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Identity and Investment in English Language Learning

Immigrant ESOL Learners' Experiences with English Language Learning in a Norwegian School Context

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Abstract

The terms identity and motivation, both previously thought to be fairly static traits of an individual, have gone through re-conceptualizations where the ever-changing social context and factors such as past experiences, expectations, ambitions and power relations have gained significant appreciation. Both terms are presently understood as dynamic concepts whose manifestations are socially and contextually dependent. Identity and language are widely accepted as being closely related; identities can be explicitly communicated through language, both orally and in writing, and specific language choices can be implicitly indexical of identity traits such as socio-economic and ethnic origin, gender, or age. Within the field of second language acquisition, motivation has long been an important factor. The present paper seeks to investigate the relationship between identity and the motivation for language learning, in the context of immigrant students learning English in Norwegian schools. Specifically, the thesis looks at how informant identities, personal backgrounds, and societal expectations have shaped their motivation for English language learning, and what effects learning English had both in regard to the other languages in their linguistic repertoire, and in the way they perceive themselves. Data were collected through recorded interviews with five students that have immigrated to Norway from different countries, and who were enrolled in English classes in a Norwegian school at the time of the interviews. The results reflect the multifaceted and individual nature of both identity and motivation. Though the present data set is too small to make extensive generalizations, the results indicate trends that concur with previous research. English is widely regarded as an important skill due to its status as a lingua franca, but majority of the participants reported prioritizing learning Norwegian given their circumstances. Knowledge of the English language and the ability to partake in discussions related to English media is regarded as an important skill for a typical teenager in Norway. Multiple participants reported that English allowed them to access otherwise unavailable fora and media, which in turn provided them with opportunities to grow as individuals and further enhanced their motivation for their English language development.

Key words: identity, immigration, language learning, investment, motivation, agency, social labels

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1. Introduction

Technological advancements in terms of communication and transportation and the globalization that followed greatly increased an individual's chances of mobility, both in regard to their social status and geographical location. International travel is no longer only available to the rich upper classes; people are migrating and settling in new countries at a greater rate than ever before. In 1970, there were approximately 85 million international migrants, amounting to 2.3% of the world population. In 2019, this number has increased to 272 million, or 3.5% of the world population (International Organization for Migration, 2019, p. 21). Increased trans-national travel and migration gave rise to new multi-cultural and multilingual societies. While it used to be that the study and pursuit of language skills was reserved for those financially and socially able to pursue education beyond elementary level, most people now have access to language learning aids in their pockets in the forms of apps on their phones (e.g., Duolingo), instructional videos, or communities online.

The need for a common language to allow for communication between different groups is not new. However, the globalization processes and the establishment of international firms and organizations (e.g., the United Nations) prompted a need for a lingua franca that applied to the whole world (Crystal, 2004, p. 9). Tough Mandarin is the language with the highest number of native speakers in the world (920 million), English is the most spoken language worldwide when taking non-native speakers into account (1.45 billion) (Ethnologue, u.d.). A language achieves the status of a genuine global language when its special role is recognized by every country (Crystal, 2003, p. 3). English is by many considered to be *the* global language (King, 2018, p. 14). The English language's rise to the position of a global language can be explained in terms of geographical-historical (e.g., trade and colonization) and socio-cultural developments (e.g. use in business, entertainment, and communication) (Crystal, 2003, p. 29). In sum, the English language holds a special position in the global community, and because the majority of its speakers are non-native, it is inherently associated with multilingualism.

In Norway, the core curriculum which applies to all subjects and classes in both elementary and secondary schools, states that "All pupils shall experience that being proficient in a number of languages is a resource, both in school and society at large" (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017, p. 5). It is thus evident that the Norwegian government views multilingualism as an important skill. As the number of pupils in

Norwegian schools with a native language other than Norwegian rises, educators must consider how to accommodate these pupils to ensure that they are given the opportunity to prosper and thrive across all their languages.

The group of pupils with a home language other than Norwegian is not homogenous. Some pupils have grown up with immigrant parents and speak their parents' native language at home while learning Norwegian in kindergarten and are thus already proficient in two languages when they begin to learn English as a third language in 1st grade, and a foreign language in 8th grade. Some pupils are immigrants themselves, with their own native language, and no knowledge of Norwegian upon their enrollment in the Norwegian school system. Of this group, some may speak English prior to their arrival in Norway and others may not. Both Norwegian and English make up their own subjects, and proficiency in both is expected when graduating secondary school. Though the English language holds a prominent position in Norwegian society through its use in media, and the majority of the Norwegian population is proficient in English, Norwegian is still the language used in most everyday situations.

Consequently, immigrants may struggle to balance their desire and need to learn Norwegian to best integrate themselves into the Norwegian society with the social and educational pressure to also be proficient in English. Moreover, expectations to learning several new languages may affect their opportunities and efforts to maintain their native language. Factors such as lack of input of their native language and the social stigma of practicing it can lead to new languages receiving priority. An individual's goals and ambitions can be a determining factor when it comes to prioritizing the languages they learn and practice. Hence, as language is an integral part of one's identity, these decisions can affect their perception of themselves and their position in relation to their surroundings.

The present paper seeks to investigate how personality, individual background and personal goals affect how, and to what extent, the participant is motivated for learning English – and how this motivation fluctuates depending on various factors. Such factors can be the social context (e.g., who is present), personal factors (how one is feeling at the time), the goal for the situation (e.g., demonstrate English skills in class, participate in an online discussion etc.) or other additional factors. Furthermore, the project will look at how learning and becoming more proficient in English affects the participants' identities, their sense of self and

their relations with their surroundings. Three questions have guided the research conducted in this paper:

1. How do informant identities, personal backgrounds, and societal expectations shape their motivation for and investment in English language learning?

2. What effect does learning English have on how the informants view and treat the languages they know?

3. Does learning English affect how the informants view themselves, and if so, how?

As this thesis' focus group are students that have immigrated to Norway and now receive English lessons through high school or adult education programs, themes related more generally to immigration, assimilation and cultural differences will naturally also be discussed.

The following section outlines the theoretical background for this project, including explorations of the terms identity and motivation and their connections to language learning and usage, immigrant culture and its implications for perceptions of minority languages and multilingualism, and multilingual approaches to second language acquisition. In section 3, methodology, the choice, and process of data collection through narratives and interviews is described and reflected upon. Section 4 presents selected interview excerpts with participant reflections on the status of the languages they know, the importance of English, how learning English has affected them and their identity, and in what way this affects how they position themselves vis-à-vis their surroundings. In section 5, these excerpts are analyzed, discussed, and compared to previous research to deduce their implications for language learning policies and strategies when it comes to immigrant ESOL (English as a second or other language) learners in a Norwegian school context. Finally, section 6 summarizes and concludes the findings of this study and offers suggestions for directions of future research.

2. Previous research

The goal of this section is to establish a theoretical framework for the present study into immigrant learners' experiences with the two-way relationship between their identity and English language learning process. This section will begin with a closer look at the term identity, as well as how identity relates to language. Subsection 2.2 looks at motivational aspects of language learning, and what social and personal factors can hinder or aid an individual's desire to practice their language skills. One such factor can be the status of a given language, which will be further elaborated on in subsection 2.3. As the focal group of this study is people with an immigrant background, subsection 2.4 outlines some general statistics about immigration and integration in Norway and in general, how identity and immigration relate to one another, and how languages and how they are viewed also plays a part in this greater picture. Finally, subsection 2.5 briefly explores multilingual approaches to second language acquisition (SLA), as it is the hope that this thesis and the insights it provides into the experiences of multilingual immigrant students can be useful for teachers when planning their lessons.

2.1 Language and identity

2.1.1 Defining identity

In order to explore how identity is related to language use it is first necessary to establish an understanding of the term identity. Defining a term that is so frequently used in everyday conversation for research purposes can be challenging and has generated great discussions among researchers. Some have even argued that due to its overuse it is best to discontinue the use of this term altogether (Brubaker and Cooper, as cited in Yuval-Davis, 2010, p. 261). However, Yuval-Davis argues that as long as clear and specific definitions are used, the concept of identity is still useful (2010, p. 262).

Identity relates to the sense of belonging, and thus also to a sense of *not* belonging – it becomes a question of what or whom one associates oneself with as much as what one does not associate oneself with or take active measures to distance oneself from. Belonging to a social formation calls for some sort of boundaries and terms of membership and hence becomes a subject of both inclusion and exclusion (Erdmann, 2015, p. 479; Yuval-Davis,

2010, p. 266). In order for someone to be defined as *insiders,* others have to be viewed as *outsiders.* Additionally, an individual's claim to membership of a social grouping can be accepted or contested by others, both within and outside the target membership group.

In sociology, there is a recurring question of to what extent social structures affect individual choices. This can also be applied to the concept of identity by asking to what extent an individual's identity is a result of his or her agency, and to what extent it is determined by sociocultural constructions and constraints. Agency relates to peoples' socially constructed capacity to act (Barker, 2002, p. 13). It is a concept that pertains to both what an individual *can* do, and what they *choose* to do. Cultural anthropologist Gordon Mathews visualizes the notion of agency and sociocultural constraints as a cultural supermarket where just as one can pick and choose from a varied assortment of foods and goods at an ordinary supermarket, one can choose from an array of identities. However, like any supermarket's selection of groceries will be determined by trading deals, seasonal availability and the like, the selection of available identities will be determined by laws, social structures, and norms of the given society (Mathews as cited in Block, 2009). This illustrates how identities are heavily dependent on social context. Bucholtz and Hall note how identities are strongly attributed to situations, more so than to groups or individuals (as cited in Erdmann, 2015, p. 479). As the context for any given situation changes, e.g., someone joins or leaves the conversation, the participants' identities, and the expression of these may also change.

Furthermore, identities can be perceived as narratives – stories people tell themselves and others about who they are, as well as who they want to or feel they should be (Yuval-Davis, 2010, p. 266). The nature of narratives implies that they are told and re-told, hence identities are contingent and part of a continuous process that may alter them over time and space. This notion is relatively new in language research, where the direction of the understanding of identity has gone from viewing it as a somewhat fixed, static conceptualization of someone's self, to perceiving it as dynamic, ever-changing, and contextually dependent. Because the construction of identity narratives happens when individuals interact, the people present at any given time is an important sociocultural context to consider. An individual may express themselves according to the social norms implicitly imposed by those present. For example, if telling a story at a family gathering, a teenager might use swearwords for emphasis and effect when talking with cousins his own age but refrain from such language if telling the same story while a more conservative grandparent is present.

As previously stated, identity narratives emerge during interactions. Such interactions can take various forms: face to face, over the phone, through texts, or various online forums and platforms (Block, 2015, p. 327). Whilst an individual's identity is continually shaped by sociocultural and historical structures, they can in fact also shape the very same structures. Identity is a specific marker of how an individual defines themselves at any particular moment (Kirk & Okazawa-Rey, 2006, p. 8). Additionally, identity also refers to how individuals view their relationship with the world and how they perceive their future possibilities (Norton, 1997, p. 410)[1].

For the purpose of this paper, the term identity will be used in a broad sense to refer to an individual's dynamic positioning vis-à-vis social groups and labels, as well as to their fleeting perception of themselves. In other words, this paper is taking a post-structuralist approach to the identity term and viewing it as dependent on a number of factors, both internal (e.g., an individual's mood, their goal for an interaction) and external (e.g., setting, participants present).

2.1.2 Language as a means of expressing identity

Language usage is a central aspect of building and performing identities. In addition to being a communicative tool, language is a social phenomenon and a means through which identities are communicated and negotiated. Word choice, intonation and other linguistic elements can be indexical of the speakers' identity. Language choices can reveal clues about the speaker's age, gender, social status, ethnicity, and place of origin (De Fina, 2020). The speaker may refer to themselves or others in ways that can signify perceived group membership and positioning vis-à-vis their surroundings and other people.

In the post-structuralist linguistic discourse there has been an increasing appreciation for the performative nature of identity, and how "an individual can claim an identity in/through language, be inscribed within an identity through someone else's language use, and/or reject or alter the terms of their identifications" (Erdmann, 2015, p. 477). The understanding of identity as a narrative constructed through language performances

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[1] Bonny Norton previously published under Bonny Norton Peirce, and publications under both names are used in this paper. The in-text citations always reflect the name on the referenced publication, but the author wanted to make the reader aware that they refer to the same researcher.

theoretically gives the language user an opportunity to redefine their positioning to others and to society whenever they use language through speaking, writing, or signing.

Being proficient in more than one language increases the number of factors in play when it comes to an individual's linguistic expression of their identity, as they will have a wider language repertoire to choose from. Bilinguals can have preferred languages for certain activities or topics, for example when it comes to expressing thoughts and emotions. In their study into this topic, Bakić and Škifić (2017) found that the majority of the participants considered their L1 to be more emotional, and the only language they could sincerely say "I love you" (p. 49). Their study also demonstrated great individual differences when it comes to how bilinguals use their languages for thought processes such as counting, journaling, or writing shopping lists. Bakić and Škifić hypothesize that such variations can be explained in terms of differences when it comes to the language acquisition process; some situations are strongly associated with their L1, while their L2 has dominance under other conditions (p. 49). The process and means through which an individual developed their second language, as well as their age of acquisition, may also influence how they switch between languages depending on their circumstances and the task at hand.

2.2 Investment in and motivation for learning and practicing language

2.2.1 A brief overview of motivation

As with identity, motivation is another term so frequently used in day-to-day speech it can be challenging to grasp in a research context without an explicit definition for each given research paper. A basic definition of motivation that will be used in this thesis is forces acting on or within an individual to initiate goal-oriented behavior (Petri & Cofer, 2022). Within motivation research, a common division has been between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1994, p. 5; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015, p. 66). Intrinsically motivated behavior is performed because the individual feels joy or accomplishment from it, the activity is perceived as interesting and rewarding in and of itself (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015, p. 66). This internal, deep-rooted form of motivation is based on an individual's genuine interest in the activity, and entails curiosity and exploration of one's surroundings (Deci & Ryan, 1994, p. 5). Intrinsically motivated behavior is the prototype of self-determined behavior (Deci & Ryan, 1994, p. 5; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015, p. 67). In other words, it is behavior and actions

that a person does out of their own free will simply because they feel like or enjoy it, and not because they feel obliged, threatened, or forced to do it.

Extrinsic motivation differs from internal motivation in that the action itself is not reward enough to do it. The behavior exhibited is motivated by external factors rather than intrinsic factors (for example joy found in performing the activity, or satisfaction of one's curiosity through learning something new). Extrinsically motivated action is often understood as an action that is carried out in order to obtain some sort of reward, or alternatively to avoid receiving a form of punishment (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015, p. 67). It is thus not self-determined activity in the sense that the individual performs it on their own accord, but due to external forces acting on them. Examples include getting good grades, a promotion at work, avoiding reprimands for not fulfilling one's homework, or alternatively a reward upon the completion of them. Deci and Ryan (1994) outline a continuum with self-determined (i.e., intrinsically motivated) actions on one end, and controlled and/ or coerced (i.e. extrinsically motivated) actions on the other (p. 4). This demonstrates how motivation is not fixed but can fluctuate along a sliding scale. Furthermore, they describe processes of internalization and integration through which extrinsically motivated actions can become self-determined. Individuals can internalize external regulatory processes into internal regulatory processes, and adopt and integrate values that control such processes into one's self (pp. 5-6). Acting in accordance with social expectations (such as not telling lies) can start out as extrinsically motivated decisions – choices made in order to avoid sanctions associated with breaking societal norms (e.g., exclusion from communities). However, people's desires to feel socially competent and related to others can cause them to integrate regulations of behavior that was initially externally prompted (p. 6). In other words, they will align their intrinsic motivations with external expectations and sanctions and thus move from one side of the scale to the other.

2.2.2 Motivation and additional factors that affect language learning

When it comes to SLA research, Norton Peirce argues for "a conception of investment rather than motivation to capture the complex relationship of language learners to the target language and their sometimes ambivalent desire to speak it" (Norton Peirce, 1995, p. 9). She claims the term investment better captures an individuals' multifaceted desires and their

intricate connections to their immediate social surroundings. A learner can be highly motivated to learn a language, but not invested in specific language learning practices or situations. In other words, despite a desire to improve their language skills, individuals can refrain from practicing their target language due to external factors. Factors that may increase an individual's investment in an activity include their personal ambitions (e.g., needing English skills to achieve their dream job) and opportunities to increase their capitals (further elaborated below). Increased capitals give the individual new opportunities to claim agency to (re-)negotiate their identity positions. Factors that can decrease investment in learning opportunities include high stress situations and a high active affective filter. This can be due to the power differences and dynamics between those present.

As has been discussed above, social setting and circumstances play a crucial role when it comes to the development and expression of identities. Social surroundings are also a significant factor when it comes to language learning. Gardner believed that a learner's attitude towards speakers of the language they are trying to learn will affect their motivation for learning the language, and that these attitudes are affected by those around them (e.g., a parent's attitude towards a group of people affecting their child's attitude towards the same group) (Gardner, 1968, p. 141). When reviewing studies that measured, compared and analyzed students' motivations, language aptitude and language learning, students motivated by a desire to communicate with native speakers of the target language were found to be more motivated in that they worked harder, and were thus more successful in acquiring the target language (Gardner, 1968, p. 143). Norton Peirce argues that great group differences between the language learner group and the target language group can thwart language learner efforts. On the other side, minimal social distance between the groups will to a greater extent facilitate enhanced learning and the acculturation of the target language into the language learner group (1995, p. 11).

2.2.3 The concept of capitals and the power to impose reception

In his work related to power dynamics and power exchange, French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu developed an economic metaphor related to various capitals (economic, cultural, social, and symbolic). This concept of various capitals can be useful when analyzing an individual's motivational factors for various pursuits (e.g., language learning), the goal

ultimately being increasing one's capital in some way. Bourdieu argues that capital is accumulated labor and that it functions as an underlying guiding principle for the social world; the structure and distribution of the various forms of capitals represent constraints for social interaction and can determine an individual's chance of success in their pursuits (2011, p. 81). Where economic capital refers to a person's financial assets, cultural capital refers to their competencies, behavioral patterns (e.g., accents, mannerisms), and cultural assets (e.g., books, instruments). Social capital refers to their social connections, networks, and relationships – the higher the cultural capital of these connections, the greater the social capital one achieves through knowing them (Block, 2007, p. 866). Finally, there is symbolic capital, which according to Bourdieu relates to a person's reputation, fame, and prestige – something one will achieve through the possession of other forms of capital, when they are deemed legitimate by others. The extent of someone's capital can therefore not be determined without reference to the social context – an accent that is viewed as posh and a symbol of high cultural capital in one place might not hold the same status somewhere else. Block argues that the different forms of capitals and the constraints they represent can affect identity formation, as they may limit what options are available to the individual, like in the case of the cultural supermarket discussed above (Block, 2007, p. 866).

Bourdieu himself refers to language as a form of cultural capital; "[it] is not only an instrument of communication or even of knowledge, but also an instrument of power. A person speaks not only to be understood but also to be believed, obeyed, respected, distinguished" (1977, p. 648). As discussed above, capital value is appraised and determined in a socio-cultural context, and different languages may therefore yield different capital quantity depending on the place and participants present. Being competent in multiple languages can thus increase a person's cultural capital as well as their ability to assert power. The status of languages will be further discussed in the next section. In addition to being an instrument of power in and of itself, language is also crucial in conveying other aspects of a person's background that come into play when negotiating identities, such as age, gender, social status, religion, employment etc. Because language is often the vessel through which such information is expressed, a speaker's access, or lack of access, to linguistic resources can aid or hinder the negotiation process. If a brilliant Spanish doctor is presenting his newest research on a revolutionary surgery technique at an international conference in broken English, the audience may falsely dismiss his genius because he is not able to articulate his discovery in a convincing manner. Linguistic resources are thus a form of power that can play

an important role in the speaker's perception of the self and the other, based on whether their association with a certain community is deemed legitimate by others.

Both Norton Peirce and Bourdieu argue that when it comes to language competency it is necessary to examine more than just the speaker's mastery of grammar and vocabulary – one must also examine their right to speak and their power to impose reception (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 648; Norton Peirce, 1995, p. 18). Participants in a conversation will determine who they believe to be legitimate speakers (of a language) and thus who has the power to impose reception. This process can heavily influence an individual's identity; they will have to face the social position the label (legitimate/ illegitimate speaker) they have been implicitly assigned puts them in. Agency allows an individual to construct and negotiate their identity and to position themselves in a societal discourse (Lanza, 2012, p. 288). The speaker may accept or reject social roles attributed to them by others, or project themselves into other social roles they want to be associated with (e.g., a successful student, a legitimate speaker of English). Power relations are especially relevant in terms of identity construction, as they can encourage or discourage agency and reject or accept positions assumed by the individual within the discourse. Indeed, agency is related to power, "for agency is a major basis for claiming power" (Al Zidaljy, 2009, p. 179, as cited in Lanza, 2012). As previously discussed, an individual's capacity to act is to a great extent influenced and restricted by their surroundings and social structures, and hence their claim for power will be too.

2.3 Importance and status of languages

2.3.1 Importance of L1 and effects of second language acquisition (SLA)

First language, native language, mother tongue or L1 are terms used to refer to the language an individual was first introduced to, and brought up listening to, typically that of a parent or primary caregiver. An individual's primary language provides them with a personal, social, cultural, and linguistic identity (Hirst, u.d.). Participation in the culture of their own or their parents' country of origin, calls for proficiency in the native language, which may strengthen an individual's cultural identity and sense of belonging (Nasjonalt senter for flerspråklig utvikling, u.d., p. 3).

Mastery of one language means one is better equipped to develop skills in other languages, as the individual can apply learning principles from one language to another, for example the principle of guessing the meaning of a word from the context (Lightbown & Spada, 2013, p. 36; Rowland, 2014, pp. 49-50). Lambert believes bilingualism offers "a comparative, three-dimensional insight into language" that is rarely achievable by monolinguals (Lambert, 1981, p. 12). Indeed, bilingualism and proficiencies in multiple languages often comes with a greater sense of metalinguistic awareness, which can allow for discussions about languages and their usage (Lightbown & Spada, 2013, pp. 32-38).

In multicultural societies, one must learn the majority language in order to be able to take full advantage of the opportunities available, for example when it comes to education or employment (Fillmore, 1991, p. 323). The timing and circumstances under which a child comes into contact with a new, second language (L2) can greatly affect their language development, both in their L1 and L2 (Fillmore, 1991, p. 323). Simultaneous bilinguals refer to those that learn more than one language from early childhood, while sequential bilingualism refers to those who begin learning a second language at a later time (Lightbown & Spada, 2013, p. 30). There are misconceptions surrounding children's ability to learn and process multiple languages at the same time, however there is little no that supporting the claim that learning two languages significantly stalls their linguistic or overall cognitive development (Lightbown & Spada, 2013, pp. 32-33). Despite this, Lightbown and Spada report cases where bilingual children are mistakenly interpreted as lacking normal language development. It might just be that they lack the expected proficiency in the language used in school, while being perfectly age-appropriately proficient in their L1.

A phenomenon within language acquisition research known as subtractive bilingualism refers to the learning of a new language at the cost of one's primary language/ L1 (Lambert, 1981, p. 12). The loss of a language can negatively affect individual's self-esteem and may also influence their relationship with their family (Lambert, as cited in Lightbown & Spada, 2013, p. 32). Because language is closely related to the understanding, promotion, and participation in cultural traditions, connections to such practices and the communities that perform them may diminish with continued language attrition. Outreach specialist Natalie Rogers aptly observes: "When a language is lost, part of that culture is lost" (2020). This is true both at an individual and societal level. The loss of a language may mean the loss of a specific cultural connection for an individual. On a grander scale, if the last

speakers of a language die, distinctive cultural features and customs communicated through this language die with them.

2.3.2 Status of English in Norway

Following increased globalization and the subsequent widespread use of English as a lingua franca by non-native speakers, English is not only characterized by its native speakers, but also by those who speak it as a second or other language (Rindal, 2015, p. 179). Through mandatory English lessons in school, exposure to English-speaking media, and frequent travel, English has become a familiar language for Norwegians (Rindal, 2014, p. 8). In her 2010 study of 107 secondary school pupils from Oslo, Aalborg found "80% of the participants said they often use English words and expressions when they speak Norwegian (or other native tongue)" (Aalborg, 2010, p. 88).

As mentioned in the introduction, the Norwegian government values and encourages proficiency in multiple languages. The special status of English in Norway (i.e., being regarded as a second rather than foreign language (Vattøy, 2019, p. 30)) is reflected in the weighting of language subjects through the 10 years of mandatory schooling all children in Norway must go through. English language instruction begins in 1st grade. In 8th grade, most pupils will choose a third language (in addition to Norwegian and English).[2] An overview of the allotted number of hours per subject can be found in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Lesson distribution of language subjects

Subject/ grade	1-7 Elementary school	8-10 Lower secondary	Total for 10 years of mandatory schooling
Norwegian	1372	398	1770
English	366	222	588
Third language	-	222	222

Note. From Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (2021)

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[2] The following examples are based on pupils who have Norwegian as their first language. Students with another first language (e.g. Sami or another minority language) may have different competence aims and a different distribution in the number of lessons.

Starting English language instruction in 1st grade emphasizes the Norwegian government's assessment that English proficiency is an important and necessary skill for Norwegian pupils. The fact that the pupils have been taught English for seven years longer than their third language is reflected in the specific subject curriculums. At the end of lower secondary, after being taught English for ten years and a third language for three years, the pupils are naturally expected to be more proficient in English than their third language. This is reflected in the subject curriculums' assessment criteria and competence aims, as is exemplified by the two excerpts below.

Curriculum for foreign languages after year 10 (joint curriculum for all foreign languages)

The pupil is expected to be able to:

- use simple language structures, rules for pronunciation and spelling and the official alphabet or characters of the language to communicate in a way that is adapted to the situation

(Ministry of Education and Research, 2019a)

Curriculum in English after year 10

The pupil is expected to be able to:

- express oneself with fluency and coherence with a varied vocabulary and idiomatic expressions adapted to the purpose, recipient and situation

(Ministry of Education and Research, 2019b)

2.4 Immigrant culture and views on minority languages and multilingualism

Immigration to European countries has steadily risen in the past decades, and researchers argue that integration into multicultural societies will be one of the biggest challenges of the century (Deaux & Verkuyten, 2014, p. 1; Martiny et al., 2020, p. 312). Integration can be understood at a societal level (equal access to education systems and labor market) and a personal level (personal identification with one's country of residence).

Successful integration can benefit both the individual and the new host community. Fleischman and Phalet argue that the socio-political context in the receiving country is a major factor in determining the outcome of the integration processes. The social and political background and norms may affect whether an individual experiences identity compatibility or conflict between their minority culture and the receiving country's majority culture (Fleischmann & Phalet, 2016, p. 447). If an immigrant experiences a perceived threat towards their identity, or personal discrimination by the majority group, it may cause them to view the majority group more negatively. However, if they do not experience personal discrimination, it will not only cause them to view the majority group more favorably, but also for their ethnic and religious minority identities to be more aligned and positively associated with the country's majority – in other words, identity and group differences will be less significant (Fleischmann & Phalet, 2016, p. 460).

Of Norway's 5.4 million population, 18.9% (or 819 356 people) have an immigrant background, either from migrating to Norway themselves or being born in Norway with immigrant parents (Statistics Norway, 2022a, 2022b). National immigrant policy, labor market needs, and global crises have affected the flow of immigrants. Though the general attitude among Norwegians towards new immigrants is deemed to be generally positive, there are instances of social rejection of those with immigrant backgrounds, whether intentional or not. Lanza introduces a noteworthy example of a 2006 debate of the term "etnisk norsk" (ethnic Norwegian), where a representative for the state funded Language Council initially stated that the term "norsk" (Norwegian) should be reserved for people of Norwegian descent. Lanza also brings up the 2011 terrorist attacks, committed by a Norwegian born and bred man with anti-immigrant and anti-Islam ideologies, and argues that this attack will influence the discourse on immigration in the years to come.

More and more children are growing up in a culture that differs from that of their family's origin. Studies have shown that young immigrants in Norway feel a strong attachment to their new country, but also to multiple and dynamic cultural identifications (Erdmann, 2015, p. 477). The exposure to different cultures on a regular basis can lead to the internalization of more than one culture, and the identification with more than one ethnic group. "Immigrants often construct their multiple identities by identifying with their ethnic group of origin (i.e., *ethnic identity*, e.g., feeling Kurdish) as well as with the receiving society (i.e., *national identity*, e.g., feeling Norwegian […]) They can also identify with a

combination of both groups (i.e., *dual identity*, e.g., feeling Kurdish-Norwegian)" (Martiny et al., 2020, p. 313).

Early life experiences are primarily centered around the family and ethnic group, meaning that ethnic identity is typically more salient at this stage. This is especially true for immigrant children who are visually different from their peers from the receiving society due to children's need to label entities to understand which social categories are relevant in given contexts. Norway is a country with strong assimilation norms, and in a poll carried out by Statistics Norway, 49% of the Norwegian population completely or strongly agreed that "Immigrants should strive to become as similar to Norwegians as possible" (Statistics Norway 2018, as cited in Martiny et al., 2020, p. 213). Research has shown that strong assimilation pressure can be perceived by immigrants as a threat towards their ethnic identity, triggering the reassertion of this identity through increased identity endorsement. Dual identity endorsement is stronger than national identity enforcement in countries with a strong assimilation pressure (Martiny et al., 2020, p. 313). Studies on how social identities affect each other are inconclusive; some have shown that ethnic and national identity are unrelated, some that they have been negatively related (incompatible) and some that they have been positively related (compatible). Martiny list socio-political context, national history of immigration, climate towards immigrants in the receiving society (e.g., assimilation pressure) and perceived incompatibility of identities as context-specific variables that may explain these inconsistencies. "Incompatibility of two identities (for example a negative relationship between the Norwegian identity and the Kurdish identity) can arise from conflicts between cultural norms and values that are attached to each identity" (Martiny et al., 2020, p. 314).

Krulatz and Iversen conducted a study where they implemented and reviewed a multilingual teaching module, as well examining the participants' attitudes towards English, Norwegian, their home language, and being multilingual. The 14 participants were aged between 12 and 16 and were all students at the Center for Intensive Norwegian Language Learning in Oslo Schools. Their time at this institution varied from 2 weeks to 5 months with a 2.5-month average. When asked to rank the importance of Norwegian, English and their home language, home languages were perceived as the least important, as can be seen in the graph below.

Figure 1 Reported importance of home language (HL), Norwegian, English as a foreign language and multilingualism

Note. From Krulatz and Iversen (2020, p. 380). Scale used: very important (4), important (3), neither important nor unimportant (2), not very important (1), not important at all (0).

The graph demonstrates how the participants in Krulatz' and Iversen view English and Norwegian as equally important to know. Moreover, it shows that the participants view Norwegian and English as more important to know than their home language, at least in the setting the research is conducted in (a classroom in the Center for Intensive Norwegian Language Learning in Oslo Schools). It also demonstrates a favorable view of multilingualism.

2.5 Multilingual approaches to SLA

While SLA was dominated by a target language only approach for a long time, there is now a growing interest in multilingual approaches to second language learning that encourages the learners to use any linguistic resources available to them. This approach encourages teachers to use the learners' home languages as a resource with "benefits such as facilitated language learning, increased motivation, and self-confidence of the learners" (Krulatz & Iversen, 2020, p. 373). Schools' and teachers' attitudes towards learners' home languages can influence their identity construction as well as emotional and cognitive development.

Krulatz and Iversen found that a multilingual teaching module where students were to utilize Norwegian, English and their home language when creating a text about themselves had positively impacted the students' understanding of language as well as the relationships between the languages they knew. Additionally, it sparked the students' interest in their peers' home languages (Krulatz & Iversen, 2020, p. 383). When participants were asked what they perceived the benefits of being multilingual to be, they cited among other increased opportunities to communicate with other people and to obtain information, improved self-confidence, and being able to translate between languages and to learn how different languages work. The participants also noted some difficulties with multilingualism, most notably being unable to sufficiently compartmentalize the three languages in their mind, resulting in forgetting words and unintentionally mixing languages. They also reported that receiving help with developing their language skills could be a challenge due to teachers lacking proficiency in some of their languages (Krulatz & Iversen, 2020, p. 382). Parents may be able to help with one language but not others, and if they are not competent in the language used for teaching purposes, then the instruction the children receive at school may not be accessible to them.

Themes of pride and shame related to multilingualism also emerged from Krulatz and Iversen's study. Students were found to be proud of being proficient in different languages and being able to communicate in their home language, but they also reported shame related to being forced to speak their home language, or not being able to speak it. Shame related to lacking home language proficiency is heavily related to family expectations (Krulatz & Iversen, 2020, pp. 382-383). Such expectations of learning, maintaining and continually practicing one's home language can also be linked to the greater immigrant discourse.

3. Methodology

3.1 Aim of study

The aim of this study is to examine the reciprocal relationship between identity and language learning and to investigate which factors determine whether participants are motivated for and invested in improving their English skills. Furthermore, the study will look at how participation in English lessons and increased English capabilities affect the participants' identity, sense of self and language usage. A deeper understanding of which factors affect a learner's motivation for and investment in English language learning can aid teachers in more successfully tailoring their teaching methods to students' individual needs. This will allow for more effective language lessons where the students experience the content as more relevant as it will be based on their own interests, ambitions and learning preferences.

Students that have immigrated to Norway and that mainly speak a language other than Norwegian or English at home were eligible for participation in the study. An additional criterion for participation was that the participant was receiving English lessons at a high school or through an adult education program at the time of the study. The reason for the selection of these criteria is that research on immigrant students' experiences with and motivations for English language learning in a Norwegian school context is limited. Teachers are bound to encounter immigrant students with home languages other than Norwegian or English, and thus will require knowledge about how they can best accommodate them.

3.2 Research method

A qualitative approach was chosen to investigate these topics, as identity research requires detailed accounts that are difficult to achieve through quantitative methods. A survey would restrict participants' opportunity to explain in depth as well as the researcher's opportunity to ask follow-up questions. Individual interviews were determined to be a method that would allow for the participants to tell their narratives and speak freely about the relevant topics. Additionally, interviews allowed for the interviewer to prompt the informants to elaborate or give examples of relevant experiences.

3.2.1 Narratives as a research method

Narratives are personal stories where an individual shares their experiences, assessments and feelings (Golden et al., 2021, p. 133). Because the practice of narration includes the negotiation of identity, narratives are often a preferred method when it comes to identity research, and linguist Aneta Pavlenko argues that:

> L2 learning stories, and in particular language learning memoirs, are unique and rich sources of information about the relationship between language and identity in second language learning and socialization. It is possible that only personal narratives can provide a glimpse into areas so private, personal, and intimate […]

(Pavlenko, 2001, p. 167)

Speaker narratives can identify a speaker as a member of a community and shed light on how speakers use their agency to negotiate and navigate social roles and membership in various groups (Lanza, 2012, pp. 287-289). In other words, narratives can be used to gain insights needed to research individuals' understanding of themselves, their connections to their shifting surroundings, and their reasoning behind actions they choose to take in any given situation. The goal with choosing a narrative approach for this research project was to create an opportunity for the informants to openly share their language learning experiences, in order to analyze these to shed light on the research questions presented in the introduction.

The nature of narratives in interviews must be considered when using them as a basis for research. One must also consider the significance of the role of the interviewer. Though an interviewer's objective is to remain neutral, true neutrality is unachievable as any question or reaction can be interpreted differently by different people. Moreover, interviewees are aware that they are being interviewed and recorded and may tailor their responses to their perception of the researcher's expectations. Therefore, "methodologies of analysis cannot fail to take into account the way narratives shape and are shaped by the different contexts in which they are embedded" (De Fina, 2009, p. 237, as cited in Lanza, 2012, p. 301). Reactions and contributions from the researcher may contribute to affirming and empowering the participant's identity construction. All participants in an interview must be seen as involved in the claiming or ratifying of agency in their interactions. Other contexts may have produced a different picture. Narratives constitute an important research method for the study of identity negotiation and agency, but one must remember to take the interactional dynamics into account.

In addition, narratives are by nature subjective, and the opinions they convey are impossible to quantify and measure. When it comes to narratives, research reliability refers not to the achievement of "statistically consistent outcomes on an elicitation instrument, but concerns the dependability and strength of analysis of the data" (Lantolf and Thorne as cited in Golden et al., 2021, p. 135). In other words, it is not what is said in itself that determines whether narratives are reliable sources, it is how the researcher proceeds with the analysis of what is said. The authentic and honest presentation of the data and the analysis are imperative for the reliability of narrative based research (Golden et al., 2021, p. 135). Measures have therefore been taken to ensure that the participants responses are rendered as accurately as possible.

3.3 Recruitment process and participants

Through personal connections with teachers in Southern Norway, I was able to present the project in a total of four different English classes at high school and adult education level. Due to the covid-19 restrictions, two presentations had to be conducted digitally via Zoom. The other two were conducted in person. Interested candidates were given an information and consent form (appendix A) along with a background questionnaire (appendix B) to ensure they were eligible for participation. Both forms were available in both Norwegian and English and the students were instructed to choose the language they felt the most comfortable with. A total of 13 students initially filled out the consent form and background questionnaire. Out of these, five responded to the interview invitations that were sent out later. The interviews with these five students make up the data material for this thesis. The participants who completed the interview were rewarded with two scratch card lottery tickets each. An overview of the five students and a brief description of their background can be found in Table 2 below. The names used have been changed to protect the identity of the participants.

Table 2 Participant overview

	Maya	David	Amir	Amina	Regina
Age	25	41	16	17	18
Gender	Female	Male	Male	Female	Female
Country of birth	Philippines	Romania	Afghanistan	Somalia	Lithuania
Age at immigration	19 y/o	33 y/o	12-13 y/o	10 y/o	8 y/o
School	Adult education	Adult education	Upper secondary – intro class	Upper secondary	Upper secondary
Number of years in Norway	6	8	3	7	10
Reason for immigration	Marriage, pregnant	Work	Asylum seeker	Family reunion (father had moved to Norway to work a couple of years prior)	Family reunion (father had moved to Norway to work a couple of years prior)
Languages	Bisaya, Tagalog, English, Norwegian	Romanian, Italian, Spanish, French, Norwegian, English	Pashto, Dari, Norwegian, English	Somali, English, Norwegian	Lithuanian, English, Norwegian, Russian, Spanish

3.4 Interviews

The interviews lasted an average of 1 hour and 8 minutes. They were all conducted in person at various publicly available conference rooms. The participants were given the choice of conducting the interview in Norwegian or English and urged to choose the one they felt the most comfortable with. All participants chose to do the interview in Norwegian. The interviews followed a semi-structured format, as is common in narrative case studies (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018, p. 121). Initial questions were based on a pre-made interview guide (appendix C) with room for follow-up questions and discussions around topics the participants brought up. All interviews began with an oral repetition of the background information the participants had provided, including the languages they had reported knowing. The participants were then asked to rank each language they had listed on a scale from 1-5, 1 being very poor skills and 5 being native level. An overview of their rankings is presented in Table 4 in the results section.

3.5 Processing of data

All interviews were recorded and later transcribed. Transcribed interviews were organized using the software NVivo, which allows for thematical and categorical sorting of the participants' responses. An overview of the different categories used for a rough sorting of the data material can be seen in Table 3 below.

Table 3 Categorical sorting of data

Category	Files	References	Category	Files	References
Agency	5	27	How can teachers motivate	4	7
Code-switching	4	8	Motivations + advantages of learning English	5	67
English in COB	5	34			
English hindering other language learning	4	8			
			Norwegian language	5	40
English usage - places, contexts, etc.	5	64	Pride	4	23
			Religion	1	1
Family and English	4	33	Social labels	4	18
Feelings towards L1	5	26	Social expectations	4	12
			Speaking for others	5	10
Hesitance towards using English	5	19	Stereotypes	5	13
			Traveling	5	17
Home language	5	51	Thoughts on English	5	47
Identity – country of birth	5	52			
			Thoughts on multilingualism + multiculturalism	5	37
Identity - Norway	5	54			
Immigrating to Norway	5	61			
			Unmotivating factors	4	6
Language learning	4	54			
Language skills	5	71	Youth culture + online	5	28
Learning and practicing English	5	80			

Note. Files refers to the five transcribed interview files, and the numbers reflect how many of these each category was referenced in. The number of references refers to the total amount of references for each category, across interview files.

All direct quotations were originally given in Norwegian and have been translated by me. Some of the informants code-switched between Norwegian and English when talking. Instances of speech where the informant originally used English words, intonations, or pronunciation have been indicated in italics where they appear in the results section. In direct

quotations, … is used to indicate a pause in the speaker's narrative, while […] is used to indicate that some of what was said has been omitted for the purpose of clarity and consistency. Capital letters are used to indicate heavy emphasis and exaggeration from the speaker on the words that are capitalized.

3.6 Ethical considerations

This study was approved by the Norwegian Center for Research Data, and the collection and processing of the data material was assessed to be in accordance with privacy regulations. The participants were informed of the purpose and procedure of the study several times, first during the initial recruitment presentation in their class, then through the written information and consent paper and finally at the beginning of the interview session, prior to any questions. All participants were informed that participation was voluntary, that they had the right to withdraw at any point, and that to withdraw would not affect their relationship with their teacher. Written consent for the collection and processing of audio material and background information was collected from each informant. Each participant was assigned a code to store and organize the collected data. This code was kept separate from identifying information to ensure anonymity. Care has been taken to ensure that information can never be traced back to an individual participant – names of informants have been changed, and background information has been generalized as much as possible without interfering with the study's field of interest.

4. Results

This section has been thematically structured into central themes that emerged during the interviews. The first subsection lists the participants' assessments of their own language skills, and outlines how they learned the various languages. 4.2 describes how the participants came to learn English. Subsection 4.3 covers participant views on the importance and advantages of knowing English, their personal motivations for learning it, and prioritizations they have made when it comes to language learning. In 4.4, participant opinions on multilingualism and multiculturalism are presented. Subsection 4.5 and 4.6 are devoted to participant comments related to youth culture and the Norwegian society respectively. Subsection 4.8 relates to instances where the participants reported using their linguistic competences to speak on behalf of others. Finally, subsection 4. relates to social labels, expectations and stereotypes the informants reported having faced.

4.1 Language skills and language learning

All participants were asked to rank their competences in each of the languages they reported knowing on a scale of 1-5, where 5 indicates native level and 1 a very basic level. The results of these rankings can be seen in Table 4 below. These rankings were based solely on the informants' own understanding of their level, no material with external assessments of their language levels were collected.

Table 4 Participants' self-reported language skills

Amir	Amina	David	Maya	Regina
Pashto: 5	Somali: 3	Romanian: 5	Tagalog: 5	Lithuanian: 5
Dari: 3	Norwegian: 4	Italian: 3,5	Bisaya: 5	Norwegian: 5
Norwegian: 4	English: 3	Spanish: 4,5	Norwegian: 3	Russian: 1
English: 2		Norwegian: 4,5	English: 4	Spanish: 2
		French: 3		English: 4,5
		English: 4,5		

4.1.1 Amir

Amir learnt his native Pashto from his family in Afghanistan: "when you are born into a family that speaks Pashto … or … then you have to learn Pashto. And when they are

talking, kids learn". Though Dari and Pashto make up the official languages of Afghanistan, Amir did not learn any Dari before becoming friends with Dari-speaking Afghani immigrants after his arrival in Norway: "Now I know like 60-70%. I can understand completely and speak a little, can't speak perfectly", he says. His first encounters with Norwegian language learning were through the adults working at the asylum reception center he stayed at during his first months in Norway, as schools were closed during the summer. After schools started back up again, Amir was placed in a NOA-class (Norsk som andrespråk, Norwegian as a second language), and found the teachers there very helpful. He notes the many hours he spent doing homework after school to practice and learn Norwegian: "I have practiced very hard. Because I live in Norway and if you don't know Norwegian it is a problem". As for his English language journey, there were next to no English influences through media or other channels in the village he grew up in – the Taliban would break any TVs they came across because they were illegal. Later, the village experienced some contact with the English language through English speaking military personnel that were stationed or passed through the area. He did not learn any English prior to his arrival in Norway at the age of 13.

4.1.2 Amina

Amina grew up learning Somali from her family, but after immigrating at a young age and having lived almost half her life in Norway, she feels like she does not fully master her native language:

> After a while when you go to a Norwegian school and have Norwegian friends and are around Norwegian society most of the time, you forget your language little by little. So I mix Norwegian language and Somali a lot, so it's like … I don't know any of those languages perfectly, I don't know Norwegian 100%, I don't know Somali 100% either, so it's like a little mixed …

By her own account, she is better at Norwegian than Somali, as stated in Table 4 but she has received feedback from teachers that her Norwegian was not up to par:

> I had a presentation and the teacher told me 'Your Norwegian is not that good, but I can help you'. And the saddest part was that Norwegian was the only language I like knew well, and I could have full sentences without stopping or without thinking a hundred times what the words are. So Norwegian was my first language, and that she

said that I thought 'what languages do I know, if I like don't know Norwegian, do I really know any languages?'

Somali does however remain the language she communicates with her mother in, as her mother has not learned that much Norwegian. Amina did not receive any English lessons before arriving in Norway. Though she arrived and started at a Norwegian elementary school when she was 10 years old, she did not begin having English lessons until she started lower secondary at age 13. This was done in order to allow her to focus solely on learning Norwegian as fast as possible. Instead of choosing a third language in 8th grade, Amina was encouraged to choose "Engelsk fordypning" (English specialization), an option for those who do not wish to pursue a third language. The English specialization subject has its own curriculum and assessment that is independent from the ordinary English subject. Nevertheless, it provides the students with double the number of English lessons in lower secondary, as can be seen from Table 1.

4.1.3 David

David grew up learning Romanian from his family, and this remains the only language he communicates with his parents in as they do not speak any other language (possibly a little Russian, but they have most likely forgotten it, according to David). He began learning both English and French in school. While he continued having regular English lessons throughout his secondary and tertiary education, he regrets forgetting some of his French due to lack of continued practice; "French, I forget to talk but I know a lot […] it was some years ago, but if someone speaks French, I understand. But I forgot those verbs, tenses, *past tense …*". David has lived and worked in several countries prior moving to Norway 8 years before the interviews were conducted. His goal has always been to learn the language of the country he has been living in, which is how he came to learn Italian and Spanish. He found it relatively easy to pick up and learn these languages through his work in the construction industry and commented on how Italian and Spanish are linguistically close to Romanian: "Romanian is in Latin language group, together with French, Italian and Spanish. […] it is easy for us to learn Italian and Spanish because it is so similar. […] I don't struggle to learn, because there are a lot of common words, you know?" Upon arrival in Norway, he attended a Norwegian language course totaling approximately 9 months. He noted how learning Norwegian was very different from learning Spanish and Italian:

Norwegian was something completely different. I came to Norway, I stayed with a friend. Then she would get visitors often and I heard the language, I thought, I will never learn Norwegian. Sounded so difficult. And then … I had to attend Norwegian course, I couldn't learn from her or TV, not like Spanish or Italian. Never been to a course in Italy or Spain, just like at work or on TV, but here I have to …

David says that he puts Norwegian subtitles on English movies in the hopes of expanding his vocabulary by hearing the English word and reading the Norwegian word and then comparing to ensure he has the correct understanding.

4.1.4 Maya

When asked about what languages she grew up hearing in the Philippines, Maya explains that there are many different languages and dialects in the Philippines, but that she learned two – Bisaya and Tagalog, and that Bisaya is her native language spoken in the area where she grew up. Maya describes Tagalog as the "main language" of the Philippines, and said she learned it in her Filipino lessons at school. When she was young, she encountered English both at school and through her aunts' English-speaking husbands that had married into the family. English was the only language allowed in the classroom – the pupils were not allowed to speak their native languages: "Private school you have to pay a lot. So I was sent there and it was very strict, because if we were to talk Filipino inside the classroom, we had to pay money. Every word we speak in *vernacular* in a way." Upon arrival in Norway, Maya attended a Norwegian language course for three months before having to quit as she had her baby and had to stay home with the child due to her then-partner's work schedule. She would listen to instructional CDs and have posters with words on them that she would practice using in sentences. Per a suggestion of a family friend, she would also watch old episodes of the Norwegian comedy series "Fleksnes":

He is very easy, you understand it. When he like … body language ... eh … then suddenly you're laughing without understanding it, but you know exactly what he means, but you just don't know the language. […] I wasn't very patient, at first, because I didn't understand anything, I didn't think it was any fun, but I just go for it and go for it and just watch it, in a way, just like have fun. And suddenly one day – 'I

got it! I got it!' I was so proud of myself because I totally understood what he was saying.

Upon arrival in Norway, Maya and her husband would communicate in English as it was their only shared language, but her husband would soon instate a no-English rule at home to encourage her to learn Norwegian quickly by practicing every day. However, for important messages or warnings, Maya would switch to English: "then I say it in English so I say it correctly, so there won't be misunderstandings and big consequences out of the language barrier."

4.1.5 Regina

Regina grew up with her family in Lithuania and thus grew up learning Lithuanian as her native language. Because she had family living in England and cousins who did not speak Lithuanian all that well, she also begun learning some English at around the age of five. In the Lithuanian school system, pupils will choose a second language to learn. Russian used to be mandatory but is now an option same as English, which is becoming increasingly popular. Regina had moved to Norway by the time she was required to select her second language. She did however attend Lithuanian 2nd grade online during her first year in Norway, in combination with Norwegian elementary school. Her move to Norway influenced her decision when it came to choosing her second language: "I chose not to take Russian, because I was living here". Though she did not take any Russian classes, she was still exposed to some Russian both at home and at school while still living in Lithuania. Both of her parents are fluent in Russian. She is currently able to understand a little Russian but cannot produce any herself.

When reflecting on the process of learning Norwegian, Regina says she was initially placed in a "Velkomstklasse" (welcome class/ introductory class for non-Norwegian speaking pupils) when she arrived at age 8. She remembers that they had a Lithuanian speaking teacher who would translate and help them. Regina estimates that the process of learning Norwegian took about 4 months for her to be sufficient enough to join an ordinary elementary school class.

Upon starting 8th grade after some 5 years in Norway, she chose Spanish as her third language. She still remembers quite a bit despite not continuing with Spanish after 10th grade.

She believes herself to be more competent in Spanish than in Russian, as can be observed in Table 4, saying "I can at least speak a little bit of Spanish". In addition to traditional Spanish classes in school, Regina claims she learnt a fair amount of Spanish from watching poorly dubbed soap operas:

Regina: "I used to watch those [Spanish speaking] soaps, ha-ha. Or, they were dubbed to Lithuanian, but they were poorly dubbed, so I'd hear the Spanish word first, before I heard the Lithuanian"

Interviewer: "Oh, so the Spanish wasn't taken out, they had just added Lithuanian on top?"

Regina: "Yeah, yeah, it was just put on top, and then I understood more and more of what they were talking about before it was dubbed over, and then it was a little easier at school too, because I had watched so much of these series."

4.2 Learning and using English

As it was one of the requirements for participation, all informants reported using English in a classroom setting through their school. Regina and Amina were enrolled in ordinary high school programs. David and Maya were enrolled in an adult high school education program. Amir was part of a high school introduction class for newly arrived students. As part of their schooling, all informants had several English lessons per week.

All participants either had part time jobs or had practical work placements through their school program. All of them reported having been in situations where English was used at work. Regina, Amina, Amir, and Maya all work in different kinds of stores where they have encountered customers that did not speak Norwegian and instead communicated through English. Regina, Amina, and Maya all reported feeling comfortable when it comes to communicating with customers in English. Amir said that once when a customer came and asked about a product in English, he went to go get his manager as he did not understand what the customer was asking. David worked part time in the offshore oil industry and reported speaking English with colleagues from other countries that did not speak Norwegian.

All participants reported consuming English media, primarily through movies, TV-series, and online social networking sites. Amir reports that watching movies with subtitles has been an essential part of his English language development. Amina too has learnt English through movies and series. She says that when she moved to Norway at age 10, she felt like she did not quite fit in with the other children and that this made her withdraw and watch a lot of movies – first children's movies, then youtube videos and then Netflix and other streaming services etc. She claims her English competences further developed when she discovered and became a fan of a K-pop band whilst in lower secondary school. All the song lyrics were in Korean, so Amina would find English translations and watch interviews where the band spoke in their native Korean with English subtitles. The international fan base also uses English to communicate and discuss the band, an activity she reported participating in. A shared like for Korean music also led her to become friends with two girls at her own school, who had both also immigrated to Norway. Though all three of them understand Norwegian, they use English as their primary language of communication. Amina says this is because her friends feel their English is better than their Norwegian, and that they also just prefer the English language to Norwegian. When asked if speaking English with her friends had helped her English she replied: "Yes, it has helped me with my oral [skills] and written [skills] I'm trying to improve. And it made me more comfortable that I could speak English, without feeling embarrassed or anything". In addition to speaking English with immigrants from other countries, Amina also uses English to communicate with other Somalians around the world: They are like me. A Somali teenager whose language is not great, so we communicate in English. And then we like relate to our problems, growing up on a new culture and fitting in and stuff". Amina's interest in Korean music sparked an interest in Korean drama series, where she would read the English subtitles. She reported improving her English skills through reading subtitles and says this was also reflected in her grades.

Maya too reported watching a Korean animated series with English subtitles. When watching English speaking series and movies she would put on Norwegian subtitles, saying that if she does not understand an English word, perhaps she will know the Norwegian one. Amir reported that he primarily watches movies in his native Pashto but will still frequently watch both Norwegian and English-speaking movies. For English-speaking movies, he will add Norwegian subtitles, saying "you learn a lot from it … movies and stuff". David also watches English speaking movies with Norwegian subtitles, saying it helped him expand his

Norwegian vocabulary: "because you hear English, and then you look at the screen, the text, and you can compare".

Regina reported that English has become a part of her everyday life and that she sometimes speaks it with her Norwegian boyfriend "like, just for fun? It's become so normal", she says. While she does not report communicating with any English speakers online, she says that everything she watches and reads is in English. She also has her phone set to English, saying "I've always just liked English, in a way?".

4.3 The importance, advantages, and motivations for learning English

All participants agree that English is a language that can provide them with opportunities not available to them through their L1, especially when it comes to education and employment opportunities, and also communication with people from other countries and cultures. Regina says that English is important to keep up to date with news and happenings from around the world, and that understanding English allows one to skip a translation and obtain the news straight from the source.

For Maya, learning English was a crucial part of her early school years as all of the other subjects at her school in the Philippines were taught in English. Hence, she reported a need for English in order to express her competences and understanding of other subjects. Maya reported that she prioritized teaching her son (born in Norway) English over her own L1 (Bisaya and Tagalog) because she believed English would be of more use to him: "It is very important, in case he ends up in another country when he grows up because *language barrier* … it is very difficult […] So I want him to learn English to survive, in a way". Thus, she made the choice not to speak her own native languages at home, as she believed that focusing on too many languages from the beginning would be confusing:

> […] I did start with it [speaking Bisaya], but then I quit because he was like 'what do you mean?' I was just like … speaking native Filipino languages is too cumbersome. But he does unfortunately not understand anything Filipino, because I don't really use it, because I feel like I need to learn Norwegian, I prioritize speaking Norwegian or English.

She is however planning on getting him an online tutor for Bisaya and Tagalog when he gets older. Maya reported that her son watches content in English on YouTube and in Norwegian on Netflix. According to her he speaks Norwegian and some English but understands a lot more English than what he is able to speak.

When asked why knowing English is important, Amir said "it's because … it's like the national language of the whole world in a way". He said he wanted to move to England when he got older in order to really learn the language. He reasoned that if he was to move to England, he would have to learn their culture and way of life, and that knowing the language was an essential part in order to achieve this: "If I don't know English, then I can't do anything. Because I must learn … the language is very important if you want to find opportunities and other things. So it is that you must learn the language first". Amir expressed a desire to travel and see the world and learn about different cultures. Again, he stressed the importance of being able to communicate in order to achieve insight into other ways of life, and that in foreign countries English would be a useful tool for this.

4.4 Multilingualism and multiculturalism

Amina reported an ambivalent feeling towards being multilingual. While she viewed knowing multiple languages as a resource that allowed for communication and understanding of others, she also stated that when it comes to being multilingual, "you don't know one language. Like, you know a little bit of everything, there isn't one language you know perfectly". She sympathized heavily with those trying to learn a new language, saying she could see her younger self in them.

Amir said that before he left Afghanistan his father said to him "if you know one language you are one person. If you know two languages, you are two persons".

Regina reported frequently code-switching between Lithuanian, Norwegian and English, especially when trying to explain something and forgetting the word in the given language. When speaking Norwegian and a word escapes her, she says she is most likely to switch to Lithuanian but will switch to English if the person she is talking with does not understand Lithuanian or she does not know the Lithuanian word for it: "It's quite nice if it's a difficult word or something, like, maybe I'll understand it in one language but not really in another".

All participants were asked about their perception of the status of English in their home country. Amir reported that knowing English in Afghanistan would be beneficial when it comes to good job opportunities, for example starting a school and teaching kids English.

4.4.1 Speaking for others

Several participants reported having used their linguistic competence to communicate on behalf of their parents, who either did not understand or speak the given languages as well as their children. Regina reported communicating with the locals in Spanish and English on behalf of her parents when her family vacationed in Spain. She goes on to explaining that being able to communicate with and on behalf of her parents and others who cannot communicate in a given language is an important motivational factor for her. She gives an example of someone struggling to make themselves understood on a bus. If they do not speak the same language as the driver, but a language she understands, being able to step in and "fix it" (her words) feels good.

When immigrating to Norway, Amina's older brother was in his late teens and had learned English in school in Somalia. Amina's father was already living in Norway and knew some Norwegian, but because he was often away at work her brother would help their mother and siblings with shopping, transportation and getting around by using his English. As she grew older and learned Norwegian, Amina would also come to help her mother with bureaucratic and everyday tasks, like going to the doctor, buying and returning things and interpreting letters. She also said she would interpret things in English for her parents, especially online – looking up something, social media, steering clear of fake ads and scams, etc. When it comes to translating and helping her parents communicate, Amina said: "I don't feel like I'm special … I'm like every immigrant child, I'm an interpreter for my parents".

4.5 Youth culture

The younger participants emphasize that English is an important part of youth culture. When asked if knowing English was important for her as a teenager, Regina replied:

Yes, absolutely. Especially since we're living in this time of social media. It's like … I speak English with several of my friends and stuff. Because … I know … I just feel

knowing English has become really like cool. And knowing English and … it's like 'oh, who doesn't know English?' like, you get that thought.

When asked if knowing English is important for keeping up with the times Regina answered: "Yes, I feel like it's a big part of being young, in Norway. Knowing English and understanding it."

4.6 Norwegian society

When asked about how she viewed the Norwegian society, Amina replied: "the Norwegian society is like a second home to me. And it's a society that you … I don't know how to describe it really. It's a nice place, but at the end of the day you have to go home, you know?". She reported feeling more Somalian than Norwegian saying she felt Somali, but that she is part of the Norwegian society and has adopted some of what she considers to be typical Norwegian mannerisms such as being quiet and introverted, whereas she views Somalians as loud and outgoing.

While Amina was in the introductory class she was placed in immediately after her arrival in Norway, she had an unpleasant encounter with some boys her own age, who called her "brunost" (brown cheese). This experience led her to reflect on her own positioning in the Norwegian society:

> So that was when I understood I was different from other people, and after a while I saw that I was different when I used the hijab, and the color of my skin, and no matter how … no matter how much Norwegian I learn and how good my Norwegian is, I will never be seen as if I'm from here, you know? So after I grew up you learn after a while that how long you've lived here, or how good your Norwegian is, that doesn't say anything. Because you will never be seen as a Norwegian. Like … this will never be your home, completely. […] You're just new, you know. So you're always like … an *alien* … when people see you. So that's what you understand after a while when you grow up, even though you have more memories here and know Norwegian better than your own mother tongue. You feel like … you're never welcome, by anyone.

This demonstrates Amina's ambivalent feelings towards Norwegian society and her place in it.

4.7 Social expectations, labels, and stereotypes

4.7.1 Parental expectations

All participants were asked if they believed it was important for their parents both that they learned English, and that they maintained their L1s. Amir, who had not had any contact with his parents since he left Afghanistan three years ago, said he did not think it was important for his parents that he learned English, because they themselves had not gone to school to learn it. Maya reported that her parents understood and respected her decision to prioritize teaching her son English over Tagalog and Bisaya, a testament to their opinion of English as an important language and valuable resource. Amina puts her parents' thoughts on English and Somali like this:

> They want me to be good at English, but [sic.] they know it is an international language. But they also want me to keep Somali very *close*, because … it is the only language that I feel so comfortable, it feels like home. And … I feel like … I'm forgetting my culture, and I'm forgetting everything if I forget the language. And Somali is a very difficult language so if you forget it is difficult to learn again. So … and I don't want to disappoint them.

Her parents' expectations are obviously of great importance to Amina, especially when it comes to maintaining a connection with her cultural heritage through her native language.

4.7.2 The status of English in country of birth

Maya describes the status of English in the Philippines as quite high, saying English proficiency can greatly improve one's chances of employment. A very basic English competence is quite common, but more advanced skills are usually found among those that have completed high school and higher education. When asked if knowing English triggered a sense of pride, Maya replied: "Not like pride, but I have worked for it so it's okay to be proud, but it's not like you go "I KNOW ENGLISH!" But I am proud that I did it so I can communicate and understand."

4.7.3 Stereotypes and social roles

Several participants reported having been stereotyped based on their status as immigrants and their country of origin. Maya reported facing the stereotype of being a gold digger (i.e. someone who marries for money, not for love) based on her Asian background. She strongly disagrees with this labeling, saying she works hard for her money. When asked if she does anything to actively distance herself from this stereotype, she says she tries to "do the opposite" of what is typically expected of a gold digger, which for her means working and earning her own money and being independent. When challenged with how learning English has played a part in working against this stereotype she says "Yes […] what can I say … […] it reflects who you are, and like, I don't want to be cheap. I want to learn […] to be of more value like to myself". She goes on to explain that she has no need to confront or change the minds of those who make assumptions about her but will instead work on herself quietly to prove them wrong.

David too has experienced prejudice towards his country of birth. His impression is that when people learn that he is from Romania their immediate associations are "poor, gypsy, […] begging". Many would also ask questions such as "'Are you a gypsy?' […] 'in Romania, do you have color TV and hot water showers?'". He says he feels both uncomfortable, humiliated, and frustrated when asked such questions. One particular experience has left a lasting impression:

> One time I was at an interview at a job […] And I came in there in the office. And I greet him and then first question 'where are you from?', 'from Romania'. And he asked me 'where is your cup?' You get it? My cup? As beggar. I didn't know how to react.

David reported frustration over being grouped together and associated with people that steal and beg:

> You come here, learn the language […] even though you work, you pay taxes, you do everything legal when you go to the store, buy and never steal […] you haven't done anything wrong. Despite that, you get … you see that they are not that fond of people from Romania.

When asked if he ever tried to reply and advocate for himself or his country, he said: "First year maybe. […] but every day same questions. […] I tried to explain but afterwards I just gave up […] those that know, they know". David believes a central cause of much of the prejudice he is facing is based on ignorance and a lack of knowledge.

Regina reported that she has encountered several people who will base their perception of an entire culture and ethnic group based on their experiences with one individual from a given country: "if they have experienced something bad with someone from another culture than here in Norway, they are very quick to judge people, like … as a whole, the whole culture". She believes this type of generalization applies to all individuals that come from a different country. Regina has also faced prejudice and stereotyping based specifically on her native country of Lithuania and its neighbors: "I am always placed in the same bucket, in a way, with all the Lithuanians and Poles and all that and just … 'oh, will you be a cleaning lady when you grow up' and will you be a painter when you grow up'. Regina speaks Norwegian without an accent and is White. Up until she reveals her name, which is distinctively non-Norwegian, she says people assume that she is Norwegian: "but as soon as it becomes clear that I am like … from another country, it's like 'oh, okay'". When asked what expectations people have of her and other Lithuanians, she replies that common biases are that Lithuanians are prone to stealing, and that they have immigrated to Norway to receive government hand-outs.

5. Discussion

The following section will discuss the results presented in section 4 in light of the previous research presented in section 2. Additionally, this section will compare and contrast the participants' reported experiences and perspectives in order to deduce emerging trends when it comes to ESOL learners' experiences with English language learning in a Norwegian school context. The themes chosen for discussion were selected because they emerged in multiple interviews, and because they are significant in terms of analyzing the research questions presented in section 1. These questions are directly addressed at the end of this section.

5.1 Language proficiency

What it means to know a language appears to be a highly individual question – perceived proficiency is subjective. An individual's assessment of their proficiency in a second language might not coincide with an official evaluation of their capabilities. The different assessments may vary their emphasis on the importance of a wide vocabulary and mastery of grammar and syntax. This raises the question of whether native-like fluency is a reasonable approach to assess language skills. Another approach to proficiency evaluation is the ability to communicate; if the message is conveyed, what does it matter if the words were in the wrong order and the incorrect verb tense was used. For Regina, being able to produce language is an important distinction of what it means to know a language. The fact that she can speak a little Spanish, but only understand and not be able to produce any Russian is why she rated and positioned herself as more proficient in Spanish than in Russian.

Amina said she felt like Norwegian was her first language, but questioned this belief after her teacher made comments about how her Norwegian was not up to par. Her perception of her Norwegian skills was thus greatly affected by the remarks of her teacher. The feedback caused her to question not only her identity as a Norwegian speaker, but also made her question her abilities to communicate in any of her other languages, as she felt like Norwegian was her strongest language. To her, fluency, and the ability to express oneself without thinking about language choices are indicative of language proficiency. Hence, as she is not able to blabber mindlessly in any of her languages, she feels like she does not know one language 100%. Erdmann (2015) and Yuval-Davis (2010) outlined the notion of membership

groups, the boundaries of these (i.e., terms of membership), and the acceptance or challenge of an individual's claim to membership. Amina's association with the group of L1 Norwegian speakers is contested by her teacher, despite her own perception that Norwegian is her first language. Hence, in terms of Bourdieu (1977) and Norton-Peirce's (1995) conceptions, the interlocutors in the given situation do not perceive or accept Amina as a fully legitimate Norwegian speaker. As Lanza (2012) emphasizes, power relations are significant when it comes to an individual's response to social positioning. Amina finds that her agentive abilities to contest and re-negotiate her exclusion from this group are restricted by the relative power differences between her teacher and herself. After all, the teacher has greater cultural capital from being a native Norwegian speaker and greater symbolic capital from their authoritative role as a teacher.

Another interesting aspect of Amina's reflections on her competences is her ambivalence towards her language proficiencies. She reports that she considers Norwegian to be her first language but speaks of the Somali language as "home", and she says she cannot speak either fluently. This can be explained in terms of the processes she has acquired the different languages, the input she is currently receiving, and her opportunities and willingness to practice them, as outlined by Bakić and Škifić (2017).

It is the researcher's assessment and belief that though some of the participants gave themselves the same score in the self-assessment of the languages they knew, they would have been given different scores in a formal, standardized assessment situation. This is based on their level of fluency when speaking and the rank they gave themselves in Norwegian. Though it is the subjective experience of language proficiency that is of interest in this thesis, the author felt that an external observation on the individual differences of the participants' rankings would further illustrate the point of how perceptions of language skills can vary greatly from person to person.

5.2 English vs. Norwegian vs. native language: prioritizations and usage

The circumstances and processes of how one has become bilingual, as well as the combination of the languages one is proficient in, can influence language development (cf. Fillmore, 1991) and decisions when it comes to language prioritization. Whether one is brought up bilingual (simultaneous bilingualism) or comes to lean a second langue later in life

(sequential bilingualism) can affect how one switches between one's languages depending on both the circumstances and task at hand, as elaborated on by Bakić and Škifić (2017). Another factor that can affect how an individual processes and prioritizes their language is the status of a particular lanugage in a given social settings. Some languages may indicate greater cultural, social and symbolic capital. However, as noted by Bourdieu (1977) and Block (2007), quantification of capital is inherently dependent on the social circumstances and perceptions of those present.

Maya's choice to prioritize teaching her son English over her own native languages is a strong indicator of which languages she perceives to be the most useful and important. Her priorities align with the students of Krulatz and Iversen's study, as reported in Figure 1; Norwegian and English are perceived to be equally important, while the home languages are perceived to be somewhat less important. Furthermore, her choice supports Fillmore's presumption that the majority language must be learned to take full advantage of the opportunities available. Though Norwegian is the majority language of Norway, English can be said to be a majority language of the world. Thus, given the circumstances (growing up in Norway), it makes sense for Maya to introduce her son firstly to the immediate majority language (Norwegian) and secondly to the international majority language (English). She perceives her own native Filipino languages to be of less use to her son in his present situation. Her desire for him to learn Bisaya and Tagalog down the road speaks to her sentimental attachment to her own native languages, and a desire to communicate and convey her cultural heritage.

As previously stated, Amina reported feeling like she did not have one true native language – that neither Somali, Norwegian or English felt fluent and allowed her to speak freely without thinking. For Amina, English has allowed her the opportunity to connect with her fellow countrymen that are also living in diaspora. This signifies that she is not the only emigrated Somalian with insufficient abilities to express herself in her native language, but who still has a deep desire to remain in touch with her roots and countrymen. English gives them the opportunity to discuss their shared experiences of having to adapt to a majority culture and language, the quest for fitting in in their new surroundings, and their desire to maintain their Somali heritage. In this sense, English adopts a role similar to that of the native language in regard to connecting with the culture of their home country.

Upon moving to Norway, Amina received little Somali input and opportunities to engage in the Somali language outside of her family. Consequently, her L1 development stalled, which, as noted by Rowland (2014) and Lightbown and Spada (2013) can make the process of acquiring additional languages more challenging. Additionally, inadequate proficiency in one's L1 can lead to the loss of connections to one's cultural heritage, which can greatly influence one's identity. Language attrition can also affect family relations, as observed by Lambert (1981, and in Lightbown and Spada, 2013). This can affect the individuals perception of multilingualism as a valuable skill, and thus breaks with the clause in chapter 1.2 of core curriculum which stipulates that proficiency in multiple languages should be experienced as a resource both in school and society at large (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017).

David's desire and choice of prioritizing learning the language of the country he is residing in is both a reflection of his keen linguistic interest and aptitude but can also be due to greater social influences. Fillmore (1991) notes how proficiency in the majority language of a country is required in order to be able to take full advantage of opportunities available, for example when it comes to employment or social participation. David sought employment in the different countries he has lived in. As he reports learning both Italian and Spanish largely through work, it appears that language is not only important for opportunities, but opportunities are important for language.

5.3 English as a cultural phenomenon among today's youth

Speaking English is an important factor in being young in Norway, as explicitly stated by both Regina and Amina. Knowing English allows the teenagers to access, understand, and refer to shared experiences and materials such as news, memes, or social media. Shared references are a crucial aspect of group identities, and the understanding of such references can be used to determine group belonging. Regina insinuates that as a teenager in Norway, knowing English is implicitly expected, and that not knowing English might cause some raised eyebrows. Consequently, the language itself becomes a shared reference, and not just a means to access other references. According to Aalborg's study, 80% of teenagers in Norway frequently mix in English words into their everyday speech. Failure to fluently use and

understand such code-switching can lead to the questioning of someone's identity positioning as a Norwegian teenager.

English has allowed for several of the participants to expand and explore their fields of interest, and to be able to communicate with likeminded people from other corners of the world. This is especially true when it comes to social media. Amina's interest in K-pop and her communication with fellow fans was made possible through online fora dedicated to discussions about different bands and their latest songs, concerts, or general gossip.

Regina says that she will communicate with her friends using English on various social media platforms. One reason for this might be that because the posts that are being discussed are already in English, it is simply easier to continue the discussion in English rather than translate to Norwegian, or frequently code-switch back and forth. A similar effect is noted by Weston (2017), in his research of code-switching among Norwegian university students. He found that one motivation behind the students' code-switching was when engaging in activities suffused with English terminology (p. 100). Social media can certainly be said to fall into this category, as Norwegian equivalents for words such as *follow* (e.g., a profile on Instagram)*, like* (e.g., a post or a picture)*,* and *subscribe* (e.g., to YouTube channels or TikTok profiles) are rarely used in the everyday speech of Norwegian youth. Weston notes how this effect is amplified in activities associated with English or English speakers (p. 100). English thus becomes self-perpetuating in certain situations and when discussing certain topics.

5.4 English and the immigrant experience

Depending on their age upon arrival, some of the participants relied on English to communicate when they first arrived in Norway, however all of them reported prioritizing learning Norwegian first before focusing on their English. This is also an official approach as reflected by Amina not entering English classes before beginning in 8th grade to focus on Norwegian language development. The ideal of learning the language of the country he is in rather than relying on English has been David's approach to several of the languages he has resided in. Amina's brother chose another approach. As he was already proficient in English upon arrival, and able to communicate with Norwegians in English, he did not pursue learning

Norwegian to the same extent. He was thus discouraged from learning Norwegian because he was able to get by in English.

Maya chose to not teach her son her own native languages because of her assessment that English would be of more use to him, and that introducing too many languages would be confusing. This signals that Maya was not aware of children's ability to learn multiple languages at the same time. This information should have been conveyed to her through health centers or kindergarten. Regardless, the English language can be said to affect the communication of her own cultural heritage to her son, as language is an integral part of culture and relaying traditions and customs from one generation to the next

The perception and use of English among immigrants can thus be concluded to be a highly individual affair. Hence, there cannot be a one method fits all approach to the linguistic reception and accommodation of immigrants. Official decisions regarding language instruction (e.g., the decision that Amina should not participate in English classes until she started 8th grade) must be made based on individual considerations on a case-to-case basis. Depending on the reason for immigration, previous language instruction, family situation, and individual ambitions may require different alternatives and levels of support and follow-up from official institutions. There is a need for the communication of children's bilingual acquisition abilities to ensure that they have the opportunity to develop all their languages, and to reassure parents that they need not avoid teaching their children their own L1 for fear of confusion.

5.5 Agency and negotiating identities

Agency refers to an individual's capacity to act and react. In terms of identity, this relates to how individuals purposely attempt to associate themselves with certain traits and identity tags (e.g., proficient speaker of English), or react to social labels and roles (e.g., resourceful) immigrant assigned to them by others by either accepting or rejecting this positioning. Re-positioning and negotiation of identity can be both explicit (e.g., referring to oneself as a fluent speaker of Norwegian) or implicit (demonstrating one's identity as a fluent Norwegian speaker through correct and appropriate language use).

Maya rejects the social label as a gold digger and uses her agency to actively distance herself from this stereotype by doing the opposite of what is expected of a gold digger, namely working and being (financially) independent. While she does not explicitly use English to reject the positioning as a gold digger, she views it as a factor in the larger quest of quietly work on and better herself to disprove peoples' prejudice and stereotypes. Thus, language learning can play a part in the grand scheme of identity negotiation by signaling an individuals' desire to learn, grow and prosper.

Similarly, David also takes distance from social roles associated with his country of birth, namely that of gypsy, beggar, and thief. Initially he would use his agency to question those who voiced such associations, and thus actively and intentionally distance himself from such stereotypes. However, the frustration of facing the same pre-conceptions on an almost daily basis discouraged him from this active approach, causing him to assume a more passive response. It is still evident from David's responses that the lack of active resistance towards ignorant questions does not equal a passive acceptance of their implications.

5.6 Implications for educators and schools

There is an increasing number of students with a home language other than Norwegian. Educators must be able to aid students with a varied linguistic repertoire with developing all their languages in order to prevent language attrition. This needs to be addressed at a policy level, in terms of extended rights to native language instruction in schools. For immigrants, maintaining their minority languages in a majority culture is an important factor in keeping in touch with their ethnic and cultural heritage. Such a connection has the potential to greatly affect their identity and their positioning of themselves as members of a specific cultural group. Language is a strong bond to their country of birth. Losing this bond can affect them negatively by invoking a feeling of grief over the lost connection to their homeland, and shame over not being able or willing to put in enough work to maintain this connection.

Additionally, strong proficiency in one's L1 establishes a better basis for further language acquisition and development. Measures must be taken to ensure that no one is stuck in a position of partially learned languages like the one Amina reported experiencing. Not having at least one fully developed language can greatly affect the individual's ability to

express themselves, both in terms of linguistic capacity (i.e., not having the words) and in terms of the right to impose reception (cf. Bourdieu, 1977, and Norton, 1995).

Teachers must be offered opportunities for professional development to become better equipped to facilitate immigrants' multilingual development. There is a need for more practical training and understanding of how to transfer and the learning criteria stipulated in the curriculum from theory to practice. Practical examples of how to incorporate and develop students' full linguistic repertoires ought to be a part of the education and instruction language teachers receive in order to ensure that they are prepared for the multilingual and multicultural classroom they undoubtedly will face.

Teachers must be made explicitly aware of the identity aspect of language. If one of the languages of a student is not held to a certain status or considered useful in the given context, then they will not experience their multilingualism as a resource. Failure to promote appreciation and acknowledgement of students' linguistic identities can lead to the loss of motivation for language learning. This can in turn lead to language attrition, and the negative consequences associated with this, as outlined by Lambert (1981, and in Lightbown and Spada, 2013).

5.7 Analysis of research questions

5.7.1 RQ1: How do informant identities, personal backgrounds, and societal expectations shape their motivation for and investment in English language learning?

The expectations of other people in regard to language proficiency influenced the participants' motivations for pursuing better English skills. As discussed above, there is a social expectation that teenagers in Norway understand and speak English. This was a central motivation for younger informants. Parental expectations can shape an individual's decisions when it comes to languages they choose to learn and maintain as well, however this appears to be a bigger factor when it comes to maintaining their L1 than for them to learn English.

The informants' pursuit of better English skills is to a large extent determined by the use they believe English might be to them. In order to achieve his goal of moving to England and learning the English culture, Amir believed it was crucial to first acquire an extended comprehension of the language.

For Maya, improving her English skills was part of an overall endeavor to better herself and disprove those who looked down on her and associated her Asian background with gold digger stereotypes. This exemplifies how an individual's experiences shape their motivations, and how they can use their agency to reject identity positionings they disagree with.

There are situations where the participants reported not feeling comfortable or wanting to use English. Amir reported not feeling comfortable communicating with English speaking customers when he was at work. Though Maya reported being thankful when friends and family correct both her English and her Norwegian, she is less comfortable speaking English and being assessed by a teacher at school. These cases are not a direct reflection of Amir's or Maya's lack of motivation for practicing their English, rather an example of how their surroundings affect them. Important factors to consider here are the power relations between those present. Maya might feel like her teacher has more power than her in an official assessment situation and is more comfortable receiving feedback from someone she perceives to be on equal level with.

5.7.2 RQ2: What effect does learning English have on how the informants view and treat the languages they know?

English is perceived to be an important language because it functions as a lingua franca and allows for communication with people with whom they do not have any other shared languages. However, several of the participants believed that in their immediate circumstances and current situation (i.e., living and attending school in Norway), knowing Norwegian was more important than knowing English, as signaled by their choices to prioritize learning Norwegian before setting out to learn or better their English. Though Amir and Amina did not have much choice in this decision as they were too young to object to it when starting school in Norway, they both agree with this sentiment.

For several participants, the reflection of the importance and effect of different languages generated a sentimental and affectionate perception of their native language. Though Amina referred to Norwegian as her first language, she spoke of Somali as home. Maya says speaking her native languages feels like a break, where she does not need to think about grammar and can just speak freely. Furthermore, she feels a strong connection to her

homeland when speaking her native language. Encountering and talking with Filipinos in Norway allows her to refer to things they too would know about simply from growing up in the same country. David only communicates with his mother in his native Romanian, and hence the language becomes a critical connection to those he holds dear. These examples concur with the notion that language is a strong link to one's cultural heritage: "Language is more than the sum of its parts: it's not just sentence-structure and grammar, language is history and discourse, customs and heritage" (Rogers, 2020).
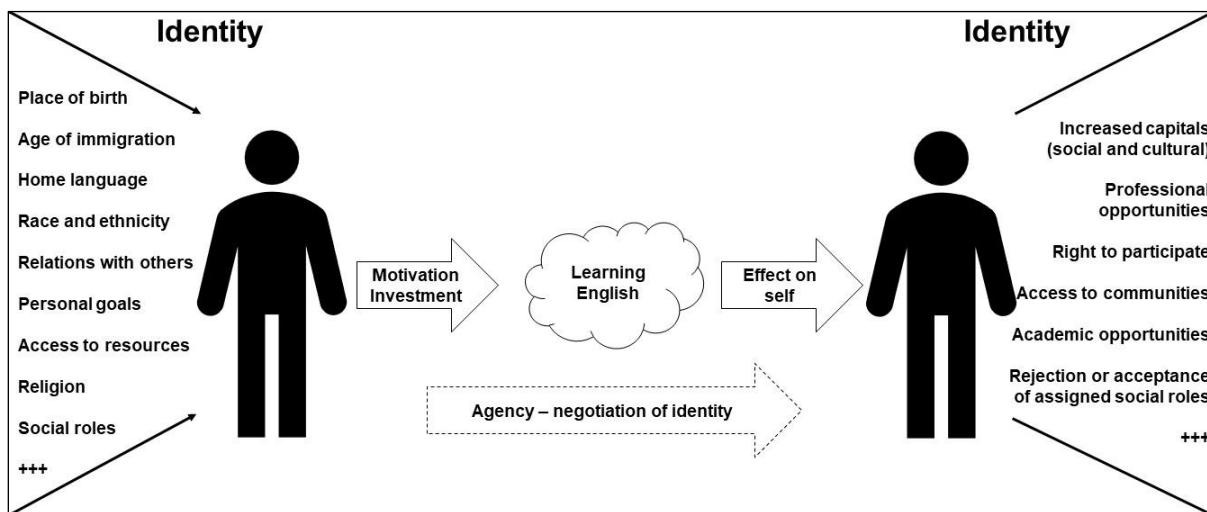
5.7.3 RQ3: Does learning English affect how the informants view themselves, and if so, how?

The acquisition of a new skill results in a feeling of pride and accomplishment. The degree of this can be dependent on social expectations. If one is expected to be proficient in English, and it is considered a basic, fundamental skill for someone in the given circumstances, fulfilling this expectation might not invoke such a strong feeling of pride. However, if learning English is not expected, going above and beyond others' expectations may trigger a greater sense of achievement.

A persons' background and baggage in the form of all the life experiences that have made them into the person they are today, and their ambitions for tomorrow, will affect to what extent they are motivated and invested in learning a skill – namely learning English. Deciding to pursue this skill is a testament to their agency – they have the sociocultural capacity to act, and they are choosing to do so. This choice will affect them in multiple ways. Their newly developed English skill may offer opportunities that were not previously available to them, for example when it comes to education or employment. Mastery of a new language means the ability to communicate with new groups of people, which can promote cultural exchange and a shift in one's values and beliefs. Newly acquired language skills can strengthen an individual's agency as it allows them to articulate a response to social positions and labels they have been assigned. This can be done both explicitly and implicitly. An implicit signaling of an individual's positioning is their use of pronouns when discussing groups and group membership; the use of "they" signify a perceived distance and distinction between themselves and the group, whereas "we" implies perceived group membership.

Figure 2 below illustrates how identity and language affect one another.

Figure 2 Exploring the dual relationship between identity and language learning

Identity

Place of birth
Age of immigration
Home language
Race and ethnicity
Relations with others
Personal goals
Access to resources
Religion
Social roles
+++

Motivation Investment

Learning English

Effect on self

Agency – negotiation of identity

Identity

Increased capitals (social and cultural)
Professional opportunities
Right to participate
Access to communities
Academic opportunities
Rejection or acceptance of assigned social roles
+++

6. Conclusion and directions for further research

The overall goal of this thesis is to shed light on immigrant ESOL experiences with English language learning in Norway to deduce trends which may provide language teachers with insight into how and why they want to learn English. Such knowledge can aid them in their pedagogical approach to this group to ensure their motivation for and success in further language development. Data was collected through qualitative interviews and analyzed and compared to previous research.

In the present study, analysis of the participants' narratives has revealed how and why they have come to learn English, and how learning English has affected them both in terms of their multilingualism, but also in terms of how they perceive themselves. English allows for the participants to access communities and opportunities not available to them in other languages: higher education, jobs, social network and media, and people with whom English is the only shared language. While analysis of participant experiences revealed emerging trends, factors affecting motivation, identity and language learning are ultimately dependent on the individual.

Teachers should consider how to apply these finding in their practice. They should seek out individuals' motivations and tailor lesson plans to their fields of interest to maximize investment and language development. Furthermore, teachers must understand, respect, and utilize the students' pre-existing linguistic competences to maximize further language learning, for example using variations of the teaching module used in Krulatz and Iversen's study. An added bonus of such a pedagogical program is that it invoked curiosity among the students on the home languages that existed in the classroom. This can be used to establish a classroom environment that welcomes and values different backgrounds, where students feel safe and comfortable. This again lowers anxiety and reduces the students' affective filter, which in turn leads to increased learning.

A significant drawback of this study is its limited number of informants. No generalizations can be made in regard to identity and language learning based on five individuals' stories and beliefs. However, several experiences and opinions that emerged from the informants' narratives concur with findings from similar research, and thus the findings of this study can be seen as emerging trends in the greater discourse of language learning and identity.

In order to gain a complete understanding of the processes of identity positioning and negotiation in this digital day and age, future research should explore how these processes may differ when performed in different online fora. Such an investigation should examine similarities and differences in terms of identity construction between the physical and digital world, and whether new opportunities or restrictions arise through this new mode of expression.

Replications of the present study with participants from the same countries will yield more data, resulting in a greater (and thus more reliable) basis from which one can deduce trends in a more general manner than what the current amount of data allows for. Accounts from individuals from the same countries will allow for the comparison of their experiences with immigration and language learning. This can shed light on if and how the immigration experience is shaped by country of origin. One factor to examine is the social labels and stereotypes the immigrants reported facing, and if these are country dependent.

Another interesting research topic is what factors affect the Norwegian populations' perception of immigrants, for example perceptions of native English speaking immigrants versus non-native, but English proficient, immigrants.

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<h1 style="text-align: center">8. Appendices</h1>

Appendix A: Information and consent form

<h2 style="text-align: center">Do you want to participate in the research project</h2>

<h2 style="text-align: center">"Immigrant ESOL Learners' Experiences with English Language Learning in a Norwegian School Context"?</h2>

This is a request to you regarding participation in a research project where the goal is to investigate immigrants' experiences with English language learning and how this affects, and is affected by, their identity and sense of self.

In this document we provide information about the goals of the project and what participation would involve for you.

Purpose

The study is a part of a master's thesis in English at the University of Agder (UiA). The thesis addresses the reciprocal relationship between identity and language learning and investigates which factors determine whether participants are motivated for and invested in improving their English skills. Furthermore, the study will look at how participation in English lessons and increased English capabilities affects the participants' identity, sense of self and language usage.

The data basis for this study will be interviews with suitable informants from adult education programs or high schools in Southern Norway.

Information will only be used for the purpose described above. Recordings and personal information will be deleted at the end of the project.

Who is responsible for the research project?

Lenka Garshol is responsible for the project. Martha Kristiansen Birkeland (master student) will be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the project.

The data controlling institution is the University of Agder.

Why are you asked to participate?

Pupils and students who have immigrated to Norway and that mainly speak a language other than Norwegian or English at home are eligible for participation in the study. An additional for participation criterium is that the participant is receiving English lessons at a high school or through an adult education program during the period the study takes place (school year 2020-21).

What does participation involve for you?

If you choose to participate in the project, it will involve filling out a brief questionnaire and conducting an interview.

The questionnaire is on one page and concerns background information like age, country of birth, your own mother tongue, your parents' mother tongue, age at time of immigration to Norway, etc.

The interview will last approximately one hour. The interview can be conducted in either Norwegian or English, depending on your preference.

During the interview I will amongst other things ask you about …:

Some general background information, like where you are from, what languages you speak and how you have come to learn these

Specifically about your relationship with the English language, how you have learned it and what motivates you to learn it, and how you think you will use it in the future

Your identity and sense of self, hereunder religion, politics, ethnicity and race, philosophical convictions/ values, other affiliations. I will also ask you about various (social) roles or labels you hold or have been assigned by society and what is expected of you in relation to these – both from a personal and societal point of view

The main focus will be on aspects of your identity that you regard as relevant for your language learning

- How you believe knowing/ learning English affects your identity
- How you believe your identity and personality affect your English learning

The interviews will be recorded, and the recordings will be stored until the project is completed.

Participation is voluntary
Participation in the study is completely voluntary. If you choose to participate, you may at any

time withdraw your consent without stating a reason. All your personal information will then be deleted. You may also refrain from answering specific questions in the interview if.

There will be no negative consequences for you if you choose not to participate or if you later decide to drop out. You can drop out of the study by contacting Martha Kristiansen Birkeland via phone (90703544) or email (martkb16@uia.no).

Not participating in the study will not affect your relationship with your teacher.

Your privacy – how we store and use your information
We will only use the information about you for the objectives described in this document. We treat your information confidentially and in accordance with the privacy regulations.

Your name and contact details will be replaced by a code that is stored on a separate name list away from other data. Personal information is stored on a PC with restricted access.

Only the master student Martha Kristiansen Birkeland will have access to personal information and contact details. Advisors Lenka Garshol and Susan Lynn Erdmann at the University of Agder will have access to anonymized information.

In the publication of the project personal information will be generalized and anonymized. This means that names will be replaced with an alias, and that age and residence will be replaced with for example "twenties" and "Southern Norway" or the like. Specific information related to various affiliations (e.g. religious affiliation with a specific congregation or political affiliation with a political party) will also be generalized (replaced with "is religiously/ politically active" or the like).

Background information like country of birth and linguistic skills will not be generalized due to the project's area of interest. Care will be taken to ensure that information can never be traced back to an individual participant.
What happens with your information after we finish the research project?
Your information will be anonymized when the project ends, which according to plan will be in June 2021.
Contact information and recordings from the interviews will be deleted upon completion of the project.

In the publication of the project, personal information will be generalized as described above.

Your rights
As long as you can be identified in the data material, you have the right to:
- Access to view what personal information is registered about you, and the right to receive a copy of the information
- Correcting information about you
- Deleting information about you
- Sending a complaint to the Norwegian Data Protection Authority

What gives us the right to treat information about you?

We treat information about you based on your consent.

On assignment from the University of Agder, NSD (Norwegian Center for Research Data) has assessed that the treatment of personal information in this project is in accordance with the privacy regulations.

Where can I learn more?
If you have questions regarding the study or wish to use one of your rights, please contact:
- University of Agder by project manager Lenka Garshol (email: lenka.garshol@uia.no, phone: 38141078) or Martha Kristiansen Birkeland (email: martkb16@uia.no, phone: 90703544).
- Our data protection officer at the University of Agder: Ina Danielsen (email: ina.danielsen@uia.no, phone: 38142140/ 45254401).

If you have questions regarding NSD's assessment of the project, you can contact:
- NSD – Norwegian Center for Research Data by email (personverntjenester@nsd.no) or phone: 55 58 21 17.

Sincerely

Lenka Garshol   Martha Kristiansen Birkeland
(Researcher/ advisor)   (Master student)

Declaration of consent

I have received and understood the information regarding the project "Immigrant ESOL Learners' Experiences with English Language Learning in a Norwegian School Context" and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

I consent to:

- ☐ Participate by filling out the background information questionnaire
- ☐ Participate by conducting an interview, and that this is recorded
- ☐ Being contacted by email or phone to find a time to conduct the interview

I consent to my information being treated until the project is concluded.

_____

Participant name (please use block letters)

_____

Participant's signature, date

Appendix B: Background questionnaire

Participant code (do not fill out)

| |
| |

Background information for participants of "Immigrant ESOL Learners' Experiences with English Language Learning in a Norwegian School Context"?

Please complete the form using block letters. Please use the back if you have additional comments.

Last name	First name	Country of birth
Phone number	**Email**	
Gender	**Age**	**Age at immigration to Norway**
Your mother tongue	**Mother's mother tongue**	**Father's mother tongue**
Name of school + VGS/ adult education/ other?	**Number of years receiving English lessons outside of Norway**	**Number of years receiving English lessons in Norway**

Language(s) used at home, in ranked order (1 = used the most)
1.
2.
3.
4.

Appendix C: Interview guide

Interview guide

This interview is part of the master thesis project "Immigrant ESOL Learners' Experiences with English Language Learning in a Norwegian School Context".

The overall goal of the project is to examine the dual relationship between identity and language investment among immigrants in a Norwegian school setting. The project seeks to investigate how personality, individual background and personal goals affect how, and to what extent, the participant is motivated for learning English – and how this motivation fluctuates depending on various factors. Such factors can be the social context (e.g. who is present), personal factors (how you are feeling at the time), the goal for the situation (e.g. demonstrate English skills in class, participate in an online discussion etc.) or other additional factors. Furthermore, the project will look at how learning and becoming more proficient in English affects the participants' identities and their sense of self.

You have been invited to this interview because you showed interest in the project and because you fulfill the participant criteria (you are over the age of 16, you have immigrated to Norway, you primarily speak a language other than English or Norwegian at home and you are enrolled in a form of formal English instruction).

You have signed a form consenting to participate in this interview as part of the greater study. You may withdraw your consent to participate in the study at any point by saying you no longer wish to participate. You may also choose to refrain from answering specific questions asked throughout the interview.

- Do you have questions regarding …
  - The aim or the project?
  - Why you have been invited to this interview?
  - How the information you provide will be treated?
  - How you can drop out of the project?

Background
- Where were you born?
- Where were your parents born?
- At what age did you immigrate to Norway?
- What languages did you hear growing up?
  - Spoken by parents
  - At school
  - With friends
  - Media
- What languages do you know? How proficient are you in the various languages?
  - Do you read or watch movies/ series in the different languages?
  - Do you communicate with friends or parents?
- Where and how have you learnt the different languages?
  - From parents
  - At school

- o Through friends
- o Through media
- What type of English language instruction have you received?
  - o In country of birth
  - o In other countries
  - o In Norway
  - o Has instruction consisted of lessons in school, private tutor, peers? Uninstructed/ implicit language learning (just by being exposed to the language without formal instruction – as is the case with your first language/ mother tongue)

Motivation, perception, and usage
- In what situations do you practice/ use English?
  - o School
  - o Work
  - o Online communities
  - o Everyday life
    - Communicating with neighbors, store employees etc.
    - Pop culture

- What motivates you to learn English?

- How do you think being proficient in English could be beneficial to you?
  - o Professional/ work opportunities
  - o Academic/ school opportunities
  - o Personal opportunities
    - Access to communities (e.g. gaming communities, online communities)
    - English as an alternative to Norwegian when communicating with Norwegians in different settings

- In your opinion, what is the status of the English language in your country of birth?
  - o Popular language, official language
  - o Status symbol
  - o Widespread usage – approximate number of users? General knowledge?
  - o Used in businesses, higher education?

- How does knowing English affect your life?

- Have your perspectives changed since/ through learning English?
  - o Access to other media sources and content
  - o Cultural exchange

Identity, negotiating positions and language investment
- What do you do in your spare time/ outside of school?
  - o Sports, drama, social clubs, part time job, watch TV, browse the internet, religious activities?

- What social identities/ roles/ labels would you say you hold, or have been assigned by society?
  - o Parent, child, spouse, employee, student, immigrant, etc.

- o   What characteristics do you associate with the different roles/ labels?

- Do you spend time with your parents' community/ immigrant community?
  - o   What are your feelings towards this community? Towards your country of birth?
  - o   How do you think your parents feel about this? Do they want you to have a connection with your country of birth?
  - o   How important is it for your parents that you know/ use your mother tongue? How important is it to them that you know English?

- How often do you travel back to the country you immigrated from?

- Do you feel more Norwegian or more [country of birth]?
  - o   Do people often ask you where you are from? How does that make you feel?

- What are your feelings towards your first/ home language?
  - o   Do you speak it outside of home? In front of friends?

- What do you think about being multilingual?
  - o   Do you consider knowing more than one language in general to be an asset?
  - o   Do you think knowing your first language in specific is an asset?

- How would you describe Norwegian society and your place in it?

- What are key features of your identity?
  - o   How would you describe yourself in 3 words? In 5 words?
  - o   How and why have they become important in defining who you are?

- How do you express your identity?
  - o   Clothing, speech patterns, affiliations, online etc.
  - o   Are there parts of your identity you try to hide or tone down in certain situations or settings?

- Going back to your social roles/ labels
  - o   Do you agree with these labels? Are there any labels/ roles you specifically want or do not want to be associated with – why?
  - o   Do you actively try to associate with or distance yourself from any labels? Why? How?

- How do these different roles affect your English language investment?
  - o   In everyday life
    - ▪   E.g. learning English slang to communicate with peers/ children
    - ▪   Proving yourself as a good student
    - ▪   Demonstrating social knowledge through pop culture references
  - o   On vacations etc.
    - ▪   E.g. speaking for children/ parents because of their inability to communicate

- How do you think knowing English has shaped you and your identity?
  - o   How does it make you feel knowing that you can communicate in English?

- ▪ Pride in self, good son/ daughter/ student etc.

- What could make you unmotivated for learning or using English?

- What are factors that could keep you from using English in a situation where English could have been used?
    - o Interlocutor, e.g. a person of authority
    - o Other audience
    - o Embarrassment about pronunciation or language skills
    - o Topic of discussion

- Have you been in a situation where you refrained from using English even though you could have used it? Example?

- Do you have any additional comments?
    - o Your background
    - o Thoughts on English
    - o Thoughts on home country/ language/ immigrant community
    - o Thoughts on language investment and motivation
    - o Thoughts on identity and language