but also does not actively use their out-of-school English proficiency at school. Since they do not see themselves as resources in the classroom, English teachers should try to help the students feel more connected to their teaching, by for example linking the teaching of English with the students’ out of schools experiences. An important implication for teaching is how to engage the Social Media Consumer, the Surfer and the Gamer in activities
at school, especially in relation to the virtual word their reveal that they participate extensively in (e.g., Gee, 2017).

*The Social Media Consumer profile* indicated that these students are exposed to large amounts of English through the social media (like Facebook, Instagram or Snapchat), by watching TV-series and movies, and by listening to music with English lyrics. These students seem mainly to be consumers of English, seeing as they do not seem to produce much written or spoken English texts in these physical and virtual out-of-school contexts. For the Social Media Consumer, it might be an idea if they were offered the opportunity to present texts in the same way as on Facebook, Instagram or Snapchat, or to ask the students to create a product that could be presented in the same way as in the social media. The students could for example get tasks presented as pictures are posed on Instagram; have one picture of an event followed by a description portraying one side of for example a conflict. The comments underneath the pictures could be different people arguing and supporting the sides of the conflict, or the Social Media Consumer could be asked to produce a product interpreting and using the information acquired in this task. Listening to songs or reading lyrics might also be efficient for these learners, as part of their lessons or viewing instructional videos that explain the functionality of tools or processes related to their study program. In this manner, the Social Media Consumer could be asked to solve a task and to present it in ways suggested by Vasbø et al. (2014); using a social media platform to help merge their everyday knowledge and school knowledge.

*The Surfer profile* suggests that the use of English for these students is varied; reading on Facebook and the news, spending time on the Internet, participating in online gaming, watching TV-series and movies, and listening to music. By seeking authentic language situations, and enjoying participating in situations in which he or she can practice their English skills, the Surfer is a producer of English, actively participating in various language situations. As for the Social Media Consumer, the Surfer could also be presented with texts in the same way as on Facebook, Instagram or Snapchat. He or she might also appreciate being presented with the suggested task to present the new topic like an Instagram-post, but instead of being given all the information, he could be asked to do his own research and fill in the post for himself. As the Surfer spends much time surfing online, it could be relevant letting these students spend time searching for the information needed to solve the task, within
educational frames, but nevertheless building on the experiences and skills developed also outside school.

Also, the teacher could present a new topic by using pictures instead of a textbook. Online texts are most often presented with pictures, both in the news and on social media, and new topics could be presented as a news story, or a real news story could be part of the teaching material. Although texts might be considered more challenging when they do not have pictures, texts with pictures would be just as challenging if they are asked to explain the steps ahead – like in a comic book. Such tasks might help the student stay interested and motivated throughout the task, and resemble instructional manuals vocational students read in their workshops (Brevik, 2017).

*The Gamer profile* shows that even these students spend at least one hour each day gaming, that the most used language while gaming is English, and that while gaming, the reading activity is based on instructions and both written and oral chats. Through participating in gaming, the Gamer practices his reading and writing skills, as well as his listening and speaking skills when participating in chats.

As Silseth (2011) investigated the use of an online game in the teaching of a conflict, the use of online gaming through games could be a task well fitted for the Gamers. To introduce a topic through instructions in a game, navigating within the game and acquiring new knowledge as the game progresses, allows the Gamer to practice his gaming skills while participating in the context of the classroom. In this manner, their virtual gaming activity in the out-of-school context, is connected to a physical in-school context (e.g., Gee, 2017). However, the digital/virtual reality that the students know from gaming out of school, is still the same in school. Using the gaming activity in teaching is a collaborative task, means that the students have to make meaning of the information they acquire throughout the game. In this context, the teacher also plays an important role in not only helping the students move their character within the game, but also helping them understand the task and structuring the classroom discussions to help these Gamers make meaning of the topics at hand (Silseth, 2011).
For the Gamer, who not only listens and reads, but also writes and speaks in English while playing, it may be possible to structure the task so that the Gamer is allowed to work in the same way, or to communicate in the same way as he does when gaming. When introducing a new topic, the teacher could provide the task and the new topic knowledge through instructions given sequentially, one by one. The students could be asked to solve tasks, to discuss or make choices at the end of one instruction, before receiving the next. During this process, the Gamers could participate in both written and spoken chat as part of the tasks given throughout the game. Such a task can be considered problem-solving tasks, as suggested in Report No. 28 to the Storting (KD, 2016), and essential competence in the school of the future.

These examples are based on the three identified Outlier profiles, and the question is whether such profiles could be explicitly linked to situations of personal relevance for the students. The idea is not simply to present school activities initiated by the teacher and conducted by the students primarily because the teacher tells them to, in line with findings by Brevik (2017).

At the most simple level, these Outliers have chosen a virtual/digital reality to participate in out of school contexts. They are not only participating in and English-speaking world, as being part of the Norwegian society, but they also participate in an English-speaking virtual/digital world of their own choice. The student profiles share a focus on moving within a digital/virtual reality. Tasks, assignments and teaching should help students develop their English skills further, to participate in both the English-speaking world, as part of the Norwegian society, but also help them when participate in their virtual/digital world in out-of-school settings.

Finally, the findings of this study may be relevant for vocational students, and English teachers in vocational programs that experience their students to fit the Outlier profile. It may be an advantage for the teachers to know that these students’ out-of-school use of English might influence their English reading skills in order to provide these students with the necessary help to link their English skills in and out of school.
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Appendix A: Survey

Survey: English at upper secondary school (based on Brevik, 2016a)


(This is a survey about what you read in Norwegian and English, and what you use English for in your spare time. It consists of 20 questions, and it takes 5-10 minutes to answer. Even though you fill in you name, you answers will be confidential. The school/teachers will not get access to your answers.)

Om din bakgrunn (Your background)
Disse spørsmålene er fra Brevik (2016a). (These questions are from Brevik (2016a).

1. Hvem er du? Skriv navn og klasse nedenfor: * (Who are you? Write name and class below:)

☐ Gutt på yrkesfag (Boy in vocational studies)
☐ Gull på studiespesialiserende (Boy in general studies)
☐ Jente på yrkesfag (Girl in vocational studies)
☐ Jente på studiespesialiserende (Girl in general studies)

2. Hvilket yrkesfag går du på? * (Which study program do you attend?)

☐

3. Er norsk ditt førstespråk? * (Is Norwegian your first language?)

☐ Ja (Yes)
☐ Nei (No)

4. Hvis du svarte nei, hva er ditt førstespråk? (If no, what is your first language?)

☐

5. Har du gått på engelskspråklig skole tidligere? * (Have you previously attended an English-speaking school?)

☐
Ja (Yes)
Nei (No)

**Din motivasjon (Your motivation)**
Disse spørsmålene er fra Brevik (2016a). (*These questions are from Brevik (2016s).*

6. Hvor interessert er du i engelsk som skolefag? * (How interested are you in English as a school subject?)

- 1. Ikke interessert i det hele tatt (Not interested at all)
- 2. Litt interessert (A little interested)
- 3. Ganske interessert (Quite interested)
- 4. Veldig interessert (Very interested)

7. Hvor interessert er du i norsk som skolefag? * (How interested are you in Norwegian as a school subject?)

- 1. Ikke interessert i det hele tatt (Not interested at all)
- 2. Litt interessert (A little interested)
- 3. Ganske interessert (Quite interested)
- 4. Veldig interessert (Very interested)

8. Hva leser du på norsk utenom skolen? * (What do you read in Norwegian outside of school?)

- Nyheter (news)
- Facebook
- Romaner (novels)
- Magasiner, tegneserier (magazines, cartoons)
- Online spill (online games)
- TV-serier og filmer (TV-series and films)
- Musikk og sangtekster (music and lyrics)
- Annet (other)

9. Hva bruker du engelsk til utenom skolen? * (What do you read in English outside of school?)

- Nyheter (news)
- Facebook
Onlinespill (Online games)
Disse spørsmålene er fra Brevik (2016a), bortsett fra sp.m. 10 og 13, pluss ett alternativ på sp.m. 11, og to på sp.m. 12, som er lagt til av Katharina Garvoll (KG).

10. Hvis du spiller onlinespill - hva slags type spill spiller du? Skriv navn og sjanger på spill/spillene: (If you play online games, which type of games do you play? Write the names and genres of the game(s)) (KG)

11. Hvor mye spiller du? (How much do you play?)

- Mindre enn 3 timer pr dag (Less than 3 hours per day)
- 3-5 timer pr dag (3-5 hours per day)
- Mer enn 5 timer pr dag (More than 5 hours per day) (KG)

12. Hvilke av disse funksjonene bruker du? (Which of these functions do you use?)

- Chat skriftlig (på norsk) (Written chat in Norwegian)
- Chat skriftlig (på engelsk) (Written chat in English)
- Chat muntlig (på norsk) (Oral chat in Norwegian)
- Chat muntlig (på engelsk) (Oral chat in English)
- Deltar aktivt i forum/grupper om spillet, utenfor spillet (Actively participation in forums/groups about the game, outside the game) (KG)
- Leser bare hva andre skriver/sier i forum/grupper om spillet, utenfor spillet (Read only what others write/say in forums/groups about the game, outside of the game) (KG)
13. I spillene, hvor mye av teksten/instruksjonen leser du? (In the games, how much of the text/instructions do you read?) (KG)

- ☐ Leser alle instruksjonene/oppdrag (Read all the instructions/assignments)
- ☐ Skumleser bare (Skim read only)
- ☐ Spillet har nesten ingen instruksjoner (The game has very few instructions)
- ☐ Leser ikke instruksjonene (I don’t read the instructions)

Om norsk og engelsk på skolen (About Norwegian and English at school)
Disse spørsmålene er fra Brevik (2016a). (These questions are from Brevik, 2016a).

14. Hvor lett er det å skjønne skoletekster på norsk? (How easy or difficult do you find school texts in Norwegian?)

- ☐ Lett (Easy)
- ☐ Ganske greit (Quite easy)
- ☐ Vanskelig (Difficult)

15. Hvor lett er det å skjønne skoletekster på engelsk? (How easy or difficult do you find school texts in English?)

- ☐ Lett (Easy)
- ☐ Ganske greit (Quite easy)
- ☐ Vanskelig (Difficult)

Dine engelskferdigheter (Your English proficiency)
Dette spørsmålene er fra Brevik (2016a). (These questions are from Brevik, 2016a).

16. Synes du at du er bedre til å lese engelsk eller norsk? Forklar nedenfor: * (Do you believe you are a better reader in English or Norwegian? Explain below)

Leseprosjektet på skolen (20 min hver morgen) (Reading project at school (20 minutes each morning))
Disse spørsmålene er utarbeidet av Katharina Garvoll (KG). (These questions are from Katharina Garvoll (KG)).
17. Hva har du lest i lesestunden på morgenen hittil dette skoleåret? * (What have you read during the reading sessions each morning so far this school year?) (KG)

- Lekser (Homework)
- Bøker/romaner på norsk (Books/novels in Norwegian)
- Bøker/romaner på engelsk (Books/novels in English)
- Fagtekst på norsk (Factual text in Norwegian)
- Fagtekst på engelsk (Factual text in English)
- Norsk tekst om yrkesfaget mitt (Norwegian text about my vocational study)
- Engelsk tekst om yrkesfaget mitt (English text about my vocational study)
- Nyheter på norsk (News in Norwegian)
- Nyheter på engelsk (News in English)
- Magasiner/tegneserier på norsk (Magazines/cartoons in Norwegian)
- Magasiner/tegneserier på engelsk (Magazines/cartoons in English)
- Norsk tekst om noe jeg er interessert i på fritiden (Norwegian text about something I am interested in in my spare time)
- Engelsk tekst om noe jeg er interessert i på fritiden (English text about something I am interested in in my spare time)
- Andre tekster på norsk (Other texts in Norwegian)
- Andre tekster på engelsk (Other texts in English)

18. Tenker du at leseprosjektet bidrar til at du blir en bedre leser? * (Do you believe the reading project helps you become a better reader?) (KG)

- Ja (Yes)
- Nei (No)

19. Er du villig til å bli intervjuet av oss om hva du bruker engelsk til på skolen og i fritiden (ca 30 min)? * (Are you interested in participating in an interview about what you use English for at school and in your spare time?) (KG)

- Ja (Yes)
- Nei (No)
- Kanskje (Maybe)

20. Hva er din e-post? * (What is your e-mail?) (KG)
Tusen takk for at du svarte på disse spørsmålene. Hvis du svarte ja til å bli intervjuet, tar vi kontakt med deg snart.

(Thank you for answering these questions. If you answered yes about participating in and interview, we will contact you soon.)

Med vennlig hilsen (Best regards)

Lisbeth M Brevik, førsteamanuensis ved Universitetet i Oslo (associate professor at the University of Oslo)
Katharina Køber Garvoll, masterstudent ved Universitetet i Oslo (master student at the University of Oslo)
Appendix B: Student log

Student log

Takk for sist! Her kommer leseloggen jeg fortalte om. Du fyller den ut hver dag i to uker, på disse dagene:
(Thanks for last time! Here is the reading log I told you about. You fill in the log, each day for two weeks, at the days listed below)

UKE 39: Mandag 26/9, tirsdag 27/9, onsdag 28/9, torsdag 29/9, fredag 30/9.

Week 39: Monday 26/9, Tuesday 27/9, Wednesday 28/9, Thursday 29/9, Friday 30/9.

Ditt navn: * (Your name)

Klasse: (Class)

Logg for dato: * (Log date)

OM DAGENS LESESTUND (About todays reading session)

Hva har du lest i dag (de 20 minuttene)? * (What have you read today (during the 20 minutes)?)

- Nyheter på norsk (News in Norwegian)
- Nyheter på engelsk (News in English)
- Bok på norsk (Book in Norwegian)
- Bok på engelsk (Book in English)
- Tegneserie/magasin på norsk (Comic book/magazine in Norwegian)
- Tegneserie/magasin på engelsk (Comic book/magazine in English)
- Internett på norsk (Internet in Norwegian)
- Internett på engelsk (Internet in English)
C Annen tekst på norsk (Other text in Norwegian)
C Annen tekst på engelsk (Other text in English)

Her kan du skrive tittelen på det du leste: (Please write the title of what you read here)

Tenker du at det du leste i dag har noe med yrkesfaget ditt å gjøre? * (Do you think what you read today is relevant for your vocational studies?)

☐ Ja (Yes)
☐ Nei (No)
☐ Kanskje (Maybe)

Kan du si hvorfor? (Can you explain why?)

☐

OM GAMING (About gaming)

Spilte du onlinespill i går? * (Did you play online games yesterday?)

☐ Ja (Yes)
☐ Nei (No)

Hvis ja, skriv navnet på spillet her: (If you replied yes, write the name of the game here)

☐

Hvis du spilte i går, skriv hvor lenge du spilte: (If you did play games yesterday, for how long did you play)

☐

Hvis du spilte i går, kryss av for det du gjorde: (If you did play games yesterday, please check of the boxes for what you did)

☐ Leste de fleste instruksjonene (på norsk) (Read most instructions (in Norwegian))
☐ Leste de fleste instruksjonene (på engelsk) (Read most instructions (in English))
☐ Skumleste instruksjonene (på norsk) (Skimmed the instructions (in Norwegian))
☐ Skumleste instruksjonene (på engelsk) (Skimmed the instructions (in English))
☐ Chattet skriftlig (på norsk) (Written chat (in Norwegian))
☐ Chattet skriftlig (på engelsk) (*Written chat (in English)*)
☐ Chattet muntlig (på norsk) (*Oral chat (in Norwegian)*)
☐ Chattet muntlig (på engelsk) (*Oral chat (in English)*)

**OM DIN BRUK AV ENGELSK I GÅR**

Gjorde du noe av dette i går **ETTER** skolen? *
Du kan sette flere kryss

☐ Leste nyheter på engelsk
☐ Leste Facebook på engelsk
☐ Leste roman på engelsk
☐ Leste fagtekst på engelsk
☐ Leste noet på internett på engelsk
☐ Leste noet på engelsk som har med yrkesfaget mitt og gjøre
☐ Så på TV-serie/film på engelsk
☐ Lyttet til musikk på engelsk
☐ Brukte engelsk til noe annet
☐ Brukte ikke engelsk etter skolen i går

Hvis du brukte engelsk til noe annet - skriv hva her:

☐

Takk for dagens logg!
Appendix C: Participation in VOGUE

UiO § Institutt for lærerutdanning og skoleforskning
Det utdanningsvitenskapelige fakultet

Erklæring ved deltakelse i prosjekt: *Vocational students’ Use of English (VOGUE)* ved prosjektleder Lisbeth M Brevik, 2016/17.


Alle data som innhentes i prosjektet, eies av VOGUE (ved prosjektleder Lisbeth M Brevik), og kan brukes av prosjekter i videre forskning. Det betyr at innsamlet data til masteroppgaven ikke eies av studenten, men av prosjektet. Studenten har tilgang til dataene så lenge arbeidet med masteroppgaven pågår, innenfor veiledningsavtalens periode.

Jeg bekrer herved at jeg er inneforstått av avtalens innhold, har gjort meg kjent med personopplysningslovens retningslinjer, og forplikter meg til å følge disse i mitt arbeid med datamaterialet tilhørende forskningsprosjektet VOGUE.

Jeg plikter også å referere eksplicit til VOGUE prosjektet (ved prosjektleder Lisbeth M Brevik) i min masteroppgave, jf. Forskningsetiske komiteers krav til god forskningspraksis/henvisningsetikk (http://www.etikkom.no/Forskningsetikk/God-forskningspraksis). Enhver situasjon der datamateriale som tilhører VOGUE benyttes i analyser i publikasjoner, skal være kjent for prosjektleder Lisbeth M Brevik før publisering.

Sted: Blindern, 9. mai 2017

Katharina Køber Garvoll

Student

Lisbeth M Brevik

Prosjektleier

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