



UNIVERSITETET I AGDER

Comics in the Classroom

How comics can aid in a pupil's reading experience

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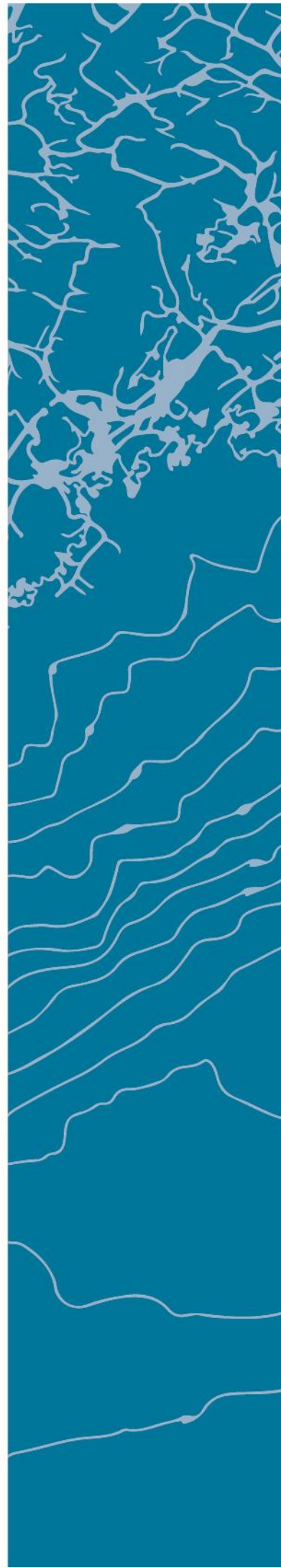


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Introduction to Comics in the Classroom: The Thesis Question

There has been a decline in youths who read daily (BUFDIR, 2018). At the same time researchers have raised concerns regarding Norwegian pupil's lack of adequate reading skills (Hellekjær, 2017). There is drawn a correlation between the two, which can impact pupil's proficiency level in their second language. Underlying factors of the decline in youths reading habits can be related to an increase in available leisure activities as a consequence of digitalisation or that teachers fail to provide a varied collection of text types in the classroom. Therefore, it might not come as a shock that youths prefer other activities that they perceive as more enjoyable. This raises some challenges for educators of English as a second language because they cannot force pupils to read and expect them to find the activity enjoyable.

A different approach to solving this challenge is providing a wider variety of content. A text type that can play a role in altering pupil's perception is comics. Many Norwegians might associate the word comic with titles such as *Donald Duck & Co* or *Pondus*. However, the universe of comics is diverse and can exhibit many examples that can spark the interest of pupils. Examining the applicability of using comics in the classroom revolves around criteria such as the ability to motivate, support in the continuation of the reading experience, and result in a learning outcome. Thus, a question that can explain the relevance of comics in the classroom is: How can comics aid a pupil's reading experience as part of their language learning process?

Method: Implementation, Structure, and Limitations

There are some parameters that need to be set before it is possible to examine the thesis question. There are aspects concerning either the implementation of the thesis, specific features, or limitations that will have an effect on the thesis. The first aspect that needs to be discussed is the development of the thesis statement. The first draft of the hypothesis was "How can the use of the comic book *Blacksad* be used as a tool for explaining culture and history in the classroom?", and later evolved to "How can comics aid pupils in their reading and understanding of culture and history?". There has been a shift from the focus on culture and history towards narrowing it down to how comics can support a pupil in their reading experience. The intention has always been to explore how comics might benefit the reading process, but it was initially meant to argue the relevance of using comics to explain cultural and historical circumstances. However, this would lead to a divided focus where one part of the thesis would concentrate on reading comics, whereas the other part would discuss the applicability of comics to educate pupils on historical and cultural themes. Therefore, to avoid

splitting the focus the thesis question developed into: “How can comics aid a pupil’s reading experience as part of their language learning process?”.

The second aspect that influence the thesis is related to the study programme that I attend. Thus, the thesis should reflect the Lektor 8-13 programme with an MA thesis in English. At the University of Agder this programme shares the education of English lektor students between the Department of Foreign Languages and Translation and the Teacher Education Unit. To implement components from both of these units the thesis will be discussed at a theoretical level. In addition to not reflect the study programme, quantitative and qualitative data gathering and analysing will not be used for two additional reasons. Firstly, I assessed that the duration required to collect relevant quantitative data was longer than the time I had at my disposal. For instance, such a data gathering could have been initiated no more than four months prior to the thesis deadline, and therefore would not last long enough to see the long-term effects of reading comics. Secondly, the reason for not choosing a qualitative collection of data is due to the limited sample size related to these methods. Thus, it would not provide the necessary amount of data required to provide an answer to the thesis question.

To remedy the lack of empirical data there will be an examination of Norwegian comics culture, which can provide an answer to how pupils might perceive comics. Having this information is beneficial as it can give an explanation to what pupils might expect when they encounter a reading activity involving comics.

The development of the hypothesis and the Lektor 8-13 study programme leads to some limitations on the thesis, which is related to combining the field of literary studies and didactic perspectives. Traditionally research concerning didactic perspectives are answered by collecting data, whereas the field of literary studies is based on literary analysis. In order to integrate the English literary studies into didactic and pedagogical theory resulted in the need to restrict the thesis to solely deal at a theoretical level. Therefore, the thesis will be answered by applying didactic and pedagogical theories in the light of a literary analysis.

For the literary analysis to be relevant for didactic and pedagogical theories it will be based on the multimodality of comics. There is a possibility to analyse every aspect of a comic. However, the analysis will only deal in perspectives that are relevant to present how comics can support the reading experience of a pupil. There are three overarching aspects of comics, which is text, image, and text-image combination. The multimodality of text will be based on the theories of Roman Jakobsen, and the modalities of image and text-image combinations will derive from Scott McCloud’s work on comics. The chosen comic for this

thesis is *The Complete Maus* (hereby referred to as *Maus*) by Art Spiegelman. The reason for choosing this comic is due to *Maus* being critically acclaimed and can be a relevant comic to introduce in a classroom based on the Norwegian curriculum. Although the analysis covers *Maus* specifically it is used as an example to see if comics can support a pupil's reading process. To demonstrate how multimodality influence the reading experience I have chosen three different categories of text-word combinations, which will be presented during the analysis.

To implement these elements from literary studies results in examining Norwegian comic book culture, investigating the multimodality of comics, and analysing *Maus*, which will be done in that order. These three components constitute the first part of the thesis. Thus, there is a foundation that didactical and pedagogical perspectives can be applied to in the second part of the thesis. Engaging in a comic is a type of reading activity, and therefore the second part of the thesis will deal with the different stages of reading. In addition, due to the nature of reading activities being a cognitive process the didactical and pedagogical theories and perspectives will mainly deal in cognitive approaches to learning.

The pre-reading stage will examine the motivation that can spark a pupil's inclination to read a comic, which will be based on John W. Atkinson's Theory of Achievement Motivation. This theory will be seen in relation to the findings on Norwegian comic book culture. The while-reading stage will analyse how comics can support pupils to continue reading and cover the Multiple Intelligences Theory and Dual Coding Theory. These theories will be applied to analysis of *Maus*. Lastly, the post-reading stage is related to the learning outcome that a comic might give to a pupil, and because reading is a form of exposing pupils to language Chomsky and Krashen's theories are relevant for this stage. However, it is the pre-reading and while-reading stage that highlights aspects that can provide support for a pupil, and therefore more attention will be given to these two stages.

There are four factors that have an influence on the implementation of the thesis but are not directly connected to the structure. Firstly, in order to assess the relevance of using comics in the classroom they must be measured according to the subject curriculum. I have chosen to use the current curriculum rather than "*Fagfornyelsen*" because the implementation of this curriculum does not occur until 2020. In addition, this curriculum was not finished when I began this thesis and therefore could not provide concrete aims. Furthermore, competence aims that will be seen in relation to comics are those corresponding to the VG1-programme for general studies and Vg2- vocational education programmes. The reason for using these competence aims are related to the level of difficulty and graphic detail in *Maus*.

Secondly, the search engine Oria has been used to collect most of the material for the thesis. However, other forms of collecting material has been used. This is because the University of Agder has lost the rights to provide several articles in 2018, or because the University of Agder could only display a limited proportion of the material. Lastly, the sources are referenced after the APA 6th model according to Kildekompasset, and references are, therefore, structured to correspond to these guidelines. Lastly, the definition of comics needs to be specified. “[comics are] juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence intended to convey information and/or to produce an aesthetic response in the viewer” (McCloud, 1994, p.9). Thus, referring to comics includes other visually told stories such as graphic novels.

Comics in Norway

Norwegian comic book culture has been influenced by two of the major traditions of comics, which are the American and the European tradition (Harper, 1997, p.7). Firstly, American influences have contributed to the form and structure common in Norwegian comics. Secondly, the Norwegian tradition has also been affected by the European tradition (Harper, 1997, p.7). Therefore, it will be beneficial to explore these two traditions.

The U.S. is considered as the birthplace of the modern comic strip with the series *Yellow Kid* in 1896. Over the years super-heroes have become the dominant genre in North-America. In this genre powerful characters almost seem to break the panel when they knock out their enemies (Harper, 1997, p.8). The evolution from 1896 up until present day has not been a story of stability and unity. It can be described as a rollercoaster with ups and downs. Of course, no art form evolves smoothly into a medium of high renown. However, comics have had a long and turbulent history where critics and the general populace have branded comics as low brow in the U.S. (Lopes, 2009, p.xii). Even though there has been a lack of stability, the comic book has been influenced as much by the booms as the periods of recession.

A mentality of comics in the U.S. has been the idea of this medium as an industry, which resonates with a general perspective of media as an industry. This view on comics can be traced back to the 1930's. There was a general rise in circulation from the 1930's to the mid-1950's, and this period is considered as the “Golden Age” in U.S. comics (Lopes, 2009, p.2). The American comic book field in this period replicated the structures of other popular cultural industries at the time. The logic that fuelled this commercial market was driven by mass-production. As a result, artists produced comic books in a manner similar to that of an

assembly-line. Although these products were similar in content and form, it resonated with the general perception of comic books as pleasurable entertainment (Lopes, 2009, p.1). Therefore, quantity and speed were dominant factors in the production rather than quality.

The modern American comic book is influenced by three popular art forms: comic strips, film animation, and pulp magazines. This is due to both content and craft, as well as market, industry, and the people behind its success (Lopes, 2009, p.2). Firstly, comic books were influenced by comic strips through the use of panel and text. The craftsmanship existed in the combination of illustrations and a written story. Secondly, the rise of Hollywood brought animated films to a wider audience. An example is *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves*, which was released by Walt Disney at the end of the 1930's. The contribution of film animation was the introduction of a unique style and unique characters. In addition, the concept of funny animals was born through this medium. However, the third art form, the pulp magazine, might have had the greatest influence on the American comic culture. This art form brought the publishers who would sell the product on the market.

The American comic book was not a radical innovation but repurposed the comic strip into the format of the popular pulp magazine (Lopes, 2009, p.17). As an existing medium the pulp magazine brought structures and genres to the comic books. Structure both in the form of comic books' length and printing material, but also its audience and market. Publishers that are famous for their comics today, such as DC and Marvel, began as pulp magazine publishers. With them came the genres of adventure, to romance, and science fiction (Lopes, 2009, p.2).

All these different influences made comic books into an easily accessible form of entertainment for every segment of the American society. Nevertheless, the assembly-line production that favoured quantity led to the creators and writers as a cog in a wheel rather than artists. The result being that comic books were regarded as something of low status. Furthermore, this might be seen in correlation with the decline in circulation in the 60's. The competition with other entertainment media, such as cinema and television, were simply too great a task. Although there was a decrease in readers, those who remained took the comic book culture in a new direction. The most important impact that happened from the 1960's to the 1980's was the emergence of the fandoms. The social judgement of comics from the 1930's still prevailed in the perception of this medium. However, a new generation of readers with a love for comics emerged. In extension, they saw comics as an art form and the creators as artists (Lopes, 2009, p.91).

There are two new elements that came to life due to the new subculture: a direct

market and the serial stories. Rather than purchasing the products at a news stand, the new audience went to specialised shops that could pre-order works. Consequently, the mass-market of anonymous readers turned into a specialised market that targeted readers. The new direction of the market meant that publishers could expect readers who were familiar with comic book culture and its series (Lopes, 2009, p.92). Therefore, artists could create serial stories, which opens up for more complex characters and universes that were consistent.

The artists were inspired by their fandom's love of comics. Nevertheless, comic books remained a subculture with a homogenous and relatively small audience. In other words, the comic books lacked the ability to reach a wider audience during the period from 1960 to 1989. However, it was an external source that led to a revitalisation of comics in the U.S., which was manga. Comic books imported and translated from Japan sparked an interest in the medium, which proved that other genres than the super-hero genre were viable (Lopes, 2009, p.156). In addition, the new interest pushed the Big Two, DC and Marvel, to reinvent themselves. Since the beginning of the millennium the two companies have produced several blockbuster movies based on their comic books. These have, however, mainly been films with super-hero characters. Nevertheless, these films have paved the way for other graphic stories being transformed into films. For example, *Sin City* and *300* were transformed into their own on-screen adaptations. As a consequence, a larger audience were introduced to these universes. The huge success resulted in increased sales for the two graphic novels *Sin City* and *300* (Lopes, 2009, p.160).

The two last decades have earned comic books an increased respect within literature, which broke the spell that has lingered since the 30's. However, there is one thing that remains the same, which is the idea of comics as an industry. This is exemplified through the blockbuster successes. These films would not have been made if there was not a profit in it. In turn, there would not exist an arena where the characters and universes could be exposed.

Seeing comics as an industry stands in contrast to the European culture of comics where it is considered as an art form. The perspective of comic books as an art form might be seen in correlation to the materials used in the production of European works. A core element in this tradition is the album format, which had a focus on the quality of the paper and printing (Harper, 1997, p.75).

The European tradition has been heavily influenced by the comic books that came from France and Belgium, and it is these two countries that have defined the European comic book culture. The classical French, or Belgian, comic book is the humoristic-adventure story or the adventurous-humour story (Harper, 1997, p.8). The most common expression of this

genre is the tale of a super-journalist, which is part journalist and part cop. The super-journalists use their skills to solve mysteries (Harper, 1997, p.85). The series Tintin might be the perfect embodiment of the European tradition and the humoristic-adventure genre. Tintin was created by the Belgian Georges Remi under the pseudonym Hergé. Hergé's character is a journalist who travels the worlds where he uses his skills as a detective to uncover mysteries.

Another element that characterises the series Tintin is realism. However, this should not be misinterpreted as a realistic portrayal of characters, but rather the realistic depiction of the setting. Hergé used his own unique style when drawing the characters in Tintin, but he paid a great deal of attention and detail to the world that Tintin lives in. Hergé is known for his extensive research as part of creating the scenes for Tintin's adventures (Harper, 1997, p.77).

He might be at the top when it comes to the amount of research, but he is closely followed by other artists. One of them is Joseph Gillian, or Jijé, who is best known for his series of the cowboy Jerry Spring. This comic book series established the Western genre in European comic tradition (Harper, 1997, p.87). This genre is perhaps most known through Lucky Luke. The introduction of the lonesome ranger hit bull's eye. The series entered in a period when everything that could be associated with the U.S. were exciting (Hegerfors & Åberg, 1996, p.138). Therefore, there is a strong influence of U.S. culture in the European tradition. It is the fascination of the idea of American culture. Therefore, it is the European perspective inspired by the concept of U.S. culture.

The result of this fascination is several European comic books with a setting in the U.S. Nevertheless, series inspired by a U.S. setting, such as Lucky Luke, were still using the artistic expression common to the European tradition. This is where the Norwegian comic book culture diverges from the European tradition. In fact, many Norwegian artists drew their inspiration from American artists during our own "Golden Age", which happened simultaneously with its American namesake. The reason that this is considered a "Golden Age" is due to a number of comics that were created during this period are found on the Norwegian market today (Harper, 1997, p.101). However, it was the imported series that dominated the market. The stories imported from the U.S. series were the same, but in contrast to the U.S. mass-market they were printed in newspapers (Harper, 1997, p.229). Furthermore, the Norwegian market diverges from the American because the super-hero genre never established itself as a dominant story (Harper, 1997, p.229). It was rather the humoristic stories, such as Calvin & Hobbes, that got traction in Norway (Harper, 1997, p.205). This is the greatest U.S. influence on the comics' landscape in Norway, as it is still the

genre that has the highest circulation (Harper, 1997, p.222).

The Norwegian tradition is a mix of the American and European tradition. American influences were dominant after 1945, but were challenged by European series, especially French, during and after the 70's. Norwegians were then introduced to the quality of these series (Harper, 1997, p.230). A result of the importation is that the Norwegian market has been filled with foreign publications, which Norwegian artists were unable to compete with. However, there is one genre where Norwegians rule supreme, which is humoristic stories of Norwegian everyday life (Harper, 1997, p.102). Therefore, a pattern of the Norwegian comics become apparent. Firstly, they are humoristic, which means that they usually end in some sort of punchline. Secondly, they tell a story of everyday life that Norwegians recognise. Thirdly, they are made for the newspaper format, which traditionally are four panels printed every day of the week.

The importance of the newspaper for Norwegian comics are, almost ironically, reflected in the newspapers. *Dagbladet* is one of the most popular national newspapers with almost 1,5 million daily readers (Holen, 2018). It features up to eleven different comics with a new contribution six days a week and all of them are Norwegian (*Dagbladet*, 2018). Two of the featured series are *Pondus* and *Nemi*. The former has been published in *Dagbladet* since 1997 and the latter since 2000 (Holen, 2018). *Pondus* tells the story of a father who is obsessed with football, whereas *Nemi* portrays the urban life through the eyes of a goth.

Pondus exemplifies the tradition in Norwegian comics. In addition to being published in a newspaper, it tells a story of everyday life through four panels, which ends in a humoristic punchline. Furthermore, *Pondus* contains traits from both the American and the European tradition. Frode Øverli is the creator of *Pondus* and his greatest inspiration in terms of style and humour is *Calvin & Hobbes* (Holen, 2018). However, the production quality resembles that of European comic books. The comic strips are first published in newspapers and *Pondus'* own monthly magazine before they are printed in its own annual album. In this regard *Pondus* follows the European album tradition, and not a single one is sold as a cheaper version (Holen, 2015). In some way *Pondus* is the perfect example of Norwegian comic book tradition.

At this point there is a character that has not been mentioned yet, which is the world's most famous duck, namely Donald Duck. For decades *Donald Duck & Co* has been an institution in the Norwegian market of comics. The characters of Duckberg entered Norwegians' lives in 1948 (Harper, 1997, p.229). A result of the boom in the importation of American comics post-1945. At its peak during the 80's there were sold over 13 million

copies of their weekly magazine each year. However, there has been a decrease in circulation and the numbers have dropped to 1,6 million copies sold every year. This is due to readers becoming fewer and older (NTB, 2018).

Donald Duck has lost some traction in Norway. Nevertheless, the magazine still holds power when it comes to peoples' perception on comics. Furthermore, it might have an influence on pupils' expectations when they are presented with a comic in the classroom. However, the magazine is within the humoristic genre. It does not share the two other characteristic traits of Norwegian comics, which are the portrayal of everyday life and being published in a newspaper. Therefore, the expectations regarding length might vary between pupils. However, the dominant genre in Norway is humour. This might be the greatest difference when introducing other forms of comics in the classroom: the expectation of something funny versus graphic novels that focus on other themes.

Multimodality and Comics

Multimodality is a term that has previously been used as a perception to indicate that different senses influence each other. However, van Leeuwen found this definition to narrow. Consequently, he proposed a term of integration code, which signifies an integration of different modes of communication that creates a multimodal whole (van Leeuwen, 2014, p.22). This idea sprung out of his previous work on framing. This concept can be illustrated through picturing a magazine article. For example, a magazine frames its articles through the use of pictures, text boxes, in between space etc. (van Leeuwen, 2014, p22). Put together these different parts create a visual communication with the reader who creates a coherent whole.

Framing is not constricted to visual communication but is a principle that can be applied to all forms of communication. For instance, the silence between words and utterances is a form of space when we are speaking, which is somewhat similar to the visual spacing between text and image in a magazine (van Leeuwen, 2014, p22). However, the spoken word contains more than just the modes of utterance and silence. The use of body language can show, for example, hospitality or hostility, which is perceived visually. Furthermore, other modes such as odour plays on our sense of smell. For a second one might think that smell does not play a role in our communication. However, having a conversation in a landfill is not a pleasant experience, and might not last that long. Another example could be that a conversation is cut short because it is freezing outside and you want to go inside. Body language, smell, and temperature is only a fraction of the modes that can have an influence on

the way we communicate. In addition, some of these modalities cannot be perceived through seeing or hearing, such as smell and temperature.

Since spoken communication is a collection of different modalities that play on all our senses written communication must transfer a representation of these modes visually. The challenge that written communication faces in delivering a visual representation brings us to the modalities of comics. This media tries to solve the lack of senses through the combination of text and image, which makes the concept of framing relevant. Similarly to the example of the article, comics are framed by different visual parts. The two main categories are text and image, which can be broken down into a smaller set of modes. Already at this level there is multimodality through the text-image combination. Scott McCloud describes this relationship in *Understanding Comics*: “In comics at its best, words and pictures are like partners in a dance and each one takes turns leading” (McCloud, 1994, p.156).

Before delving into the text-image relationship it is beneficial to explore text and image separately. Beginning with text there is an immediate aspect that is significant to address, which is that the written word has an implied verbal modality. This perception is linked to the notion that written language is a representation for speech (Humphrey & Carjaval, 2015, p.20). This is not limited to comics but is a common perception regarding written language. The linguistic signs of the alphabet are used to represent sound. Thus, when reading a written text we replicate a “voice” from spoken communication, and therefore we are surrounded by sound even though we perceive it visually (Humphrey & Carjaval, 2015, p.24). Although written language has an implied verbal modality, speech and text differ on the modes of time and space. For instance, speech happens in real time at a certain place between people, whereas text has a physical presence which is not bound to one moment in time. Texts can be revisited and replicated (Humphrey & Carjaval, 2015, p.20). Thus, the verbal modality in spoken communication can be separated from the visual and spatial modalities in written work.

The Modalities of Text

Roman Jacobsen describes six functions of language that address written and spoken communication and the difference between the two. These six aspects of a language are the referential, poetic, emotive, conative, metalingual, and phatic function (Humphrey & Carjaval, 2015, p.21). Firstly, the referential function focus on the context of a situation. In other words, it adds information to the audience, which creates a bigger picture. Secondly, the poetic is linked to the choice of words and expressions, and in what order they are written.

Thirdly, the emotive refers to the source of the message, which is commonly known as the addresser or sender. Fourthly, those who receives the message holds a conative function in communication. Fifthly, a message has a metalingual expression, which means that there is a code imbedded with the message (Humphrey & Carjaval, 2015, p.21). For example, “#@*!” in a comic is a code for expletive language. This knowledge is not intuitive and requires competence in decoding comics. Furthermore, the alphabet has a metalingual function, which is the decoding of a symbol into sound. Therefore, the implied verbal modality is a consequence of a visual modality.

These five functions resonate with a more basic model of communication of sender, message, and receiver. The sender and receiver fit with Jakobsens’s emotive and conative functions, whereas the referential, poetic, and metalingual are transferable to the message. In addition, these five functions do not change radically from spoken to written communication. However, the last function that is described by Jakobsen, the phatic function, lose some qualities in the transition from sound to visual representation. The phatic function can be described as the contact or channel between the emotive and conative, which is needed to establish and maintain a line of communication. *The Oxford Dictionary of Critical Thinking* defines the phatic function as:

“(…) part of the communication which keeps open the line of communication itself; it is the means by which two or more speakers reassure themselves that not only are they being listened to, but they are also understood” (Buchanan, 2010).

A conversation will be driven by the person who has the emotive role. Hence, maintaining an open channel between two parties relies on the addresser. This contrasts with written communication where the addresser keeps the line of communication open. “In writing, the phatic mode of contact is not driven by the writer’s voice & presence but by the ways readers interact with the page” (Humphrey & Carjaval, 2015, p.29). For example, a reader can take a pause and go back to a different paragraph if something was unclear. The physical properties of texts make it possible for the reader to revisit parts that has already been read, whereas a conversation happens once and is gone. Therefore, written communication is driven by where the reader chooses to focus. Furthermore, the phatic function, in addition to the other five functions, make up the framing of a text. Thus, the modalities of written communication consist of the referential, poetic, metalingual, emotive, conative, and phatic function.

The Modalities of Images and Text-Image Combinations

The exploration of multimodality could end here. However, comics are made up of an additional set of modalities, which tries to remedy some of the qualities that are lost between spoken communication and its visual representation. Scott McCloud illustrated comics as a dance between two partners where each partner, text and image, took turns leading. Where the written modalities are not fully able to express a certain idea or event, pictorial modalities can pick up where the written modalities left and create a visual whole. Thus, text and image should not be regarded as complete opposites, but rather as modes with a close relationship. Therefore, it might not come as a surprise that they share some qualities. For instance, there is a metalingual level to the pictorial mode as well. McCloud uses the term synaesthetic icons to describe this meta-pictorial code in comics. Comics use a wide variety of symbols to illustrate or make characterisations that represent the invisible world of senses (McCloud, 1994, p.134).

To illustrate some aspects of synaesthetic icons we can picture the word bubble, which is an icon in itself, because it represents sound visually. If icicles are added to the word bubble there is another invisible element (temperature), which represents that it is cold, or a character is cold. Adding the symbols “#@*!” to the word bubble is a code for expletive language, which can represent anger. Consequently, this word bubble has expressed sound, temperature, and anger visually. In contrast, a written text would solve this differently. For example, a similar message to that given through the use of a word bubble might be: “Between clattering teeth he threw curses left and right”. Thus, the example with the word bubble uses three types of icons, or modes, to convey a message, whereas the text only uses the alphabet to code and convey a message.

Other types of symbols can be used to portray different characteristics in addition to the example of the word bubble. For example, wavering lines symbolise a smell, which is also invisible in the real world. The language of comics is filled with symbols, such as the word bubble and wavering lines, which is a visual representation of the invisible. When the pictorial modes are combined with the written modalities they form a powerful couple. However, McCloud stated that each partner took turns leading. Therefore, there are different combinations where there are different amounts of focus given to text and image. McCloud suggests that there are seven categories of text-image combinations: word-specific, picture-specific, duo-specific, additive, parallel, montage, and interdependent. Firstly, a panel which is word-specific is driven by the text. The image is added to the text to illustrate but does not bear significant information or value to the story. Secondly, picture-specific is the opposite of the first category. Here it is a story where the visual aspects give meaning, whereas the text

makes up a soundtrack that accompanies the pictures. Thirdly, with a duo-specific panel there is equal weight given to both image and text. Fourthly, if a picture amplifies or adds something to a text, or vice versa, it falls within the additive category. Fifthly, some panels might operate with a combination where text and image focus on two different subjects that does not intersect. This is the parallel category, where the two move forward on different courses. The second to last category is the montage. The text is an integral part of the picture, and necessary to complete a whole. Lastly, when a story cannot be told without one or the other a panel is categorised as interdependent. Text and image in an interdependent panel cannot convey a message exclusively by either one. However, they are not always given the same weight. A panel that is, for example, word heavy gives room for the image to explore other aspects of the story, and vice versa (McCloud, 1994, p.152-155).

The symbiosis of text and image opens the mind to explore the different senses visually. However, there is almost as much that is shown between the panels. Although a panel tries to play on different senses it conveys information visually. What happens between the panels, or in the gutter, does not rely on our sight, hearing, or any other senses. Thus, by not relying only on the visual it plays on all of them (McCloud, 1994, p89). A sequence of panels can be compared to a film clip. However, where a film is a continuous stream of clips a comic only shows a fraction of the same action. Consequently, a film constantly delivers information, whereas a comic demands that a reader fills in the blanks. It becomes the task of the reader to fill in the gaps to construct a coherent story. In comics theory this is regarded as an act of closure, which is when a reader willingly creates a connection between panels to create a unified and coherent story (McCloud, 1994, p.67). Thus, there is an intimacy between reader and comic because it is only the reader who can imagine what happens in the space from panel to panel.

There is a modality in this space, which cannot be overlooked. Once more Scott McCloud can give us an answer to the type of modality the gutter provides. Each panel can be said to have some sort of task, which can describe an action or provide information to a greater context. In *Understanding Comics* McCloud outlines six categories. The first category requires little to no closure from the reader. This is a moment-to-moment transition where the focus is on the same character or object. For example, a character who has his or her eyes closed in the first panel and closed in the next can replicate a blink. The next category extends our vision from a minor detail to a larger passage of progression in the action-to-action transition. In an action-to-action transition we could, for example, picture a football player just before and right after he or she kicks. There is still a limited focus because the highlight

of the panels is the player. However, a reader must picture the action between the preparation for a kick and the immediate response of the ball flying towards the goal. The third category is the subject-to-subject transition where the story stays within the same scene or idea, but there is a higher degree of reader involvement. For instance, a dialogue can change its focus from one character to the next from one panel to the second panel. A similar change occurs in a scene-to-scene transition, but instead of moving the focus from one subject there is a change in scenery. One could picture a journey from Mumbai to Paris. The panels only show an image from the two cities, but not the flight from one place to the other. There has gone a considerable amount of time, but this takes place in the gutter (McCloud, 1994, p.70-71).

The passage of time has played an underlying role in the previous categories. There are, however, some transitions that are not bound by a sequence of time. In an aspect-to-aspect transition there is a focus on an idea or mood, which sets a wandering eye. A panel showing Santa Claus and a Christmas tree does not necessarily have a direct connection, but they convey an idea of Christmas. Subsequently, this represents a larger conception of the holiday that the readers might have. The last category, non-sequitur, are somewhat similar to the previous category due to a lack of direct connection. Nevertheless, this category removes itself further from aspects of motion, action, or time. In a non-sequitur transition there is no logical relationship between the panels (McCloud, 1994, p.72).

The gutter has an important role as it sparks an intimacy with the reader, but additionally it guides the reader from one panel to another. Furthermore, it plays on the senses that cannot be represented visually. However, the text-image combinations with their subsequent modes are able to conjure a wider variety of multimodality than text alone. All of these aspects (i.e. Jakobsen's six functions, the text-image combinations, and the six transition categories) make up the framing of comics.

Analysing a comic: *The Complete Maus*

Understanding the many modalities found in comics can be used as tools to analyse a comic. The chosen comic for this thesis is *The Complete Maus* by Art Spiegelman, which portrays Vladek Spiegelman's trials as a Polish Jew during the Second World War. The complete collection contains both *A Survivor's Tale* and *And Here My Troubles Began*. The story consists of two parts, which is constantly intertwined in one another. One part of the story is told using the conversations that Art Spiegelman has with his father Vladek. The other part uses Vladek as the narrator where we follow his life from the mid-thirties until the end of the war. In addition, there is a brief mention of his period in Sweden and moving to the U.S.

Maus is in large parts a word-heavy comic with many word-specific or additive panels that favours text. However, to fully explore the didactic potential of comics there will be a variation of word-picture combinations. Consequently, there will be an analysis of a word-specific, a picture-specific, and an interdependent panel, which will be done in that order.

Example 1: The Nazi Flag

The first panel in this analysis comes quite early in the story. Vladek and his wife, Anja, are on their way home after a longer stay at a sanatorium. On their train ride they encounter their first meeting with Nazism in the form of a Nazi flag.



Figure 1: (Spiegelman, 2003, p.34)

Beginning by analysing the text some of the functions described by Jakobsen are apparent. The first sentence in this panel is: “It was the beginning of 1938- before the war (...)” (Spiegelman, 2003, p.34). There is a referential function in this example as it refers to the year 1938, which is giving information about the context to the reader. Thus, the reader can place this event into a larger context. The reader might add their own knowledge concerning the global circumstances at the time to Vladek’s situation.

The second text box in the panel shows another function. “Here was the first time I saw with my own eyes, the Swastika” (Spiegelman, 2003, p.34). Art Spiegelman’s choice of words and sentence structure replicates that of an immigrant or whose native language is not English. This choice of words is an example of the poetic function. For instance, instead of

using “this” to indicate the time of the event the author has gone for the word “here” to represent the place which the event is linked to. This choice can be said to give some authenticity to the story. This is linked to the other part of the story where Art interviews his father and we can read that Art records these interviews (Spiegelman, 2003, p.75). Therefore, by quoting and replicating his father’s language bring Vladek closer to the story that *Maus* portrays. Hence, the choice of words contains an amount of authenticity, which can be linked to the poetic function. It is worth noting that Art Spiegelman uses this type of language consistently throughout the story.

Using Vladek’s voice in this way sets him up as the narrator. However, it is Art Spiegelman who is the addresser of *Maus*, which means he holds an emotive function both as the real Art and his representation in the graphic novel. The reader holds the conative function as the addressee. What happens between the addresser and addressee, the phatic function, is quite interesting. The addresser chose the media of comics to convey his message, but it is the addressee who controls where to look. A reader has full autonomy in the reading process. Consequently, there are a dozen ways to interact with the panel. However, the traditional Western reading style is left to right and top to bottom. Thus, it might be natural for most Norwegian readers to begin by reading the text box in the upper left corner, then move their gaze to the Nazi flag, and end with the textbox in the lower right corner.

There are different aspects concerning the framing of the panel that could be discussed. Nevertheless, there is one aspect that stands out, namely the flag. In the text box in the upper left corner we can read: “Hanging high in the center of town, it was a Nazi flag” (Spiegelman, 2003, p.34). Following the path mentioned above we begin with the text mentioning the flag and then our gaze moves to the image of the flag. Continuing the path down the panel there are five mice staring at the flag. At the end the textbox in the lower right corner says: “(...) I saw with my own eyes, the Swastika” (Spiegelman, 2003, p.34). A connection is created between the picture of the staring mice and the text which reads the word “saw”. Then establish a connection from seeing the Nazi flag to the word “Swastika”. Thus, there is a continuous line drawn from the top of the panel to the bottom, which focus on the Nazi flag.

The Swastika brings up the last function which has not been mentioned. In every message there is a metalingual function that needs decoding. One such example is the written text, but a similar decoding is necessary for the Swastika. On its own the Swastika is just eight straight lines put together, but this symbol has probably become one of the most recognised symbols of Nazism. In extension, in the Western hemisphere this symbol represents the

ideology and actions of Nazis. The ability to decode and understand this symbol gives another level of depth to the panel.

The metalingual level of reading walks hand in hand with the synaesthetic icons found in the images in comics. In addition to the symbol-heavy Swastika, Art Spiegelman has made another representation that is not as rooted in reality as the Nazi symbol, which is his artistic choice of portraying the characters as animals. For instance, the Jews are drawn as mice and the Nazis as cats. This might bring a connotation of cats chasing mice, which can symbolise the Nazis' effort to catch Jews during the Second World War. There are other smaller icons that Art Spiegelman uses to convey the story. For example, he uses lines over or under the characters' eyes to signal emotions such as anger or shock. In this example the mice have furrows under their eyes as they look at the flag, which give them a sullen look. Through simple lines the reader can get a glimpse of the feelings that the characters have in this situation.

The combination of picture and text creates a visual whole. Nevertheless, this panel is word-heavy, where the panel is driven by the text. Even by removing the picture from the equation the text is able to provide the necessary information for the reader to continue to the next panel. Therefore, this panel can be categorised as word-specific, which is defined as: "a [combination] (...) where pictures illustrate but don't significantly add to a largely complete text" (McCloud, 1994, p.152). The panel adds some information through the emotions of the mice and a visual element of adding an image of the flag. However, Vladek's narration has enough power to tell the story without the aid of visual elements.

Example 2: Vladek and Mandelbaum

Maus is in large parts made up of word-heavy panels such as the example with the Nazi flag. There are, however, great examples of picture-specific panels. One of these examples is a sequence of four panels. During his first period in Auschwitz Vladek pairs up with a former associate called Mandelbaum. At their arrival in Auschwitz they are handed prison uniforms. Mandelbaum gets shoes that does not fit and pants that are too big for him. Consequently, he goes barefoot and must always hold up his pants with one hand. In addition, Mandelbaum's spoon is stolen. Vladek manages to get hold of these items and gives them to Mandelbaum.



Figure 2: (Spiegelman, 2003, p.194)

The four panels each focus on different aspects of Vladek's gifts to Mandelbaum: The first panel focus on the spoon, the second panel is where Vladek gives a belt to Mandelbaum, the third panel shows the pair of new shoes, and in the last panel we see Mandelbaum's gratitude to Vladek. However, this sequence is not driven by the text but rather uses the text as a soundtrack to accompany the action depicted in the images. Removing the text from these four panels would still provide a coherent story. Hence, the words "spoon", "belt", and "shoes" only amplify what the images already tell us. Thus, the panels are picture-specific: "(...) [a combination] where words do little more than add a soundtrack to a visually told sequence" (McCloud, 1994, p.152).

Since the story is told through images there are some visual cues that gives the story meaning. This is mainly through the three objects that Mandelbaum receives. In addition, there are other visual aspects that either adds to the story or gives some context. Firstly, the striped prison uniforms that the two characters are wearing. The uniforms alone suggest a context of imprisonment. Furthermore, as they both wear similar uniforms it can be interpreted as a meeting of equals who have a shared standing in the hierarchy. In contrast, if one of them wore a prison guard uniform the sequence could be interpreted differently. A detail on the uniforms that further adds to the context is the star patched to Mandelbaum's uniform, which is depicted in the first and second panel. The striped uniforms with a star are perhaps one of the most recognised symbols of Holocaust. Similarly to the depiction of the Swastika, the status that is attributed to this uniform provides another level of depth to the

sequence.

Creating a coherence between these four panels is possible due to closure, which is the reader's ability to mentally connect the four panels and construct a continuous story (McCloud, 1994, p.67). For example, the first panel shows Vladek presenting a spoon and in the second panel the spoon has changed hands. The reader must fill in the transaction that happens in the gutter. The remaining two transitions are similar to this example as they portray action. These panel to panel passages fall within the action-to-action category. The example that was used to describe this category was a football player before and after a kick. Similar to that example, the focus is on the same characters as they interact.

An action-to-action transition does not require much closure from a reader. Thus, the sequence is easily told through the images. The prison uniforms with a star gives contextual information to the transaction and the shared bond between Vladek and Mandelbaum. These four panels make up a story of their own, which can be told with or without the rest of *Maus*. This is due to the pictorial modalities, which provide the necessary details to tell a story of two prisoners and their lack of basic necessities.

Example 3: The Selection

The last example in the analysis of multimodality in *Maus* shows the brutality of Holocaust. Vladek tells Art about the selection process that happened in Auschwitz. Either a prisoner was healthy enough to work or they were sent to the infamous gas chambers.

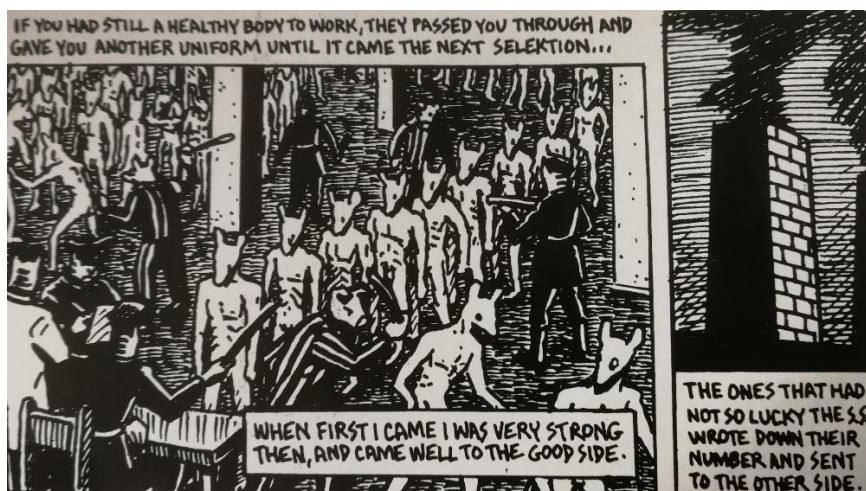


Figure 3: (Spiegelman, 2003, p.218)

The portrayal of the brutality is conveyed through both text and image. The two aim to convey the same message but use different angles to give a representation for the event. When a panel uses this approach to tell a story it is an interdependent panel. The definition of an

interdependent panel is: “[when] words and pictures go hand in hand to convey an idea that neither could convey alone” (McCloud, 1994, p.155). Comparing text and image illustrates the interdependency of these panels. On one hand, the text is almost sombre in its description. On the other hand, the image goes further in its depiction of the conditions surrounding the selection. This becomes apparent when we take a closer look at the text.

“If you had still a healthy body to work, they passed you through and gave you another uniform until it came the next selektion... When first I came I was very strong then, and came well to the good side. The ones that had not so lucky the S.S. wrote down their number and sent to the other side” (Spiegelman, 2003, p.218).

In its telling the text resembles how one might describe an assembly-line in a factory. There is an absence of descriptive words that could convey emotion. The text distances itself through a cold emotionless language rather than expressing sadness or grief for the people who were sent to the gas chambers. For instance, the selection is described as either coming to the good side or the other side. Describing the event through this choice of words is linked to the poetic function. Firstly, the resemblance to a step by step operation of an assembly line where a product is sent down for inspection and is deemed as usable or unusable. The gruesome similarity can be seen in how the concentration camps were operated where the prisoners could be used or they were discarded. Furthermore, those who were sent to the wrong side were registered by a number as if they were parts for a machine. Secondly, the cold distance can express an element of survival. For Vladek it was not a matter of living but surviving. Thus, if he attached himself to those who were sent to the chambers might break him.

The distance that is offered in the text gives an opportunity for the image to explore other aspects of the event. Both image and text are focused on the event. The picture shows depictions similar to the text’s description. For example, the line of prisoners leading up to a table where a prison guard sent them either to the left or to the right. However, the depiction is more graphic in its approach to convey the message. An example of the inhumane conditions, which is not included in the text, is the use of other prisoners as enforcers. In the first panel there are two inmates ready to strike the line of prisoners with batons. The striped uniforms reveal that they are fellow inmates but in contrast to the prisoners waiting in line these enforcers are depicted as pigs. This reflects Art Spiegelman’s choice to depict characters as animals, and he chose pigs to represent Poles. An extrapolation can be made from this information is that there is an internal hierarchy where the Jews are at the bottom.

The pictorial modes address additional aspects concerning the event that is not covered

in the text. However, when text and image are combined they convey a powerful message of the brutality in Auschwitz. The information that can be extracted from the text is that a prisoner came to the good side if they had a healthy body, but the image depicts prisoners who are like skeletons. If a reader could only access the information given in the text it is almost certain that they would imagine skeletons, whereas if a reader was only provided with the depictions they would not describe the prisoners as healthy. There is a duality in these “healthy skeletons”. On one hand, they are sick and starving. On the other hand, they are strong enough to work. Conveying this message from addresser to addressee is achieved through the use of an interdependent panel.

The strength of an interdependent panel lies in the opportunity for either text or image to explore other aspects such as the example of the “healthy skeletons”. Nevertheless, the interdependency is also its weakness as it requires more from the reader. To understand an interdependent panel a reader must extract and connect information from both text and image. If there are some aspects that the reader does not grasp it becomes more difficult to extract meaning from the panel. The second panel is an example of this challenge. The text continues the cold distance from the first panel and focus on those who were not so lucky and came to the other side. The text does not elaborate on what the other side involves, and therefore it is the picture that explores the faith of these people. Rather than depicting how they are killed the image only offers a depiction of a smoking chimney. The image portrays the infamous process of burning the corpses after they were sent to die in the gas chambers. The context that is attached to the smoking chimneys is vital to understand the panel because it reveals information that is not included in the text. Hence, an interdependent panel might require more from a reader.

There is an additional challenge to this sequence. The gutter can require an equal amount of reader involvement as the interdependency of text and image. At first it might appear as a scene-to-scene transition because there is a change of scenery from the selection to the smoking chimneys. However, the two panels deal with the same topic and are linked through telling the story of those who were exposed to the horrors of the selection. Remaining within one idea places this transition in the subject-to-subject category, which is defined as: “staying within a scene or idea” (McCloud, 1994, p.70-71). There is a higher degree of reader involvement in this transition compared to the action-to-action sequence. In this instance a reader must create their own narrative in the space between the selection and the smoking chimneys. The reader takes an active role to construct a continuous story, but the active role demands more from a reader.

The sum of the subject-to-subject transition and the use of interdependent panels poses a challenge to a reader. Firstly, because the reader must connect the cold distance of the text to the depictions. This is especially true in the case of linking the faith of the unlucky ones to the image of the smoking chimneys. Secondly, the reader must connect the two moments and construct a unified story.

The three examples show some of the varieties of how multimodality can be used in comics. The two first examples show how text or image can support one another, whereas the third example requires more from a reader. Although these are only a small portion of the panels in *Maus* they highlight important aspects that can be seen in correlation with a pedagogical angle. Consequently, they can exemplify how comics might aid in a pupil's reading experience.

Reading comics

Parameters that Influence Reading Comics in the Classroom

Teaching in a Norwegian classroom involves the implementation of the five basic skills as part of the pupils' development of competence in a subject. One way or another there is always room to use each basic skill for a task. However, for the benefit of the hypothesis at hand we will focus on reading skills.

“Being able to read in English means the ability to create meaning by reading different types of text. It means reading English language texts to understand, reflect on and acquire insight and knowledge across cultural borders and within specific fields of study. This further involves preparing and working with reading English texts for different reasons and of varying lengths and complexities” (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2013, p.4)

In short, we can say that it will be these parameters that we evaluate the relevance of using comics in the classroom. Furthermore, the advantages that comics offer in terms of getting pupils to read.

Applying a certain task in a subject is always seen in relevance to the necessary skills that a pupil should master at the end of their programme. Consequently, using comics in the classroom as a reading task must be in accordance with the competence aims. Due to the competence aims' goal of including a variety of different teaching methods there are several of them which are relevant for using comics to teach English. For example:

- “evaluate and use different situations, working methods and learning strategies to further develop one’s English language skills” (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2013, p.10)
- “understand the main content and details in texts of varying length about different topics” (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2013, p.10)
- “discuss and elaborate on different types of English language literary texts from different parts of the world” (Utdanningsdirektoratet,2013, p.10)

Based on these three competence aims teachers can fashion different reading tasks, including reading comics, with the intention of improving pupils’ English proficiency level. The competence aims are constructed in a way that can guide teachers to support the learning process of pupils. Therefore, reading is seen as a tool that can aid in this process. An extrapolation that can be taken from this idea is that children learn by reading. However, as the Age of Digitalisation has arrived there has been an increase in activities that children can engage in their leisure time. The Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs has collected data from several sources and analysed how youth spend their time. In large, time spent in front of a screen is the most dominant type of leisure activity. Over 30% of youth in upper and lower secondary school spend more than four hours on an electronic device. If we add those who spend between three and four hours on an electronic device every day there are an additional percentage of almost 30% (BUFDIR, 2018). There is some gender variation in what kind of media they prefer as boys tend to play more videogames and girls spend more time on social media (BUFDIR, 2018). This is in stark contrast to the time dedicated to reading books. The trend has been declining since the 90’s when 28% of youth in the age group 16-24 read a book outside of school daily. In 2017 the percentage was down to 15% who read a book daily in this age group (BUFDIR, 2018).

Without condemning the use of digital leisure activities, the decline in reading might still lead to a negative impact on pupil’s language learning. Therefore, getting pupils to read can be beneficial in terms of learning. On the other hand, digital platforms have opened for a wider variety of sources for English language input, which can be a strength in language learning. The accessibility of English mediated platforms has led to some assumptions regarding the acquisition of language. For instance, a study performed in Swedish classrooms shows that there are a lot of youth who believe that they learn as much of their English using digital platforms outside of school as in activities led by a teacher (Henry, 2014, p.93).

The assumption that a strong presence of English mediated media aids in language learning finds support in a survey done by Education First. The organisation conducts the survey on a

global level and can shed some light on the proficiency level of Norwegians, which might help us understand how pupils interact with comics in the classroom. In their English Proficiency Index of 2018, with 1,3 million participants, Norway is ranked as the fourth best country out of a total 88 (Education First, 2018, p.6). Overall European countries in general are ranked fairly high. One of the contributors attributed to the high proficiency levels is Internet access. The easy availability of good Internet connection makes it a source for authentic English language, which is a valuable language input (Education First, 2018, p.20). In addition, Scandinavia scores remarkably high, which is attributed to strong education systems, exposure to English through media on a daily basis, and cultures that embrace internationalism (Education First, 2018, p.24). It is worth noting that the index accounts for every age segment when they compare the nations. Although this is something to be aware of it should not deter us from using the statistics. Looking at the table displaying the difference between the age groups we see that it is the younger age segments that score the highest, whereas it is the older age segments that score the lowest (Education First, 2018, p.25). Consequently, based on the high scoring that Norwegians have achieved and the addition that the younger age segments score better it might be safe to assume that Norwegian pupils in general have a high proficiency level in English.

The English Proficiency Index paints an optimistic picture of Norwegian's competence level. However, there have been studies that suggest that we cannot expect that every pupil will perform at a high competence level. Gerard Bonnet concur in the assessment that Norwegian pupils have a fairly high proficiency level, especially when it comes to listening tasks (Hellekjær, 2017). There are some concerns attached to this assessment in Bonnet's study. Although he recorded that average scores were high, there were several pupils that showed a low competence level and insufficient skill sets to master the tasks they were given. Furthermore, the distribution of the variance was seen in multiple classrooms, which suggests that it is not isolated to one particular group (Hellekjær, 2017). These findings can be tied to research done by Glenn o. Hellekjær. As Bonnet's study indicates, Norwegian pupils fare better when it comes to audio and listening tasks. Nevertheless, Hellekjær points out that there is a lack of adequate reading skills amongst Norwegian pupils. This is attributed to pupils only reading the bare minimum of what is required (Hellekjær, 2008, p.11). In addition, when they encounter words that they do not understand they tend to skip past them rather than using a dictionary or understanding the words in context to the rest of the text (Hellekjær, 2008, p.12). Hellekjær suggests that the low variation in reading, which is mainly from textbooks, have an impact on the L2 proficiency level (Hellekjær, 2008, p.11).

Hellekjær's remark on pupils only reading the bare minimum can be tied to different factors. Teachers cannot be excluded from this equation as they often provide the texts, which in many cases are taken from a textbook. A consequence can be that pupils see reading tasks as a chore that needs to be completed, and therefore removing the positive effects that a pupil can experience from reading. A long-term effect of this perception in a pupil is that they develop insufficient reading skills, which will impact future encounters with reading. The research done by Bonnet and Hellekjær can be seen in relevance with pupils' who portray characteristics of a reluctant reader. Classifying every pupil as a reluctant reader might be to extreme. However, aspects concerning a reluctance to read shows challenges and possible remedies to pupils' lack of extensive reading. "The term "reluctant reader" is an umbrella term used in educational and related literature to denote a child who does not or cannot read, and who is likely to avoid such an experience at all costs" (Earl & Maynard, 2006, p.163). There are three categories of reluctant readers. Firstly, pupils who lack the necessary literacy and comprehension skills, and are therefore unable to read. Secondly, pupils who have the necessary skills, but choose not to read because they do not like or prefer other activities. Thirdly, pupils who can read and do read, but not in school (Earl & Maynard, 2006, p.163).

One of the challenges that many of these pupils face is self-confidence, or lack thereof, in their own capabilities. This is often tied to previous experiences where the pupil has met failure time and again. Such experiences can lead to the act of dreading to read in the future and adopting strategies to avoid reading tasks (Earl & Maynard, 2006, p.164). Thus, motivation is a core element in their reluctance. Merely pushing a pupil to read, even with a suitable text for their level, in the hopes of giving them an experience of achievement is not enough. Rather than external elements pushing, it needs to be an internal change of inclination in the pupil. A key element is the change from dreading the experience to finding them enjoyable. To remodel the conception that reading is boring a teacher must provide a text that captures a pupil's attention (Earl & Maynard, 2006, p.164).

One could assume that comics can be an attention grabber as it can provide colourful pictures or graphic detail. However, Earl and Maynard performed a survey that suggests otherwise. The most favoured genres amongst the participants were non-fiction and poetry. The explanation given to these answers were that a reluctant reader appreciated the clear purpose of providing information in a factual text. On the other hand, poetry was favoured because they are short and have a rhythm that governs how they read (Earl & Maynard, 2006, p.172). Comics is not completely out of the picture but was usually ranked as the participants second or third choice. There are some comments to this category. Firstly, it was a combined

category with both magazines and comics. Therefore, there is a lot of extra content such as advertisements with little substance compared to non-fiction. Secondly, the chosen comics had the purpose to entertain the reader, which excludes more information-heavy comics or graphic novels such as *Maus*. Furthermore, it is worth noting that the number of participants for the survey were fourteen. Thus, a different result can be expected from a larger trial. However, the research gives some valuable data that can be used to answer the hypothesis. There is an emphasis on turning reading into an enjoyable activity, which has a link to pupil's motivation.

An Introduction to Motivation

There are many tricks that can spark pupils' curiosity when a teacher introduces an activity. One of the key elements that is part of pupil's inclination to begin with a task is their motivation. Consequently, the language learning process is driven by the pupil's own desire to progress (Lorenzo, 2014, p.141). Tasks that are too challenging for a pupil to master will have an impact on their motivation due to a feeling of incompetence, which leads to a lack in their own belief to master a goal (Busse, 2014, p.160). This correlates with Earl & Maynard's research on pupils dreading reading tasks as a consequence of past failures. On the other hand, if a task is not challenging enough it deprives a pupil of a sense of accomplishment. In turn, this will lead to the pupil not engaging because of boredom (Busse, 2014, p.160).

Motivation is a dynamic process that changes over time with different factors impacting the process. A cognitive approach to motivation divides it into two categories. On one hand, Intrinsic motivation springs out of the pupil's own curiosity. The interest has raised an inclination to explore a subject, which brings satisfaction. This type of internal motivation energizes the learning activity and is often sparked by tasks that bear hallmarks such as a sense of autonomy, a source for stimulation, and a balance between challenge and accessibility (Schwieter, 2013, p.290-291). On the other hand, Extrinsic motivation is born out of a desire to be done with a task. There is no internal drive to learn and only external forces and expectations of completing a task (Schwieter, 2013, p.291). For example, a teacher who expects that a certain task should be handed in as part of a pupil's homework. The task will be done because the alternative will result in a negative response from the teacher. The task is seen as a chore and not as part of the pupil's learning process or development. In some way, calling it motivation might be an overreach as Extrinsic motivation has proved to kill Intrinsic motivation, and therefore the name motivation killer might be more correct.

Other approaches have tried to explain the dynamic process of motivation. According to a process-oriented approach there are three stages of motivation, which have an influence on the different parts of resolving a task. Firstly, the pupil's motivation must be sparked before they embark on a learning experience. This is referred to as the pre-actional stage. Secondly, the motivation must continue flourishing during a task, which is called the actional stage. Lastly, in the post-actional stage a pupil will assess the completed task. The basis of that evaluation will have an impact on future challenges (Schwieter, 2013, p.292). Thus, we start to get a picture of which criteria comics must fulfil in order to aid a pupil's reading experience as part of their language learning process. Comics must spark motivation pre-reading, aid them in continuing to read, and provide them with a learning outcome after completing a comic. At the same time comics must be enjoyable during the three stages and not seem as a chore.

Pre-reading stage: The Theory of Achievement Motivation

“Human behaviour is controlled by the pleasure/pain principle where people seek to maximise the pleasure linked to success and minimise the pain generated by failure” (Atkinson, 2000).

Facing a task based on the pleasure/pain principle leads to (at its most extreme) either avoiding the task completely in fear of failure or tackling the task with an anticipation of mastering it. John W. Atkinson attempted to determine what factors lay behind these behaviours in his Achievement Motivation Theory. An important parameter of this theory is the assumption of a godlike participant. This involves a participant who is rational, knows every possible outcome and making a choice that benefits the participant the most (Weiner, 1992, p.182). What is considered beneficial for the participant is not necessarily tied to only taking on easy tasks to achieve more leisure time; rather it is the balance between what is challenging but still achievable. A possible scenario that illustrates the balance of challenge and achievability is a game of chess where the participant can choose between nine opponents. Against opponent number one there is a 10% chance of winning, against opponent number two there is a 20% chance of winning, and so on until there is 90% chance of winning against opponent number nine. Hence the godlike participant, as they know the chances of success. Most people tend to pick a game where there is between 40% and 60% chance of winning the game (Weiner, 1992, p.182). The reason behind preferring the options that range from 40% to 60% is linked to meeting a task at a suitable level. Thus, a participant or pupil

can achieve the pleasure of success without increasing the pain of failure, which can be tied to Intrinsic motivation and Earl & Maynard's statement to avoid a pupil's feeling of incompetence. In addition, the task provides a challenge, and therefore a pupil is not deprived of a sense of accomplishment.

Atkinson explains this balance of the pleasure/pain principle through the idea of Hope of Success/ Fear of Failure in a person. The tendency to approach a task is rooted in a pupil's perception of own capabilities. The assessment that a pupil makes when facing a task will determine if the pupil will avoid or engage in a task. There are two possible outcomes of this assessment. Either the pupil will approach the task with the tendency to succeed or a tendency to avoid failure. These two tendencies are a sum of three factors. In the case of tendency to succeed the factors are motive for success, probability of success, and incentive value of success (Weiner, 1992, p.182). Similarly, the same factors apply for a tendency to avoid failure, but they have a different impact on a pupil's behaviour. Thus, the tendency to avoid failure is based on motive to avoid failure, probability of failure, and incentive value of failure (Weiner, 1992, p.186).

The factor of motive is relatively stable and present in all humans. Everyone has a capacity to experience pride when they have accomplished a goal, which also drives the need to accomplish the goal in order to experience this feeling (Weiner, 1992, p.182). On the other hand, people can also experience shame when they fail a task (Weiner, 1992, p.186). The former is related to the motive for success, whereas the latter is a motive to avoid failure.

The probability of either success or probability to avoid failure is linked to a cognitive process similar to risk assessment. Based on the available information a pupil will calculate how likely it is that they will obtain a certain goal. The parameters that pupils calculate the probability is often related to past experiences, and therefore previous experiences of success have a positive effect in the assessment, and vice versa. Using the example of the chess players there are different expectancies for the different opponents. Facing an opponent that has a 90% chance of winning will have a negative impact as it lowers a person's confidence of accomplishing the goal. Thus, the probability to avoid failure correlates with the higher tiers of the chess opponents, whereas the lower tiers of the chess opponents match with the probability of success. The probability factor is a perception of how well a person will do in a task. In contrast to the motive, this perception can be manipulated. For example, if a participant is told the difficulty level of the chess opponents, rather than knowing the possible outcomes beforehand, they can be given false information. Telling the participant that there is a 50% chance of winning when in reality the percentage is much lower can influence the

probability of success. Consequently, the participant will try to achieve the goal for a longer duration than if they were told the correct information (Weiner, 1992, p.184).

The last factor, incentive value, is inversely related to the factor of probability (Weiner, 1992, p.184). The incentive value is the emotional effects that the completion of a task leads to, which is pride in success and shame in failure. The inverse relationship of incentive value and probability is tied to the level of difficulty. If a person completes a task that is perceived as difficult it will lead to an increased feeling of pride. However, an easy task results in a minor sense of pride because it was easily attainable (Weiner, 1992, p.184).

The Impact of Achievement Motivation Theory on Comics

Introducing a reading task involving comics can influence the pupils' motivation in light of Atkinson's theory. An overarching aspect is the motivation to engage in a task. Either the task can spark Intrinsic or Extrinsic motivation, which will determine if the pupils perceive the task as a chore or raise their inclination to explore a subject. In extension, a reading task involving comics will play on their tendency to succeed or their tendency to avoid failure. The motive for success and motive to avoid failure are relatively static as everyone has the capacity to experience pride in accomplishment and shame in failure. However, the probability for success and the probability to avoid failure have a more fluctuating quality and can, therefore, be altered and manipulated.

The probability to succeed and probability to avoid failure are based on the pupil's perception of their own skills and past experiences. Therefore, their perception of comics can be a source that influences their inclination to engage in the task. Applying a perception based in Norwegian comic book culture have an impact on the pupils' assessment of reading comics in the classroom. Exploring Norwegian comics culture revealed that Norwegian comics has been influenced by the European and American tradition. The defining traits of Norwegian comics are: humoristic, published in a newspaper daily, and they tell a story that Norwegians recognise. As a result, Norwegians are exposed to humoristic comics due to the high circulation. This has an influence on Norwegians perception of comics as low-brow leisure entertainment.

The perception that comics are low-brow entertainment can alter the probability of success, which is related to the impression that comics are easier to read compared to high-brow literature such as classic novels. A pupil will then apply this attitude to the assessment of whether he or she can accomplish the reading task. Furthermore, the addition of pictures leads to fewer words, which might further increase the opinion that comics are easier to read.

Consequently, the probability of success can be manipulated on the basis of pupil's perception of comics. Approaching a reading activity involving comics might, therefore, lead to the pupil assessing the probability of success to be higher than when they approach a reading task involving text only.

There is also the question of a pupil's pre-actional stage. Earl & Maynard stated that in order for a pupil to read they need to find this activity enjoyable, and therefore teachers should provide texts that captures the pupil's attention. A pupil's past experiences with comics (e.g. *Pondus* and *Donald Duck & co*) might be the experience of comics as enjoyable and fun to read. Thus, sparking motivation based on the principle of pleasure, which is pleasure in an enjoyable and achievable activity.

A further comment must be made on the incentive value. The inverse relationship to the factor of probability can have a negative impact on reading comics. If there is a perception that comics are easy to read, then a pupil's assessment might be that the task is easily attainable. Consequently, there is probability that reading comics provides less pride in accomplishment than reading a novel. On the other hand, if the pupil fails to complete reading a comic, then there is an increased feeling of shame because it was perceived as easy. Nevertheless, the incentive value can only be reached after a pupil has failed or succeeded, and therefore can only be measured during the post-actional stage. Therefore, we can assume that the assessment a pupil makes will increase the chance of engaging the activity and spark Intrinsic motivation.

While-Reading: The Effect of Word-Image Combination on the Reading Process

Establishing a foundation to create pupil motivation is only part of the learning process. There is evidence to support that comics can contribute to a pupil's motivation to read. The low-brow stamp attributed to comics as something funny or humorous might have an impact on the probability of success, which might raise the spirits of a pupil's incentive to read. However, this is not synonymous with them being able to complete the reading task. Bonnet and Hellekjær raised some concerns regarding Norwegian pupils' lack of adequate reading skills in their second language, which might impact the pupil's reading process. The Language Threshold Hypothesis examine the relationship between L1 (i.e. native language), L2 (i.e. second language), and reading comprehension. According to this perspective transferring a pupil's L1 skills into their L2 skill set is only half the story when it comes to

their reading ability and language development in a second language.

Being a skilled reader in your native language does not necessarily mean you are, or will be, a competent reader in another language. It is estimated that between 30% and 50% of reading comprehension is due to the proficiency level in the target language, whereas reading skills acquired through L1 reading only makes up less than 20% of understanding a text (Grabe, 2003, p.248).

The level of language proficiency accounts for twice as much as reading abilities for a reader to understand a text in the target language. This finds support in work done by Hellekjær who notes that a reader who encounters difficulty, such as an unfamiliar word, is slowed down or stops entirely. Thus, a reader with an extensive vocabulary correlates with a higher reading comprehension (Hellekjær, 2008, p.3). Thus, there must be some characteristics that are unique in comics, which can be an aid in the reading process to counter the challenges posed by the need for adequate reading skills.

Drawing on what we explored on the multimodal aspects of comics we saw that the modalities of text are similar between text in comics and other text types. However, the distinct characteristic of comics is the combination of image and text. The addition of the visual modalities gained from images can prove to be an aid to the reading experience. The reason to claim that the added visual elements can be beneficial are linked to the variety of learning styles that each pupil possess. Traditionally, Western education systems have favoured verbal and mathematical expressions (Brualdi, 1998). Nevertheless, there is a wide variety of other types of learning strategies that pupils use.

Multiple Intelligence Theory

Howard Gardener argued that people have different types of preferred learning strategies in his Theory of Multiple Intelligences. He expanded on the concept of intelligence to include areas beyond the traditional linguistic and logical domain (Brualdi, 1998). The Theory of Multiple Intelligences suggests that there are seven different skill type sets, or seven different types of intelligences. These are logical-mathematical intelligence, linguistic intelligence, musical intelligence, spatial intelligence, bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, and intrapersonal intelligence (Nolen, 2003). There are some variants of this theory which operates with an eight intelligence related to naturalistic awareness. However, the two intelligences that are important regarding comics are the linguistic intelligence and spatial intelligence. Linguistic intelligence is defined as:

“(...) mastery of language. This intelligence includes the ability to effectively manipulate language to express oneself rhetorically or poetically. It also allows one to use language as a means to remember information” (Brualdi, 1998).

A pupil who is a linguistic learner is in their element when they read, write, or give oral presentations (Nolen, 2003). Thus, they are often favoured in a traditional learning environment where much of the information is acquired through text or oral communication.

Gardner specifies that everyone possesses the different intelligences, but they develop differently in each individual (Brualdi, 1998). Thus, every pupil has a capacity for learning through verbal and linguistic methods. However, some might have their strengths in other sets of intelligences. For a spatial learner their strengths are connected to the physical world and their ability to create visual representations. Therefore, pupils who favour this learning strategy are best taught through visual representations such as pictures and diagrams (Nolen, 2003).

Seeing the linguistic and spatial learner in relation to the analysis might help to illustrate how comics affect their reading experiences. Using the first example where Vladek first saw the Nazi flag, there is a potential for both learners to understand the episode. A linguistic learner might read this panel without being hindered too much. As discussed, this is a word-specific panel where the text provides necessary information to continue to the next panel. However, the text is not without obstacles. Art Spiegelman's artistic choice to replicate his father's language might slow down the reading process. Although this offers a sort of authenticity to the text, it uses words that are grammatically incorrect such as replacing “this” with “here”. However, a linguistic learner will probably be able to extract meaning from the text due to their linguistic abilities. On the other hand, a pupil who prefers spatial learning strategies might struggle more with this type of language. Nevertheless, there are some advantages for these pupils. Even though the image can be classified as an accessory to the text there are some aspects that can support a spatial learner's reading experience.

The main element of the panel is the Nazi flag and the reaction of Vladek's group. In the text we can read that the Nazi flag is synonymous to the Swastika. The framing of the panel creates a connection from the first textbox through the picture to the second textbox. Thus, the link between the Nazi flag and the Swastika is made through a visual representation of the two. For a spatial learner such visual connections might be necessary to understand the event that is transpiring in the panel. Furthermore, the synaesthetic icons that are used can further aid readers. The characters show facial expressions through the use of lines. Using a

rather simple set of lines help a reader to visualise the fear and shock of the characters. Thus, the reader can connect the reason behind their fear to them seeing the flag.

There is also the aspect of using animals instead of humans, which might have an impact on the reader. Linguistic learners are fonder of memorising and categorising using words. Consequently, the aspect that they will focus on to characterise the group might be Jew or Jewish. On the other hand, the spatial learner takes note of the visual representation of the group, and therefore might describe them as mice. Even though the two types of learners pay attention to different attributes, they can still reflect around Vladek and his group being different, or rather feeling different, from other Poles.

The artistic choice of using animal characters is probably one of the most defining traits of *Maus*. An effect of using animals as representation for humans is a clear differentiation between peoples, which shows either kinship or difference. A sense of kinship can be seen in the second example of the analysis where Mandelbaum receives gifts from Vladek. As the text is more of a soundtrack to a visually told sequence the panels are in the picture-specific category. As a result, the story is told through visual cues such as the striped prison uniforms with stars. Even without the context this sequence can be understood through visual elements. In addition, using an action-to-action transition requires only a small amount of closure from the reader.

For a spatial learner these types of visually told sequences provide an excellent opportunity to acquire knowledge. In terms of reading, there is a strong connection between image and text. It might feel a bit redundant to exemplify words such as spoon, belt, or shoes by showing images of them as we might expect readers of *Maus* to understand these words. However, it shows the possibilities that a picture-specific panel holds. There is a strong focus on the visual object and pairing them with the equivalent word. Thus, supporting a spatial learner in their reading experience. On the other hand, the roles of linguistic and spatial learner have switched from the previous example. Nevertheless, the rules that applied to the spatial learner now applies for the linguistic learner. Where the spatial learner could find support in the picture, the linguistic learner can connect the words to the actions.

Depending on the type of panel could benefit either of these learners, but there is still support for both of them either by image or text. There are, however, some image-text combinations that demand more effort from both a spatial and a linguistic learner. An interdependent panel, such as the third example, requires that the reader can connect text and image to create a whole. For example, the choice of words in the text only refers to the selection as ending up on either the “good side” or the “other side”. To understand the full

extent of the event a reader must deduce that the other side is related to the chimneys. The same goes the other way around. Without the text it is difficult to grasp that the prisoners are standing in line for a selection. The interdependent panel conveys the story through image and text equally. In contrast to the other two image-text combinations, neither picture nor text refers to the other in an interdependent panel because they both push the story onward. Consequently, the picture does not provide support to the text as in the example with the Nazi flag, nor does the text describe what happens in the picture as in the sequence with Vladek and Mandelbaum. Furthermore, because there is a subject-to-subject transition the panels require more reader involvement, which includes filling in the events that transpire between the selection and the smoking chimneys. To create a coherent storyline for this sequence requires a mutual understanding of text and picture. Thus, it is difficult to understand the selection using either text or image as an entry point.

The mutual dependency of an interdependent panel might lead to the readers slowing down in their process to see the correlation. The more a reader slows down, or stops entirely, disrupts the process as they try to use other tools to extract meaning (Hellekjær, 2008, p.3). Consequently, we might assume that a higher number of interdependent panels in a comic leads to an increase in time spent on reading the comic. On the other hand, panels where text or picture are dominant, such as word-specific or picture-specific, provides ample support for spatial learners. In addition, the text can aid a linguistic learner in their understanding of the picture. The different learning styles result in different ways of reading a comic. On one hand, a spatial learner extracts information from the picture, which they apply to understand the text. On the other hand, a linguistic learner uses the text as a point of entry to get meaning from the picture. Thus, a comic can aid the reading experience in a Multiple Intelligence Theory perspective.

There are some concerns regarding the Multiple Intelligence Theory. Firstly, if we were to follow the theory to its full extent then we must account for the remaining types of intelligences. For instance, reading a comic does not involve bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, which would require bodily movement. Therefore, comics only provide aid to spatial and linguistic learners but excludes other learning strategies. Secondly, the theory has been criticised due to a lack of empirical data (Cuevas, 2015). In addition, theories regarding learning strategies have been criticised for lacking validity. The criticism is linked to the actual impact the hypotheses have on learning outcome (Cuevas, 2015). In other words, there is no particular advantage of applying a specific learning strategy to a task because it cannot be proved to provide a better understanding of a subject for a pupil.

Dual Coding Theory

The Multiple Intelligence Theory is an interesting perspective on how pupils learn as it points to how the visual modalities can support readers. However, taking it at face value might be too drastic. Therefore, it is beneficial to explore other aspects that can provide an explanation. Another theory that deals with cognitive learning strategies is the Dual Coding Theory, which focus on verbal and non-verbal mental systems. The two are separate systems, which process different types of input. The verbal system deals with linguistic codes, whereas the non-verbal system is used when we encounter visual codes (Clark & Paivio, 1991, p.151). At first glance they might seem similar to the linguistic and spatial learner of the Multiple Intelligence Theory. However, the two systems of Dual Coding Theory include a wider variety of modalities. In addition, they work in unison, which is in contrast to the Multiple Intelligence Theory where the different intelligences operate separately without influencing one another.

The verbal system is used to extract meaning from abstract or arbitrary codes such as words or speech. For instance, words and sentences are representations for objects or events which hold no meaning without a correlating association (Clark & Paivio, 1991, p.151). In other words, we see a link to the metalingual function described by Jakobsen on decoding language. The non-verbal system picks up on non-linguistic stimuli. These representations include:

“modality-specific images for shapes (e.g. a chemical model), environmental sounds (e.g. school bell), actions (e.g. drawing lines or pressing keys), skeletal or visceral sensations related to emotions (e.g. clenched jaw, racing heart), and other non-linguistic objects and events” (Clark & Paivio, 1991, p.151).

Hence, actions and stimuli that Gardener ascribed to other types of intelligences are implemented in the Dual Coding Theory’s definition of non-verbal systems. A further note is that the verbal system operates sequentially. For instance, one word is processed before moving on to the next word when we are reading a sentence. On the other hand, a non-verbal stimulus presents a complex mental image (Clark & Paivio, 1991, p.152). An example of this could be to picture your grandmother’s kitchen. Within that mental image we remember how it looked like, the smell, and perhaps the feelings we had of our grandmother. A key element of Dual Coding Theory that can have a positive effect for using comics as a support for the reading experience is the connection between the two systems. “Links between the two systems are called referential connections. They join corresponding verbal and imaginal codes and potentially allow such operations as imaging words and naming pictures” (Clark &

Paivio, 1991, p.153). In addition, there is associative connections, which are representations within the separate systems. Thus, the word “fruit” can be associated with the word “apple”, whereas seeing an apple brings forth images of bananas or other image associations (Clark & Paivio, 1991, p.153).

Turning back to the analysis of *Maus* shows some positive effects when applying Dual Coding Theory. There are no major changes from a Multiple Intelligences Theory perspective on word-specific panels to a Dual Coding Theory perspective. There is still a process of connecting the words “Nazi flag” to the image and then to the word “Swastika”. However, there is a change in how this process works. For instance, a spatial learner would use his or her strength of applying the visual to the linguistic aspects. Hence, a spatial learner understands the panel through the image. With a Dual Coding Theory approach the verbal and non-verbal systems work simultaneously. For example, pupils might have a mental image of a Nazi flag from a previous experience. When the pupil reads “Nazi flag” they might picture this mental image. If they do not have a specific mental image of a Nazi flag there is still a possibility to picture a flag. Using a referential connection makes it possible to imagine words. When their gaze moves to the image it correlates or expands on what they have just read. Vice versa, pupils can describe the characters emotions of shock and fear through a process of naming pictures. In extension, there are possible associative connections related to the depiction of the Nazi flag. On its own the Swastika is just eight straight lines put together, but on a metalingual level it represents more than that. The Swastika has become a symbol for the Nazi ideology and Nazism. Thus, the pupils can place the event described by Vladek in a larger context. This symbol can be connected to mental images of, for example, Hitler or other aspects of the Second World War. Consequently, the image offers contextual information through association.

The most evident example of referential connection is the sequence between Vladek and Mandelbaum. Although it can be deemed as a bit simplistic, it is able to illustrate a case of imaging to words. The pictorial representation of an object such as the fork is easily connected to a verbal description. The text-image combination provides a scaffold for this referential connection because the text directly refers to the action in the image. Thus, leading to a relation between the framing and the referential connection. The pupil interacts with the comic and in this activity the text-image combination supports the cognitive process of the pupil.

Applying either Dual Coding Theory or Multiple Intelligence Theory to the example of the Nazi flag and the sequence with Vladek and Mandelbaum explains how comics can aid

in a pupil's reading experience. However, there is an interesting change when it comes to the third example used in the analysis, which covered the selection. Using the Multiple Intelligence Theory we assumed that the spatial and linguistic learner understood the panels through their respective learning strategy. Therefore, a linguistic learner would use the text to extract meaning and vice versa for the spatial learner. Applying this approach involves downplaying the other forms of intelligences to a degree that almost blocks them out completely. Consequently, saying that a pupil almost exclusively learns through one particular learning strategy. In contrast, The Dual Coding Theory stresses the mutual information flow between the two cognitive systems. Therefore, we can see the combination of text and image in unity rather than two separate parts.

This alters the perception of an interdependent panel. Firstly, the referential connection connects the description of a selection to the depiction of people standing in line who are sent to "the good side" or "the other side". This connection enables the possibility to extract information from the text and image, and therefore seeing the correlation between the two. Secondly, the pupils can connect the information from the second panel due to associative connections as well as referential connections. As the text only deals in either ending up on "the good side" or "the other side" it would require a lot to understand the event solely based on the description. However, the referential connection connects "the other side" to the smoking chimneys. Simultaneously, the pupils might associate something regarding the image. For example, associations of contextual knowledge linked to the purpose of the chimneys, which they might have gained from documentaries, movies, or photographs. These associations might help them understand the image. In turn, understanding the image can then be applied to the referential connection where they verbally describe the mental images, which connects "the other side" to the chimneys. Consequently, the pupils might deduce that those who ended up on this side were killed.

Seeing the learning process as a result of different systems working concurrently alters the previous assumption that interdependent panels are difficult to understand. Scott McCloud used the image of two dance partners taking turns leading to convey how the relation between image and text worked in comics. A similar notion can be said to apply for the Dual Coding Theory as there are different types of systems and connections, but combined they make something beyond what they could do individually. Furthermore, the Dual Coding Theory has not received the same type of criticism as the Multiple Intelligence Theory. The Dual Coding Theory has been empirically tested, which supports the claim of correlating mental systems (Clark & Paivio, 1991, p.150). In addition, there is reason to believe that the theory might

have a positive impact on a pupil's learning process in real time (Cuevas, 2015).

In relation to learning a second language Yi-Chun Pan and Yi-Ching Pan performed a study which supports the relevance of Dual Coding Theory (Pan & Pan, 2009). In addition to champion the implementation of Dual Coding Theory, they argue that pupils with a low proficiency level perform better in a reading task with the aid of pictures.

“When the reader has trouble understanding the text's linguistic input (e.g. vocabulary and structure) due to its level of difficulty, the pictures can focus the reader's attention on linguistic input. The low proficiency subjects in this study devoted more attention to pictures when they could not comprehend the text. The pictures provided them with an additional source to draw meaning from the text” (Pan & Pan, 2009, p.193).

This is not limited to a text that correspond to the proficiency level of a pupil, but also applies to texts with higher difficulty levels. However, the picture must reflect the information provided in the text. If this is not the case, then the effect of the picture diminishes (Pan & Pan, 2009, p.193).

The necessity of a proficient skill level in L2 needed for understanding a text can be linked to Yu-Chun Pan and Yi-Ching Pan's research. Hellekjær states that when Norwegian pupils encounters an unfamiliar word they tend to skip past them rather than looking it up in the dictionary or understanding the word in context to the rest of the text (Hellekjær, 2008, p.12). However, a picture can focus the attention of a reader when they do not understand the text, and therefore shorten the gap from understanding a text and the need of a proficient skill level to comprehend a text. For example, the panel with the Nazi flag connects the flag and the Swastika through the image, and the picture-specific example highlighting corresponding objects. Consequently, reading a comic does not demand the high proficiency level required for reading text only as the text-image combination provides a source for the pupils to draw meaning from. In addition, it might resolve the remark that Hellekjær made on Norwegian pupils skipping past words they did not understand because the picture provides an opportunity to understand the text through the image.

The combination of text and image in comics seems to provide support for a reader in a Dual Coding Theory perspective and resolve the challenges linked to proficient L2 skill level. As a result, the pupils will have understood more of what they have been reading because the pictures can focus their attention when they do not understand the linguistic input. The text-image combination provides additional modalities to extract information from, and therefore an increased possibility to draw meaning from the story. In turn, this can lead to a

pupil's inclination to continue reading. The actional stage in Process-Oriented Motivation states that in order for a pupil to continue an activity it must provide ample stimuli for motivation to flourish. Thus, by understanding the comic they are reassured that they master the reading task. This type of reassurance shows the pupils that completing the task is attainable and can give them a feeling of pride in doing so. Consequently, comics encourage them to continue reading based on their motive for success and reducing the feeling of incompetence.

After Reading: Learning Outcome

The text-image combination found in comics can provide support for pupils because pictures can focus their attention when they have trouble understanding the text. The effect of the Dual Coding Theory has a positive impact on pupils' reading experience in real time. Not only will comics increase pupil motivation due to the perception that comics are easier and more fun to read, but the text-image combination can help the pupils get through a comic. In turn, completing a reading task involving comics can have positive outcomes for pupils. The motive for success stated that everyone has a capacity to experience pride, and therefore pupils can experience this emotion as a result of completing the reading task. The degree of this feeling must be seen in correlation to the incentive value due to the inverse relationship to the probability of success. The perception that comics are easier to read might lead to a lower incentive value of success compared to reading a text without pictures. It must also be accounted for the probability that if a pupil fails to complete a comic will increase the incentive value of failure. Nevertheless, due to the supportive function that pictures can provide to a text increases the chance of completion. Thus, there is a higher probability that a pupil with a low proficiency level gets through a comic than reading tasks that are text-specific. Furthermore, achieving a feeling of pride can influence future reading tasks as the probability of success is calculated based on available information where past experiences are part of this information. When a pupil encounters a reading task involving comics in the future the probability of success will likely increase because they have a positive experience which boosts their self-confidence.

There are further positive effects of reading comics in addition to pupil motivation. The expectation related to reading comics can increase the chance of pupils engaging in a reading activity and the text-image combination can continue aiding them in their reading process. Consequently, engaging in a reading activity expose them to language input. Incorporating this language input as part of a pupil's knowledge is not necessarily a question

of actively making them learn, but rather by exposing them to natural language can have a subconscious influence on the pupil. This is related to an implicit learning process. The definition of implicit learning is based on three characteristics. Firstly, the outcome of the learning experience and the knowledge that one acquires are often not accessible to the consciousness. Therefore, we cannot fully express exactly what we have learned. Secondly, because the learning process is not a conscious one the information that has been extracted is abstract knowledge which cannot be retrieved through one association alone. Thirdly, the process of learning is unplanned. The pupil does not form any opinion on what the outcome of the situation will be (Seger, 1994).

Learning language through implicit learning can be related to innate theories of language learning. The linguist Noam Chomsky is probably one of the most recognised advocates for innate learning. He believed that people are born with an innate ability to learn languages. This was a criticism to behaviourists' belief that we learn through imitating habits. Chomsky's argument was based on children's ability to acquire the rules of grammar and applying them to their own language. For example, a child can say "stricked" instead of "struck". The child has learned a general rule of simple past tense but has not learned of irregular verbs yet and has therefore overgeneralised how to conjugate verbs (Drew & Sørheim, 2016, p.16). Chomsky explained this process as part of a language acquisition device. The language acquisition device, or LAD, is triggered when the child is exposed to their native language and the development of language happens naturally (Drew & Sørheim, p.16; McGregor, 2017, p.243). It is worth noting that even though Innatism has dominated the field of language acquisition studies for over 40 years there is a lack of empirical data (McGregor, 2017, p.243). Consequently, there is reason to believe that people can acquire knowledge of a language when they are exposed to it, but there is insufficient data to support Chomsky's claim. Thus, exposing pupils to language through comics can have an effect on their language learning process, but other perspectives are needed to prove that exposing pupils to language through text is beneficial.

Similar to Chomsky's theory that children acquire knowledge naturally, a pupil learning a second language can acquire knowledge of a language when he or she is exposed to it. Thus, a positive effect of presenting authentic texts for a reading task, such as *Maus*, is that they offer a more natural experience in contrast to constructed texts found in textbooks. Using the term constructed texts imply that the text has a clear purpose such as ordering of a menu, which is difficult to implement in other situations than the one it is designed to replicate. These texts can provide situations that are easily applicable by the pupils in a

specific situation, but their appearance is often that of a jagged rhythm. Stephen Krashen goes quite far in his views on such formal methods of teaching. He believes that there is a separation between what is language learning and language acquisition, where only the latter leads to real communication. Formal language learning processes such as the constructed texts designed with a clear purpose are stored in a different cognitive system than those processes that are acquired. At this point it is important to clarify that it is not the contextual situation, but rather acquiring the grammatical structures that surrounds such formal tasks. In other words, the pupils' ability to use the acquired knowledge efficiently and not only replicating a memorized situation. Thus, for a pupil to gain proficient language skills it is necessary for them to be exposed to situations involving natural language (Ioup, 1984, p.345).

Claiming that fluency in a language is gained as a result of acquisition requires a correlating process which explains Krashen's belief. Therefore, Krashen tries to explain the process of acquisition through the Input Hypothesis, where a learner acquires language through meaningful input (Input +1). Progress is made when the pupil is exposed to language that is just above their level of competence. Their level of competence is the sum of previously acquired input, and the next step is the +1 that push them to the next level (Faltis, 1984, p.352).

Using Chomsky's idea of a language acquisition device and Krashen's Input Hypothesis supports using authentic texts in a classroom because part of a pupil's language development happens when they are exposed to natural language. However, the Input Hypothesis are used in relevance to acquire proficiency in spoken language (Ioup, 1984, p.345; Faltis, 1984, p.352-353). That is not synonymous with the claims being irrelevant for acquiring fluency in a language through reading. The two ideas suggest that being exposed to natural language is a vital part of language acquisition, and therefore seeing them in relevance to studies done on reading can show the learning outcome that pupils gain from reading activities.

Being exposed to language through reading has a positive impact on two of the basic skills that a pupil should master, which is reading and writing. In a pupil's native language reading to write has proven to be well founded, and improves a pupil's ability to connect information and structure a text of different genres. Furthermore, extensive reading has an indirect effect on improving a pupil's writing (Grabe, 2003, p.246). In terms of language acquisition, extensive reading where a person is exposed to texts over time leads to other benefits from this activity. This includes increased vocabulary, a higher level of fluency, more awareness to the metalingual aspects of a language, and better writing abilities (Grabe, 2003,

p.249). Consequently, reading is beneficial to a pupil's language development.

There are, however, some challenges regarding the use of language acquisition as described by Chomsky or Krashen. According to these theories merely exposing someone to a language will result in an acquisition process. However, there might be some challenges related to pupils skipping past words they do not understand, which was mentioned by Hellekjær (Hellekjær, 2008, p.12). Instead of using other tools to understand the meaning of a word they move on, and therefore is not exposed to the target language as intended by Krashen. However, comics can remedy some of the lost opportunities. As discussed in relation to the Dual Coding Theory, pictures can provide an extra set of modalities for the pupil to extract meaning. Thus, there is a higher probability of acquiring language because they have understood the meaning and context of the words through images.

Conclusion

The thesis question asked: How can comics aid a pupil's reading experience as part of their language learning process? Summing up the different perspectives and theories provides several aspects that enlightens how comics can support a pupil in their reading process. Earl and Maynard state that a major factor for a pupil to avoid engaging in a reading activity is related to perceiving the activity as a chore, and therefore a teacher must remodel the pupil's conception into finding reading enjoyable. This statement can be seen in relevance to Extrinsic motivation and research done by Glenn O. Hellekjær. Firstly, Extrinsic motivation is born out of a desire to be done with a task. Secondly, Hellekjær argues that Norwegian pupils only read the bare minimum of what is required, and when they read the texts are usually from a textbook. Thus, a teacher must provide texts that can raise the pupil's inclination to engage in a reading task, and as a result spark an Intrinsic motivation.

Introducing a comic in the classroom can bring the necessary tools to kindle pupil's desire to read. The examination of Norwegian comic book culture established that comics are perceived as humoristic. This notion might lead to pupils being energized based on the pleasure/ pain principle because their impression is based on comics being an enjoyable leisure activity. Furthermore, the low-brow stamp attributed to comics can alter a pupil's assessment of their probability to succeed. Before the pupil engage in the reading task the pupil will assess whether the task is attainable and act according to this assessment. Thus, the outcome is either to tackle the task expecting to succeed or avoid the activity in fear of failure. The pupil might assume that comics are easier to read compared to other reading tasks that are text-specific, and therefore anticipate that there is a higher chance of accomplishing the task.

Activating a pupil's desire to engage in reading comics is not, however, synonymous with pupils being able to read through a comic as there must be ample stimuli to keep the pupil going. Therefore, comics must portray some characteristics that can support the pupil throughout the reading process. There is evidence of comics having such characteristics based on the multimodal aspect of text-image combination. Applying learning strategies to this equation makes good use of the multimodal aspects. The linguistic and spatial learner described by Howard Gardner in his Multiple Intelligence Theory have different entry points to understand comics. For instance, a spatial learner extracts information from the picture, which they apply to understand the text. On the other hand, a linguistic learner uses the text as a point of entry to get meaning from the picture. Thus, the two different types of learners can use their respective strengths to understand a panel. However, the perspective of Multiple Intelligences accounts for five more sets of intelligences, which is difficult to involve in a reading task due to the segregation between the learning strategies. In addition, there are some concerns regarding the lack of empirical data, which have an effect on the validity of this theory.

The Dual Coding Theory proved more resilient in its explanation of text-image connections. According to this theory people have two cognitive systems that work in unity. In addition, these two systems (i.e. verbal and non-verbal) includes a wider range of actions and stimuli than those found in a linguistic and spatial learner. Furthermore, the verbal and non-verbal systems are connected through cognitive connections. The referential connection makes it possible to imaging words and naming pictures, and therefore cause the pupils to experience comics as a whole. In addition, the associative connection creates associations within the separate systems, which can provide contextual information (e.g. documentaries on Holocaust). For instance, the referential connection can be used to connect the description of the selection (i.e. the third example of the analysis) to the depiction of the smoking chimneys. Consequently, pupils can extract information from image and text and create a coherent story.

Yi-Chun Pan and Yi-Ching Pan discussed the effect that pictures could have for pupils with a low proficiency level. The data suggests that when pupils encounter linguistic input that is challenging, they can turn their attention to pictures to draw meaning from the content. Seeing Yi-Chun Pan and Yi-Ching Pan's research resolves the problems raised by Grabe and Hellekjær, which stressed the necessity of a proficient skill level in order to comprehend a text. When a text is accompanied by a picture that reflects the information of the text results in a higher reading comprehension for low proficiency level pupils. Thus, the modalities of comics provide support for pupils according to a Dual Coding Theory perspective.

Furthermore, there is evidence to believe that the gap between the need for an adequate proficiency level to understand a text and reading comprehension is reduced when a pupil engages in a reading activity involving comics. In addition, this can lead to the pupil being reassured that they can accomplish the task because they are able to comprehend the information.

Getting the pupils to read can result in several benefits. When it comes to acquiring language there is documentation that extensive reading can lead to an increased vocabulary, a higher fluency level, a better awareness to the metalingual functions of language, and better writing abilities. Thus, it reaffirms Krashen's and Chomsky's idea that exposing people to natural language results in acquiring language. However, there are some restraints to their theories. Hellekjær concluded in his survey that pupils tend to skip past words they do not understand, which minimise the impact of being exposed to natural language. Nevertheless, comics can remedy some of the lost qualities of skipping past unfamiliar words because the image provides a context for the text. Hence, the image can focus a pupil's attention when they do not understand the linguistic input.

In way of concluding it appears that comics can support in a pupil's reading experience. However, it is necessary to comment on the thesis only dealing on the theoretical level. Although other surveys are implemented there is a need for further studies to provide a definitive answer. Nevertheless, the material provided to examine the thesis question can explain some benefits of using comics in the classroom. Thus, comics can provide a source of motivation, support in the continuation of the reading process, and result in a learning outcome, which make comics applicable in the classroom as they fulfil the requirements of the subject curriculum.

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