

Textbook Tasks and Linguistic Diversity

A study focusing on lower secondary school (years 8-10) textbook tasks and their alignment with the curriculum's emphasis on inclusivity and linguistic diversity.

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Abstract in English

This study investigates EFL textbook tasks found in textbooks designed for lower secondary schools (years 8-10) in Norway, published after the Norwegian curriculum reform in 2020. Tasks from two textbook series, comprising three books each, are included in the analysis. This thesis aims to examine the alignments between textbook tasks and curriculum guidelines, regarding linguistic diversity and inclusivity, and whether the tasks facilitate various linguistic backgrounds in the EFL classroom. The reformed curriculum highly emphasizes the value of linguistic knowledge and diversity, elucidated both in the core curriculum and the English subject curriculum. Based on the analysis of 2,944 tasks, the findings of this study reveal tendencies arguing limited alignment between the tasks and the curriculum's emphasis on the value of linguistic diversity. The majority of tasks requiring knowledge of additional languages for completion involve only Norwegian and English. However, *Stages 8-10* align slightly more with the curriculum, with the series including a few tasks encouraging the involvement of languages beyond mere Norwegian. Furthermore, these results regarding limited linguistic inclusion beyond Norwegian, indicate a limited facilitation toward students with various linguistic backgrounds.

Abstract in Norwegian

Denne studien undersøker oppgaver som finnes i lærebøker designet for ungdomsskoler (8.-10. trinn) i Norge, utgitt etter den norske læreplanreformen i 2020. Oppgaver fra to lærebok serier, hvor hver serie består av tre bøker hver, er inkludert i analysen. Denne oppgaven tar sikte på å undersøke samsvaret mellom lærebokoppgaver og læreplanretningslinjer, angående språklig mangfold og inkludering, og om oppgavene legger til rette for ulike språklige bakgrunner til stede i Engelsk klasserommet. Den nye læreplanen vektlegger i høy grad verdien av språklig kunnskap og mangfold, belyst både i overordnet del av læreplan og læreplan for Engelsk. Basert på analyse av 2,944 oppgaver, viser funnene av denne studien tendenser som argumenterer for begrenset samsvar mellom oppgavene og læreplanens fokus på verdien av språklig mangfold. De fleste oppgavene som krever kunnskap i tilleggsspråk for gjennomføring, involverer kun Norsk og Engelsk. *Stages 8-10* stemmer litt mer overens med læreplanen, da serien inkluderer noen få oppgaver som oppmuntrer til involvering av språk utover bare Norsk. Videre indikerer disse resultatene som gjelder begrenset språklig inkludering utover Norsk en begrenset tilrettelegging overfor elever med ulik språkbakgrunn.

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1 Introduction

In 2020, Norway implemented a reform of the national curriculum for compulsory education. A significant aspect of the new curriculum guidelines is the emphasis on equipping students with essential 21st-century skills necessary to engage with the evolving Norwegian society and the global landscape (Bakken & Andersson-Bakken, 2021, p. 730). One important and valuable 21st-century skill in today's globalized society is the ability to communicate effectively across different languages. Related to this need for communicative skills, another noteworthy aspect of the reformed curriculum is the focus on inclusiveness and multilingualism. As stated in the curriculum "A good society is founded on the ideals of inclusiveness and diversity" (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017a, p. 6). In Norway, compulsory education begins at the age of six, ensuring that all children are enrolled in educational institutions. This leaves educational institutions with a crucial mandate of fostering an inclusive society that embraces and celebrates diverse populations.

English has become a widely accepted international language, bridging communication gaps across diverse linguistic backgrounds (Cavalheiro et al., 2021). By helping people understand each other, the English subject has the means to function as a common reference framework, by providing a common language for everyone regardless of individual own languages. This responsibility is communicated in the central values for the English subject by explaining how "The subject shall give the pupils foundation for communication with others, both locally and globally, regardless of cultural or linguistic background" (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p. 2). Following this line of reasoning, the English subject plays a significant role in fostering this inclusive society envisioned in the curriculum and in helping students develop the necessary skills to participate in our global society.

Norway has an interesting history regarding linguistic diversity, whereas the country has two official written languages and numerous dialects, all considered within the Norwegian language (Özerk, 2013, p. 43). This diversity has been the case since the 1800s, however, recent trends concerning language profiles present in Norwegian society show a more nuanced picture. Today, Norwegian society entails a linguistic diversity beyond mere variants of Norwegian. As of the first of January 2024, 16,8% of the Norwegian population were immigrants and 4% were Norwegian-born with immigrant parents (Statistics Norway, 2024a). This degree of immigration in society influences Norwegian schools and their student groups. The ethnicity of immigrant students and students with immigrant parents varies, making the Norwegian classroom a diverse group of students (Statistics Norway, 2024b).

Linguistic diversity in schools can be a resource and a challenge. Nevertheless, it is an important element to be aware of. In Norway, English is taught as a foreign language from the student's first year of compulsory education. However, despite differing starting points, English is taught as either a foreign language or a second language in numerous countries worldwide (Cavalheiro et al., 2021, p. 11). As a result, students with diverse linguistic profiles might struggle with Norwegian yet be fairly proficient in the English language. Considering this complex landscape of linguistic diversity, Hall and Cook (2014) point out a noteworthy viewpoint related to terminology. In their article, the authors use the term "own language" in favor of common terms like "native language" or first language /L1. They argue that "own language" is a more precise term given the fact that "in many language classrooms, the common shared language of the learners is not the first or native language of all students" (Hall & Cook, 2014, p. 7).

Relating this to the Norwegian English as a foreign language (hereafter referred to as EFL) classroom, it is important to acknowledge that many students likely consider Norwegian their "own language", and therefore it often serves as the assisting language in EFL learning. However, it is essential to recognize that not all students will view Norwegian as their "own language", particularly in Norway's diverse society (Andreassen et al., 2013, p. 12). Following these arguments related to terminology, an important issue arises regarding the group of students who do not consider Norwegian as their own language. Especially considering participation in the English subject, where students may be faced with two foreign languages as opposed to one. Although English is the common target language in a Norwegian EFL classroom, some students may also consider Norwegian as a foreign language. How EFL teaching facilitates this group of students is the main focus of this thesis.

1.1 Textbooks in EFL teaching

Although most people learn and manage at least one language, learning new languages is complex and requires a repertoire of skills (Bygate, 2016, p. 382). Historically, in the teaching of EFL, both planning and classroom instruction have been highly influenced by the use of textbooks (Guerrettaz & Johnston, 2013). Given that textbooks are written following current curriculum guidelines, the books are well-suited for students and teachers in EFL teaching and learning (Choen et al., 2011, p. 250). In Norway, numerous EFL teachers use textbooks as their main teaching material in lesson planning and classroom instruction (Bakken, 2019, p. 106). Textbooks typically comprise a selection of different texts and tasks covering various topics.

The learning activities students encounter at school may therefore be determined by the tasks included in textbooks, making textbook tasks a relevant matter of discussion.

Considering this tendency to include textbooks in EFL teaching makes it important that the textbooks reflect the content of the curriculum. After the curriculum revision, publishing houses in Norway reviewed and updated their textbooks, however, it is important to investigate whether the textbooks do align with the new guidelines for education. Previous research investigating Norwegian EFL task development across different curriculums reveals tendencies of limited change (Bakken & Andersson-Bakken, 2021; Straumsheim, 2023). Despite these tendencies being presented only by two Norwegian studies, their results argue the need for further textbook task analyses. Therefore, given these results of limited changes and the common use of textbooks among EFL teachers, this study investigates EFL textbook tasks and their facilitation for linguistic diversity.

Within educational research, the examination of textbooks appears to be a widespread and globally recognized practice (Al-Akraa, 2013; Emilia et al., 2017; Ulum & Köksal, 2019). This approach has gathered significant attention both internationally and within the educational research community in Norway. However, within the field of teaching and learning English as a foreign language in the Norwegian context, there is published limited research on textbook tasks after 2020. Following the curriculum reform in 2020, publishing houses gradually released new textbooks following the revised curriculum. Therefore, due to the relatively recent implementation of the updated curriculum and the introduction of new textbooks in schools, there has been conducted limited research on tasks in EFL textbooks designed for lower secondary schools after 2020, apart from a few master's theses.

In general, several master's theses have examined the content of EFL textbooks following the curriculum reform of 2020 (Bratsve, 2023; Haugen, 2023; Hendrikse, 2022; Mossige, 2022; Napoli, 2020; Straumsheim, 2023; Walle, 2022). Notable studies to the present thesis include those conducted by Bratsve (2023), Haugen (2023), Straumsheim (2023), and Walle (2022). These studies focus on lower secondary school textbooks, however, only Haugen (2023) and Straumsheim (2023) focus on tasks rather than the texts and content of the textbooks. Walle (2022) analyzed tasks in relation to the texts they accompany. Haugen (2023) investigated tasks from two revised EFL textbooks following the curriculum reform of 2020, and the books included in the analysis were *Engelsk 10* (Haegi et al., 2021) and *Stages 10* (Pettersen & Røkaas, 2021b). Employing a mixed-method approach, Haugen studied the textbook tasks to examine their promotion of intercultural competence acquisition and alignment with curriculum guidelines. The findings of the study revealed that the tasks within the analyzed textbooks do

not fully align with the curriculum's emphasis on intercultural competence. With that said, *Stages 10* did appear to exhibit a higher number of tasks focusing on intercultural competence compared to *Engelsk 10*.

Considering the limited research, besides masters' theses, that focus on textbook tasks designed for lower secondary schools published after 2020, there appears to be a gap in research. To my knowledge, there is no published research analyzing textbook tasks concerning diverse linguistic backgrounds in lower secondary school EFL classrooms after the curriculum reform of 2020.

1.2 Purpose of this Study

Considering globalization, the diverse Norwegian society, and the curriculum reform of 2020, this thesis aims to investigate EFL textbooks published after the Norwegian curriculum changed in 2020 to see how/or whether the books' tasks contribute to an inclusive educational program in Norway. The Norwegian national curriculum provides clear guidelines for including students with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017a). Given the significant role textbooks play in EFL classrooms, their content can significantly shape teaching approaches. Therefore, this study aspires to examine how textbooks for grades 8, 9, and 10 correspond with the Norwegian curriculum's emphasis on inclusion and multilingualism and how the tasks facilitate linguistic diversity.

1.3 Research Questions

To investigate how textbooks for lower secondary schools (8-10) in Norway align with the emphasis on inclusion and multilingualism in the curriculum and how textbook tasks facilitate linguistic varieties in a classroom, these research questions will guide the analysis:

1. Do the tasks in textbooks used in Norwegian grade 8-10 classrooms align with the curriculum's emphasis on linguistic inclusion?
2. To what extent do EFL textbooks used in Norwegian grade 8-10 classrooms facilitate toward students with diverse linguistic backgrounds?

1.4 Terminology

In many ways, globalization has changed the world, accentuating the need for effective communication across diverse linguistic landscapes. As a result, language learning has become a highly relevant skill around the world, and the terms bilingualism and multilingualism have become a worldwide phenomenon (Martínez, 2018, p. 515). The terms bilingualism and multilingualism are frequently used interchangeably, but they are often differentiated based on the number of languages involved. Bilingualism typically refers to individuals who speak two languages fluently, whereas multilingualism often involves proficiency in three or more languages (Cenoz, 2013, p. 7). In this study, the term multilingualism is used when describing people who are fluent in two or more languages, considering bilingualism within its broader category. Furthermore, the current study uses the term first language (hereafter referred to as L1) when discussing other sources where L1 is used by the authors. However, throughout the study, the term “own language” will be used beyond this context, following the example set by Hall and Cook (2014).

1.4.1 List of Abbreviations

L1	= First Language
L2	= Second Language
EFL	= English as a Foreign Language
ELF	= English as a Lingua Franca
CEFR	= Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
SLT	= Sociocultural Learning Theory
ZPD	= Zone of Proximal Development

1.5 Structure of The Thesis

The content of this master’s thesis is organized into six sections and accompanying subsections. This subsection marks the end of section 1, namely the Introduction part. In section 2 the theoretical framework for the study is introduced before section 3 explains the methodology used to examine the research questions. Section 4 presents the findings, followed by section 5 where the discussion part of the study takes place. The last section offers a conclusion summarizing the study.

2 Theoretical Framework

This section of the study presents theoretical aspects relevant to the discussion and understanding of the research questions. Initially, the first subsections will introduce relevant elements from the curriculum. Thereafter, the subsections present different approaches to language use in the classroom and the status of English in Norway, before sections covering textbooks, textbook tasks, and the sociocultural learning theory mark the end of the theoretical framework.

2.1 The Norwegian Curriculum

National curricula play a crucial role in regulating and governing education systems worldwide. In Norway, the education landscape has been shaped by different curricula over time, and in 2020 the Norwegian school system was introduced to a new national curriculum, which changed and updated the previous curriculum established in 2006. The new curriculum of 2020 is organized by a core curriculum that applies to all subjects and provides principles, values, and guidelines that are to be reflected in all subjects (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017, pp. 1-2). Alongside this core curriculum, all subject areas have their own individual curricula, including the English subject (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019). Textbooks used in primary and secondary education usually claim to fulfill the aims of the current curriculum (Cappelen Damm, n.d.; Kleivdal, n.d.). Given the scope of this thesis, the most relevant part of the curriculum is how the curriculum facilitates diverse linguistic backgrounds that may appear in a class, although the curriculum is complex and probably influences the books in other ways as well. The following parts of this section will provide an overview of how language learning and diverse linguistic backgrounds are addressed in the core curriculum and the curricula for the English subject.

2.1.1 Core Curriculum

The core curriculum is the common part of the curriculum that connects the different subject areas included in Norwegian compulsory education. As stated in the curriculum: “The core curriculum describes the fundamental approach that shall direct the pedagogical practice in all lower and secondary education” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017, p. 1). The core curriculum divides the core values for all education into six different areas, whereas the part named “Identity and cultural diversity” communicates the values related to language knowledge

(Ministry of Education and Research, 2017, p. 5). Within this section, the curriculum provides clear instructions related to language and the significant role of language knowledge. For instance, the curriculum 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, 2017a, p. 6). Furthermore, the curriculum also communicates that “Language gives us a sense of belonging and cultural awareness” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017a, p. 6). Looking at these two citations, it appears that the importance of language goes beyond the English subject and should influence all subjects to some degree. In addition to the statements about language being a resource, the section also conveys that “A good society is founded on the ideals of inclusiveness and diversity” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017a, p. 6).

2.1.2 Curriculum in English

The curriculum for the English subject is divided into “Relevance and central values”, “Core elements”, “Interdisciplinary topics”, and “Basic skills” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, pp. 2-4). In the part “Relevance and central values”, the curriculum rephrases the value of being proficient in several languages, which is also emphasized in the core curriculum (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p. 2). Further, language learning is considered a part of the subject’s “core elements”. In this part, language learning is described as “[...] identifying connections between English and other languages the pupils know, and to understanding how English is structured” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p. 3). In other words, the curriculum does not prioritize the connection between Norwegian and English as the only correlation, it allows for the possibility of diverse linguistic backgrounds among students. To achieve language learning, working with texts is emphasized as a core element of the English subject (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p. 3). By working with a variety of different texts, the curricula aspire for the students to develop “[...] knowledge and experience of linguistic and cultural diversity [...]” as well as “They shall build the foundation for seeing their own identity and others` identities in a multilingual and multicultural context” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019). Related to these extracts from the curriculum, textbooks may often be the main provider of texts the students work with and develop their language from. Additionally, it is evident how the English subject curriculum emphasizes the value of linguistic diversity and inclusion in Norwegian compulsory education.

2.2 Goodlad's Curriculum theory

The national curriculum provides statutory principles for all educational institutions in Norway. Following the development of society and changing political views, the curriculum is reformed and updated periodically. National curricula communicate institutional goals, however, curriculum theorist argues the complexity between statutory curriculum and actual classroom practices. As discussed by Goodlad (1962), curriculums can be described and understood in different levels (pp. 215-216). One level of the curriculum provides statutory principles presented in the curriculum document, realizing political intentions and directives. The content presented in section 2.1 of the present study describes this level of the curriculum. However, although educational institutions are mandated to follow the curriculum, Goodlad claims that teachers are mostly influenced by textbooks as opposed to the actual curriculum (Goodlad, 1962, p. 216). Following this, textbooks cover another part of the curriculum, namely how the curriculum is realized in schools and classrooms. Following Goodlads argumentation, textbooks implement the curriculum in practice and make it available to teachers. Considering these levels of the curriculum, an important question emerges. Do textbooks realize the curriculum guidelines as intended by the Ministry of Education and Research, or are textbooks influenced by other elements than the curriculum as well? This complex relationship between the theoretical curriculum and the realized curriculum is highly relevant for the present study and its investigating of alignments between textbooks and curriculum guidelines.

2.3 The Use of Language in Foreign Language Learning

A recent debate in the field of foreign language education revolves around the use of language in EFL instruction (Brevik & Rindal, 2020; Hall & Cook, 2014). Over time, various approaches to EFL teaching have been emphasized, with researchers historically and presently advocating for exposure to the target language as fundamental to language acquisition. However, there has been a growing recognition of the value of including the students' own languages in EFL learning (Hall & Cook, 2012). Drawing from a recent Norwegian classroom study by Brevik and Rindal (2020), incorporating students' own language in EFL learning as a supportive tool, rather than completely excluding them has been shown to be valuable. Supporting the argument for the inclusion of student's own language, it is important to acknowledge the potential for various linguistic backgrounds present in a classroom. Although a group of students commonly learn EFL, there is no guarantee these students also share a common own language.

2.4 English as a Foreign Language and Lingua Franca

Following the discussion of language in EFL learning and linguistic inclusion, the status of the English language also proves important. Internationally, English is considered a Lingua Franca, meaning it is a common international language used to communicate across different languages (Cavalheiro et al., 2021, p. 11). By being a global language, mastering the language is a highly relevant skill regardless of nationality. In Norway, students start learning English as a foreign language in their first year of school at the age of 6 years and continue with English as a mandatory subject until their second year of upper secondary school (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019). Furthermore, due to common tendencies of early exposure to significant amounts of English, the Norwegian population usually possesses proficient English communication skills (Rindal, 2014, p. 8).

A commonly used model to categorize English users around the world is Kachru's model called "The concentric circles of English", which he introduced in the mid-1980s (Rindal, 2014, p. 7). This model divides the users of English into three circles:

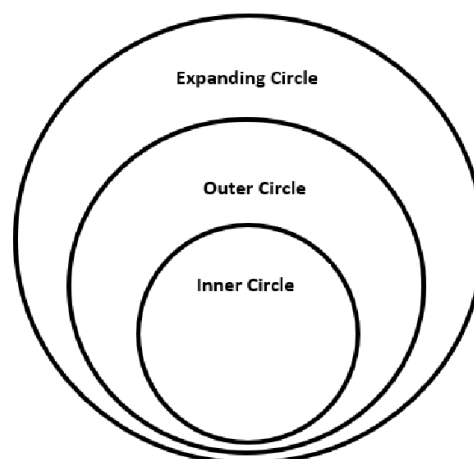


Figure 1 - The Concentric Circles of English (Rindal, 2014, p. 7)

In this model, native speakers of English, those considering English as their own language, are placed in the "Inner Circle". Populations considering English as their second language are placed in the "Outer Circle", whereas the "Expanding Circle" usually refers to people learning English as a foreign language (Rindal, 2014, p. 7). A relevant discussion regarding the status of the English language in Norway is whether English should be considered a foreign language or a second language. Available research regarding language learning refers to English as both a foreign and second language, using the terms interchangeably. Although it could be argued that English should be considered a second language in Norway, the language is not an official second language, and the current study considers English a foreign language. Hence,

Norwegian learners of English are part of the “Expanding Circle” of Kachru’s model. Since its introduction, the model has been criticized due to the argument that the description of users gets less relevant as years go by and the linguistic situation in the world changes and adapts (Rindal, 2014, pp. 7-8).

“The concentric circles of English” is a model used to categorize users of English around the world. However, as these circle and their accompanying group of users become less relevant, one could argue for the value of considering and approaching English as a *Lingua Franca* in favor of considering it a foreign language. The prevalence of English and the general English proficiency among Norwegians, create an interesting topic for discussion regarding the underlying ideas behind EFL teaching in Norway today. Is the teaching approach based on English being a foreign language following its historical roots, or is it adapting to the increased status of English as a *Lingua Franca*? It appears that the reformed curriculum of 2020 adapts to the changing status of the English language, emphasizing the importance of communication (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p. 2). However, historically, textbooks do not always change as rapidly as the curriculum, and old teaching ideas and approaches sometimes stay evident in the textbooks regardless of changes in curriculums (Bakken & Andersson-Bakken, 2021, p. 745). Considering the reformed curriculum’s emphasis on linguistic inclusion and the status of English being a *Lingua Franca*, one could argue that teaching ELF could create more inclusive EFL classrooms. This argument is supported by Cavalheiro et al. (2021) in “The Handbook to English as a *Lingua Franca* Practices for Inclusive Multilingual Classrooms”.

2.5 Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

Another influential element in Norwegian EFL teaching is CEFR. In 2001 the Council of Europe, of which Norway is a founding member, introduced the “*Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*”, commonly known as CEFR (Council of Europe, 2020). CEFR is a complex framework, involving different aspects related to language learning. Some underlying educational principles emphasized by CEFR revolve around plurilingual and intercultural education, as well as both reflective learning and learner autonomy (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 13). The Council of Europe introduced the CEFR in their “work to ensure quality inclusive education as a right to all citizens”, and the framework has significantly influenced language learning practices across Europe, including the teaching of EFL in Norway (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 21). By creating a common frame of reference, it is easier to interact across countries despite language barriers.

Related to foreign language teaching, CEFR includes and suggests a range of useful methodological innovations and approaches. By providing a systematic classification of language proficiency into different levels across distinct levels, CEFR becomes relevant to all languages. These levels usually sort language proficiency into three main categories known as “Basic user”, “Independent user”, and “Proficient user”, although the framework often involves six levels known as A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, and C2 (Council of Europe, 2020). These levels are described by “can do” statements that determine which level the language proficiency follows. CEFR is highly relevant in foreign language teaching, and it is safe to assume that both the Norwegian curriculum and textbooks written thereafter are influenced by the framework.

2.6 Ethnicity and EFL Learning

Every student engaged in foreign language learning has acquired at least one additional language, otherwise it would not be considered a foreign language (Lightbown & Spada, 2021, p. 38). However, there is no assurance that students in a foreign language classroom possess the same language skills beyond the common target language. Based on this perspective, one could argue that L2 learning ought to be linked to the student’s individual own languages, rather than the shared language of the predominant group. Many factors may influence students’ success in acquiring an L2, including social factors and ethnicity (Lightbown & Spada, 2021, p. 92). Lightbown and Spada (2021) discuss how social dynamics can affect the success of language acquisition, by looking at the power relationship between minority and majority groups in language learning (pp. 92-93). The authors present an example wherein they explain how minority groups learning a majority language may approach language learning with different motivations and attitudes, compared to majority groups learning the language of a minority group (Lightbown & Spada, 2021, p. 92). Although an EFL class usually consists of a group of students learning English, there may be different social dynamics that could influence the learning environment.

In a Norwegian EFL classroom, the majority group of students will typically be Norwegian students learning English as their L2. However, there might also be students with other ethnicities who learn English as their L2 but who are considered a minority group based on their different own languages. These students may also learn Norwegian as a foreign language, raising awareness of an interesting aspect of EFL teaching in Norway. Continuing this line of reasoning, the own language of EFL learners could affect the students’ willingness and ability to participate in foreign language learning. Regardless of its validity, recognizing

potential power dynamics and social factors present in an EFL classroom can be valuable. By considering these factors, EFL teachers may limit situations where the social factors may become amplified. Textbook tasks relating the L2 to the shared language of the majority group in the class, for instance, translation tasks between languages, could be a situation where social factors become relevant. Considering how the students' own language does not necessarily correlate to their L2 knowledge and acquisition, it is interesting as to whether textbooks for lower secondary schools must relate tasks to one specific language beyond English, compared to tasks facilitating various languages.

2.7 Textbooks in EFL Teaching.

A universally used resource in EFL instruction worldwide is textbooks (Guerrettaz & Johnston, 2013). Norwegian EFL teachers are no exception and have a history of depending on textbooks for both lesson planning and classroom instruction (Bakken, 2019, p. 106; Drew et al., 2007, p. 335). According to Choen et al. (2011), textbooks can be defined as books “(...) produced for schools and other educational institutions since the 1830s when the term itself appeared” (p. 250). Textbooks serve as valuable tools for both teachers and students, providing structured support in the learning process. Choen et al. (2011) argue that textbooks are widely favored among lecturers and teachers because the books typically follow curricula and present information structurally and comprehensively (p. 250). Although the current curriculum provides Norwegian EFL teachers with significant autonomy when choosing teaching methods and approaches for classroom instruction, textbooks are still a commonly used resource (Bakken, 2019, pp. 106-107). As a result of this broad use in EFL teaching, one can safely assume that textbooks influence students EFL learning to some degree, leaving textbooks with a noteworthy responsibility.

The use of textbooks in EFL instruction can originate from various factors, including the alignment between textbooks and curricula. Textbooks are designed to align with prevailing curricula standards and guidelines and may therefore offer assurance that the course of the books covers all the requirements outlined in the curriculum. National curricula and textbooks usually share numerous similarities, making some individuals consider textbooks “a proxy for what is taught in a classroom” (Usiskin, 2013, p. 716). In this context, Usiskin (2013) introduces the concept of “*textbook curriculum*”, which functions as a collective term including all materials experienced by students throughout their years at school (p. 716). As textbook content is typically designed following curriculum guidelines, the *textbook curriculum* tends to closely mirror the implemented curriculum. However, it is crucial to distinguish between curricula and

textbooks, considering how textbooks cannot serve as substitutes for curricula (Bakken & Andersson-Bakken, 2021, p. 730).

Both the Norwegian national curriculum and the specific curriculum for the English subject emphasize multilingualism and the value of being proficient in several languages (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017, pp. 2-3; 2019, p. 6). In addition, the curriculum highlights the importance of “working with texts” as a core element in the English subject (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p. 3). EFL textbooks are typically structured by including a mix of different texts and accompanying tasks, organized in chapters following different topics. Therefore, textbooks make a collection of various texts easily available to students and provide a large selection of different tasks. These elements make textbooks a convenient choice for EFL teachers in their lesson planning and classroom instruction. Although text material is highlighted as a central part of learning English in the curriculum, tasks are also important resources that influence students’ learning outcomes (Edwards, 2014).

2.8 Tasks in EFL Learning

Throughout the history of foreign language learning, there have been debates regarding the most effective approach to language learning, and different ideas have been popular at different times in history (Bygate, 2016, pp. 383-385). An approach that has received recent attention over the last years, is task-based learning (Littlewood, 2004, p. 319). Task-based learning can be described and understood in different ways (Bygate, 2016; Littlewood, 2004), however, a common trait across research is that the approach revolves around tasks in the language-learning process. Further, there are multiple approaches to task-based learning, whereas an approach called “task-supported” teaching might be most relevant to EFL teaching in Norway (Ellis, 2009, p. 224). “Task-supported” teaching involves implementing tasks into existing classroom structures, where tasks often function as individual activities (Bygate, 2016, p. 387).

With the broad use of textbooks in EFL teaching today, textbook tasks play a significant role in EFL learning. Simultaneously, many publishers worldwide describe their textbooks as task-based (Littlewood, 2004, p. 319). A master’s thesis by Straumsheim (2023), which examined tenth-grade EFL textbooks used in Norway education, revealed that many tasks do align with task-based learning principles. However, providing a specific and comprehensive understanding of what the task-based approach entails is not deemed necessary for this study. The important part is, however, to create an understanding of the significant role tasks play in EFL learning. Within the task-based learning approach and foreign language learning research, a problematic area appears to be the understanding of what a task is, given how tasks can be

described and understood differently (Ellis, 2009, p. 227). Bakken & Andersson-Bakken (2021) provides a comprehensive understanding of what a task is by defining a task as “ a paratext that performs a directive addressed to the student” (p. 733). In this context, a paratext can be understood as a text element surrounding a main text, which follows the usual structure for most textbooks (Bakken & Andersson-Bakken, 2021, p. 733). This understanding of tasks has influenced and guided the current study.

2.9 Task development and curriculum updates

An interesting element considering textbook tasks is whether they are updated according to curriculum reforms, or if only the surrounding elements are changed. A recognized study by Bakken and Andersson-Bakken (2021) raises attention to this potential matter. In their study, they analyzed six textbooks aimed at upper secondary schools (year 11) that were published after the implementation of the new curriculum. Their research aimed to investigate whether the tasks in the analyzed textbooks, originating from two different publishing houses, were changed after the implementation of the new curriculum reform. The authors examined tasks from both language arts textbooks and science textbooks published after 2020. The results from this analysis were compared to the results of two previous textbook analyses they did on textbooks published before 2020. The findings of their latest study (Bakken & Andersson-Bakken, 2021) indicated minimal change in the tasks found in the textbooks published before and after the curriculum reform in 2020. Related to their examination of textbooks, Bakken and Andersson-Bakken (2021) discuss a term they refer to as “*the textbook task genre*”, questioning and discussing whether tasks follow the updated curriculums or if they follow preexisting ideas and approaches present in the different subject disciplines. This potential issue is highly relevant to the research questions for this thesis, considering how the present study examines the alignment of textbooks and the current curriculum.

In his master’s thesis, Straumsheim (2023) also examined changes in textbook tasks. By employing the analytical codes developed by Bakken and Andersson-Bakken (2021), Straumsheim analyzed four textbooks from two different publishing houses. The textbooks included two versions of Cappelen Damm’s *Engelsk 10* and two versions of Aschehoug’s *Stages 10*. Both series included one version published before 2020 and one published after the curriculum reform of 2020. In his study, Straumsheim (2023) compared formal and functional task design in the books, before and after 2020. Additionally, the alignment of the tasks with task-based language learning principles was also examined.

Findings in this study by Straumsheim (2023) revealed similar results as the results emerging from the study from Bakken and Andersson-Bakken (2021), regarding limited change in task formulation despite changes in the curriculum. Additionally, the study revealed alignments between the textbooks and task-based learning principles, similar to other results briefly discussed previously in this study (see section 2.8). The two studies discussed in this section do not examine enough textbooks to provide a clear and generalizable conclusion to the argument. They do, however, offer a plausible explanation as to why some textbooks might not align with newly introduced curriculums.

2.10 Vygotsky's Sociocultural Learning Theory

In the process of understanding and describing language learning, numerous learning theories have emerged over time (Mitchell et al., 2019). Among these, Vygotsky's sociocultural learning theory (SLT) stands as a highly influential approach within the realm of foreign language acquisition (Sarmiento-Campos et al., 2022, p. 2). Originally, the sociocultural learning theory emphasized the significance of communication and social interaction in language acquisition. Vygotsky argued that learning abilities are enhanced in environments made up of supportive interactions (Lightbown & Spada, 2021, p. 25). This learning theory introduced two crucial concepts in the realm of language acquisition, namely the "*Zone of proximal development*" and "*scaffolding*", which have received widespread recognition in both research and literature (Sarmiento-Campos et al., 2022, p. 3). At its core, the SLT argues that children learn more effectively when solving tasks with others, compared to working alone.

The zone of proximal development (ZPD), as described by Vygotsky, describes a metaphorical space where children can engage in tasks that surpass their independent abilities (Lightbown & Spada, 2021, p. 25). Scaffolding, on the other hand, can be described as a supportive structure providing children necessary support to enhance their capabilities within the ZPD. In learning situations, where children interact with individuals who possess more competence and knowledge, these individuals work as scaffolds for the children in their learning. For instance, when students collaborate with teachers to solve tasks, the dialogue between the student and the teacher functions as scaffolding, guiding the students to use their preexisting knowledge and develop new abilities. In addition to scaffolds as support, Vygotsky also introduces the concept of artefacts when describing the relationship between the physical world and the development of human thinking (Anh & Marginson, 2013, p. 147). Easily

explained, artefacts can be described as physical tools enabling cognitive development and learning (Anh & Marginson, 2013, p. 147).

Since the introduction of the sociocultural learning theory, the theory and its learning principles have been interpreted in different ways, inspiring new approaches within the field of educational research (Sarmiento-Campos et al., 2022, p. 3). The principles regarding the zone of proximal development and scaffolding can offer insight into language acquisition beyond communication and social interaction. Following the concept of the zone of proximal development, suitable scaffolding facilitates students' expansion of their already acquired knowledge. Therefore, in the context of language learning, diverse elements can be viewed and function as scaffolds, supporting students in their linguistic development (Sarmiento-Campos et al., 2022, p. 3). In Norwegian EFL classrooms, textbooks and their included tasks can be considered a supporting element, working as scaffolds for the student's language learning. Textbooks and textbook tasks can also be considered artefacts, as they are physical tools bridging the gap between classroom instruction and cognitive processes. This line of reasoning argues for the complex interplay between language acquisition processes and instructional support in the classroom.

3 Methodology

Various methods and approaches can be employed when conducting research (Creswell & Guetterman, 2021, p. 36). An acknowledged research design for analyzing textual material is content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278). Content analysis serves as a general umbrella term, categorizing textbook analysis as a specialized form within its scope (Choen et al., 2011), and numerous aspects of content analysis apply to textbook analysis as well. The subsequent sections will explain the methodology of the present study within the broader context of content analyses and the distinctive characteristics of textbook analyses.

3.1 Methodological Approach

A content analysis can either have a quantitative or qualitative approach, depending on the aim of the research (Creswell & Guetterman, 2021). Quantitative and qualitative research are two distinct approaches with different characteristics, however, research may show traits from both categories (Creswell & Guetterman, 2021, p. 43). The present study aims to analyze a substantial number of tasks across six textbooks, positioning it within the realm of quantitative research. However, considering the need for interpretation of tasks for categorization purposes, the study also involves qualitative elements. Therefore, a suitable approach to effectively address the research questions of this study is a mixed approach combining both qualitative and quantitative research elements.

For instance, Hsieh and Shannon (2005) categorize qualitative content analyses into three different strategies: conventional content analysis, direct content analysis, and summative content analysis. Of these three, a summative approach contains some principles suitable to the textbook analysis for the present study. A summative content analysis typically relies on a mix of statistical procedures and the understanding of context, by for instance examining word frequency and the underlying meanings of the words (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1285). The research question guiding this thesis focuses on the occurrence of specific tasks and the formulation of these tasks, however, it does not investigate the underlying contexts behind the tasks. Therefore, the methodological approach is inspired by the summative content analysis approach described by Hsieh and Shannon (2005) but does not completely follow its structure.

The most suitable content analysis method for this study is textbook analysis. This approach, which follows the general principles of content analysis, specifically centers around the content of textbooks. Given its systematic and comprehensive nature, textbook analysis proves to be well-suited for examining the research question for this thesis. This methodological

approach makes it possible to conduct a thorough and effective analysis of textbook tasks in a systematic matter.

3.2 Data Collection

This thesis aims to investigate EFL textbooks used in grades 8, 9, and 10 in lower secondary schools in Norway. Following the curriculum revision in 2020, the major publishing houses in Norway released new textbooks following the updated guidelines. Four prominent publishing houses dominate the textbook landscape in Norway: Cappelen Damm, Aschehoug, Gyldendal, and Fagbokforlaget. While including the books from all publishing houses in the analysis would enhance this study's results, the selection is limited by the thesis's size. Therefore, given the scope of this study, only textbooks from two publishing houses will be analyzed. The sampling strategy used to choose which textbooks to analyze follows the principles of convenience sampling. This type of sampling involves purposefully selecting textbooks available at the time of analysis (Choen et al., 2011, p. 155). Furthermore, since the textbooks were chosen to achieve representativeness and select comparable books, the selection process also follows the principles of purposive sampling (Choen et al., 2011, p. 156). Therefore, the books selected for analysis are:

1. *Engelsk 8-10* (Haegi et al., 2020, 2021; Madsen & Mohammad-Roe, 2020), published by Cappelen Damm
2. *Stages 8-10* (Pettersen & Røkaas, 2020, 2021a, 2021b), published by Aschehoug

These two publishers and their books were chosen over Gyldendal and Fagbokforlaget due to their structure of content and tasks. *Stages 8-10* and *Engelsk 8-10* are both structured with one book for each specific grade containing all the relevant material to teach EFL each year. In addition, *Stages 8-10* and *Engelsk 8-10* both include five chapters for each book and follow the structure of including various texts with accompanying tasks following the text. This similar structure of the books makes the two series comparable. The books published by Gyldendal have a similar structure of content to Cappelen Damm and Aschehoug, making them comparable as well. However, the *Enter 8-10* series published by Gyldendal differs from the books chosen for analysis, by including an additional resource book called "Basic Skills". This additional book works as a supplement to the three other textbooks in the series. The book *Echo 8-10* published by Fagbokforlaget has a distinct approach compared to the three other series.

Echo 8-10 places a strong emphasis on literature, with the textbook primarily comprised of texts, accompanied by only a few tasks asking about the texts. Considering the additional book in the *Enter 8-10* series, and the unique approach in *Echo 8-10*, the most suitable approach for this study is to compare the textbooks from Cappelen Damm and Aschehoug. Moreover, the analysis does not include any digital resources that may accompany the textbooks, focusing only on the physical student versions of the books.

3.3 Analysis of The Data

The textbooks chosen for this analysis were analyzed by the counting of tasks. First, all the tasks in the books were counted. To distinguish what to count as a task in the books, I chose to consider all questions directed to the students related to the content or other learning activities, as a task. This understanding of tasks follows Bakken and Andersson's definition of tasks (see section 2.8). Although there are similarities between the two series analyzed, there are variations in the structure and formulation of tasks within each series. Therefore, when counting the total number of tasks in each book, different approaches to each series were used. These approaches are explained further in the following subsection.

In *Engelsk 8-10* all tasks and activities that stood on their own with a number, or a letter, were categorized as one task. In *Stages 8-10*, however, only the numbers were counted as one task. This discrepancy is due to differing patterns used to introduce and organize tasks within each series. In *Engelsk 8-10* numbers were used to introduce tasks or function as headings for the task, while letters were used to distinguish between different tasks within the same topic. In *Stages 8-10*, however, numbers were similarly used to organize tasks, while the letters resembled the function of bullet points within each task. For example, if the task required the translation of sentences, each sentence for translation would be labeled with a letter. Counting all numbers and letters in *Stages 8-10*, as done in *Engelsk 8-10*, would therefore result in a misleadingly high total number of tasks in *Stages 8-10*.

After identifying and counting the total number of tasks, the tasks requiring knowledge of an additional language beyond English to complete the task were identified and quantified. Then, the identified tasks were categorized into two different groups. One group involved tasks where the additional language was predetermined as Norwegian, while the other group included tasks where the additional language was not specified in the task text. Throughout the analysis, a particular type of task was challenging to categorize using the two originally established groups. These tasks initially instructed Norwegian as the additional language, but then followed

by encouraging the students to include other languages they may know as well. As a result, a third group with tasks concerning both Norwegian and an additional language beyond English was established. Finally, all results were converted to a percentage in addition to the count number. This was done to enhance comprehensibility and facilitate comparison across the different books. The tasks identified and described to this point are henceforth referred to as “regular tasks”, as they cover the largest group of tasks in the books.

In addition to the regular tasks in the books, the analysis includes introduction tasks before the chapter and “before you read” tasks in *Engelsk 8-10*, as well as “starting point” tasks found in *Stages 8-10*. However, these tasks are not included in the total count of tasks for each book. The analysis also includes “lightbulb” tips found in *Engelsk 8-10*, since they provide support and/or scaffolding for the tasks. These “lightbulb” tips are treated as a separate group and are not included in the total task count as well. All the tasks introducing the chapters in *Engelsk 8-10*, the “before you read” tasks, the “starting point” tasks, and the “lightbulb” tips are analyzed using the same approach as the regular tasks, and all these tasks as a group are referred to as “additional tasks” in this study.

To assess the relationship between the textbooks and the curriculum, the competence aims outlined in the English subject curriculum were also analyzed. The analysis of the competence aims follows a similar approach as the described task analysis. First, all competence aims up to year 10 were counted. Then the aims concerning languages other than English were identified and categorized into two groups. One group with the aims referring to other languages in general and one group for those specifically mentioning Norway or Norwegian. A noteworthy observation when creating the two groups used for the analysis was that the English subject curriculum does not explicitly mention specific languages other than English and Norwegian. An important aspect to consider regarding the competence aims in the curriculum is their evolution and development throughout the compulsory school years. It is important to consider the progression of the aims throughout all years, although this analysis primarily focuses on lower secondary school (years 8-10), making the competence aims after year 10 the most relevant. Therefore, all competence aims in the English subject are included in the analysis to provide a comprehensive understanding of their development from the different years included in the curriculum.

3.4 Validity and Reliability

When conducting research, the accuracy of a study is determined by the validity and reliability (Creswell & Guetterman, 2021, p. 297). While researchers strive for accuracy, factors affecting

the validity and reliability of research are impossible to erase completely (Choen et al., 2011, p. 179). Validity is often associated with the trustworthiness and credibility of research. Considering the impossibility of achieving 100% validity, researchers must recognize and address potential influences on the validity of their study (Choen et al., 2011, p. 179). This applies to reliability as well and researchers should always consider and explain the reliability of their study. Although validity and reliability affect each other, they describe different elements of research. Following this, one could say that while validity determines the credibility of research, reliability determines the dependability of research (Choen et al., 2011, p. 199).

An advantageous aspect of content analyses is the possibility of replication (Choen et al., 2011, pp. 201-202). The material analyzed for this study is textbooks, which typically uphold a consistent form and are available to everyone, often both online and in physical copies. This makes it possible to replicate the present study using the same textbooks and thereby strengthen the validity of the findings. Additionally, considering the rule-based and structured nature of content analyses, this research approach often involves less unpredictable factors that could influence the results. As described in section 3.3, a pre-established system was used to categorize the tasks within the textbooks. This was done to enhance the reliability of the study and limit potential sources of invalidation. Moreover, before finalizing the categorization process, a pilot analysis of one textbook was conducted. However, despite using a predetermined coding system, the categorization of the tasks required subjective interpretation of the tasks. Although objectivity is crucial for research, it is important to acknowledge the potential influence of unconscious biases an interpretation process could introduce to the study. Additionally, to avoid sampling bias, the entire book series from both publishing houses were included in the analysis, as well as all the tasks in the books.

Lastly, to reinforce the study's reliability, textbooks from two different publishing houses were selected for analysis. Given that there are no specific guidelines dictating the content and emphasis of a textbook aside from the national curriculum guidelines, the authors' individual interpretations and comprehension of the curriculum influence the outcome of the books. Therefore, it is important to note that the two textbook series examined in this thesis may not be representative of textbooks from other publishers. Nevertheless, this study contributes to a better comprehension of the analyzed textbooks and their alignment with the curriculum guidelines, making the study valuable in the field of educational research.

4 Results

The research questions for this study were “Do the tasks in textbooks used in Norwegian grade 8-10 classrooms align with the curriculums’ emphasis on linguistic inclusion?” and “To what extent do EFL textbooks used in Norwegian grade 8-10 classrooms facilitate toward students with diverse linguistic backgrounds?”. To explore these research questions a textbook analysis was conducted on six textbooks from two different publishing houses. Given that textbooks are written according to current curriculum guidelines, this section first presents a brief analysis of the English subject curriculums’ competence aims, followed by the analysis of the chosen textbooks. After the analysis of the curriculum, the subsequent part continues to present the textbook analysis results, beginning with a presentation of the Cappelen Damm books, followed by a presentation of the Aschehoug books.

4.1 Curriculum for The English subject

The curriculum for the English subject involves specific competence aims the students are expected to master after years 2, 4, 7, and 10 (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, pp. 5-9). In total, the English curriculum involves 61 competence aims; 11 aims after year 2, 15 aims after year 4, 16 aims after year 7, and 19 aims after year 10 (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, pp. 5-9). As shown in *Table 1* below, 10 out of the 61 competence aims, are related to other languages than English. Out of these ten aims four aims specifically mention Norway, and the remaining six aims allow the students to choose an additional language to relate English to.

Types of aims:	Competence aims after year 2	Competence aims after year 4	Competence aims after year 7	Competence aims after year 10	The total number of all years combined:	Percentage of the total number of all years combined:
The total number of aims:	11	15	16	19	61	N/A
Aims relating English with other languages	1	3	3	3	10	16,4%
Aims where students can choose which language to relate English with	1	2	2	1	6	9,8%
Aims where Norway/ Norwegian is mentioned specifically	0	1	1	2	4	6,6%

Table 1 - Competence Aims for the English Subject

Already after their second year at school, the students should be able to “find words that are common to English and other languages with which the pupil is familiar” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p. 5). After year 4 this aim is expanded into being able to “discover and play with words and expressions that are common to both English and other languages with which the pupil is familiar”, and the aim “explore different dictionaries and how they can be used in language learning” is added (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p. 6). After year 7, these two aims are expanded further, and after year 10 the competence aims result in one aim sounding: “explore and describe some linguistic similarities and differences between English and other language the pupil is familiar with and use this in one's own language learning” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p. 9).

There are no competence aims that connect English with the Norwegian language. However, there are four aims where Norway as a country is mentioned. After year 4 the students are expected to be able to “talk about some aspect of different ways of living, traditions and customs in the English-speaking world and in Norway” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p. 6), and after year 7 this aim is expanded into “investigate ways of living and traditions in different societies in the English-speaking world and in Norway and reflect on identity and cultural belonging” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p. 8). After year 10 this aim appears to be divided into two separate aims: “describe and reflect on the role played by the English language in Norway and the rest of the world” and “explore and reflect on the situation indigenous peoples in the English-speaking world and in Norway” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p. 9). Following this analysis of the competence aims, it appears that the competence aims concerning language and linguistic learning are designed to accommodate diverse linguistic backgrounds, whereas those mentioning Norway target aspects of culture and identity.

4.2 *Engelsk 8, 9, and 10*

Cappelen Damm published their book series for lower secondary schools between 2020 and 2021 (Haegi et al., 2020, 2021; Madsen & Mohammad-Roe, 2020). The series consists of three books, each book made to a specific grade level. Each book divides the book's content into five chapters and the series delves into a range of different topics evolving over the three years of lower secondary school. For instance, the chapter “Growing Up” in the eighth-grade book is turned into the chapter “Role Models” in the ninth-grade book, before ending in the chapter “Democracy and Citizenship” in the tenth-grade book. This progression of the chapter themes

is evident throughout the series, with each chapter creating a common thread connecting the content across the books.

Each chapter of the book features six different texts covering a variety of different genres and difficulty levels, each text followed by distinct tasks and activities. The books also offer scaffolding for students by including lightbulb statements scattered through the books. Each lightbulb provides tips to students, and the tips are typically related to task completion and/or engagement with the topic and material. In addition, the book series provides extra material for the teachers through a “*Teacher’s Book*”. The “*Teacher’s Book*” is an extended version of the “*Student’s Book*”. The book includes additional columns on each side throughout the book containing teacher resources useful for lesson planning and classroom instruction. However, for the analysis conducted in this thesis, only the content of the “*student’s book*” was employed.

4.3 Tasks in *Engelsk 8, 9, and 10*

The books include a range of various tasks and activities. At the start of each chapter, three questions serve as an introduction to the chapter's topic. Additionally, many of the texts feature “before reading” questions to prompt engagement, and each text is followed by accompanying tasks. The tasks that follow the texts are the largest group of tasks in the books and are referred to as “regular tasks” in this study. The regular tasks are the main focus of this thesis, however, the tasks from the chapter beginnings and the “before reading” tasks carry some relevance as well and are included in the analysis.

4.3.1 Regular Tasks

Books:	Total number of tasks	Tasks where students need knowledge of an additional language to complete the task:		Tasks specifically mentioning Norwegian as the additional language:		Tasks where the students can choose the additional language without Norwegian being mentioned		Tasks including Norwegian and an additional language in the same task.	
ENGELSK 8	389	15 tasks	3,9%	15 tasks	3,9%	0	0%	0	0%
ENGELSK 9	492	23 tasks	4,7%	23 tasks	4,7%	0	0%	1 task	0,2%
ENGELSK 10	468	13 tasks	2,8%	13 tasks	2,8%	0	0%	0	0%
All books in total	1,345	51 task	3,8%	51 task	3,8%	0	0%	1 task	0,07%

Table 2 - Regular Tasks, Engelsk 8-10

In total, the *Engelsk 8-10* books contain 1,345 regular tasks. Of these, 51 tasks require the students to know another language than English to complete the task. Looking at *Table 2*, the eighth-grade book has the lowest number of tasks in total, but not the lowest number of tasks requiring an additional language. *Engelsk 9* is the book with the most tasks requiring another language and it includes the highest number of tasks in total. The tenth-grade book has a lower number of tasks in total compared to the ninth-grade book and it has the lowest quantity of tasks involving knowledge of multiple languages. It is noticeable how all three books specifically state Norwegian as the additional language in all the tasks involving languages other than English. No tasks allow the students to choose the additional language, without mentioning Norwegian as well. In *Engelsk 9* there is one task in the book that opens for other languages than Norwegian. However, in this case, the task first asks the student to translate a phrase into Norwegian, and then the task encourages the student to translate the phrase into another language the student may know.

To compare the books despite different numbers of tasks in total, the results are presented as a percentage as well. *Engelsk 9* is the book with the highest quantity of tasks where students need an additional language to complete the task, with 4,6% of all the tasks requiring more than one language. This percentage decreases in the tenth-grade book, where only 2,7% of the tasks involve additional languages. However, it is noteworthy to mention that *Engelsk 8* has the lowest number of tasks, but it scores just below *Engelsk 9* with 3,8% of all tasks regarding another language. *Engelsk 8* has about one hundred tasks in total less than *Engelsk 9*, but they have almost the same number of tasks requiring knowledge of an additional language beyond English.

4.3.2 Tasks Before the Chapter

The category of tasks involving the lowest number of tasks in the books is the “tasks before the chapter”. Each book has fifteen tasks in total, working as introduction tasks to the following chapters they stand before. Among the three books, only *Engelsk 8* features a single task that relates to languages other than English. However, this particular

Books:	Tasks before the chapter	
	Total number of tasks:	Task regarding other languages than English:
ENGELSK 8	15	1 task (<i>Norwegian</i>) = 6%
ENGELSK 9	15	0 %
ENGELSK 10	15	0 %

Table 3 - "Tasks before the chapter", Engelsk 8-10

task is related to Norwegian skills, and none of the tasks preceding the chapters in *Engelsk 8-10* appears to allow the potential exploration of linguistic knowledge beyond Norwegian and English.

4.3.3 “Before you read” Tasks

In total, the series includes 94 “before you read” tasks. Consistent with the findings from the analysis of “regular tasks”, *English 9* features the highest number of “before you read” tasks. Still, neither the ninth-grade book nor the tenth-grade book requires any additional language knowledge

Books:	“Before you read” tasks	
	Total number of tasks:	Task regarding other languages than English:
ENGELSK 8	29 tasks	1 task (<i>Norwegian</i>) = 3,4%
ENGELSK 9	37 tasks	0 %
ENGELSK 10	28 tasks	0 %

beyond English in these tasks. Only one “before you read” task in the series, found in *Engelsk 8*, involves another language beyond English. However, considering how this task is a translation task between Norwegian and English, the linguistic variety is limited to Norwegian as the additional language.

Table 4 - "Before you read" Tasks, Engelsk 8-10

4.3.4 “Lightbulbs” – Tips Related to The Tasks

While the lightbulb tips included in the books are not classified as tasks, they still serve as valuable support for the students when completing the tasks. Therefore, the tips are considered relevant to the research questions guiding this thesis. The *Engelsk 8-10* series includes 255 tips in total, with 17 tips involving knowledge of languages beyond English. The

Books:	Tips related to the tasks		
	Total number of tips	Tips mentioning other languages than English:	Tips specifically mentioning Norwegian:
ENGELSK 8	89	9 tips = 10%	9 tips = 10%
ENGELSK 9	97	5 tips = 5%	5 tips = 6%
ENGELSK 10	69	3 tips = 4,3%	2 tips = 2,9 %

Table 5 - "Lightbulb" Tips, Engelsk 8-10

ninth-grade book contains the highest total number of tips. However, in terms of both quantity and percentage relative to the other books, *Engelsk 8* has the highest number of tips requiring knowledge of other languages. As shown in *Table 5*, there is a significant decrease in the percentage of tips requiring knowledge of other languages than English, from *Engelsk 8* to *Engelsk 10*. All the tips related to additional languages in *Engelsk 8* and *Engelsk 9* are only associated with Norwegian. Further, two out of three tips related to additional languages in *Engelsk 10* also involve Norwegian as the additional language. Throughout the series, one lightbulb tip appears to open for adding additional languages beyond mere Norwegian. One task in the tenth-grade book encourages the students to use a dictionary when working on a task, however, the task does not state the language of the dictionary to be used.

4.4 *Stages 8, 9 and 10*

Between the years 2020 and 2021, Aschehoug published their book series called “*Stages: Engelsk for ungdomstrinnet*” (Pettersen & Røkaas, 2020, 2021a, 2021b). The series involves three books, each book designed for each grade level of lower secondary school. Following a typical textbook structure, the books are divided into chapters covering various topics and themes, with accompanying texts and tasks. Each book consists of five chapters and the chapters evolve throughout the series. Like the structure of *Engelsk 8-10*, the chapter themes follow a common thread where the topics progressively develop from one book to the next.

All the chapters end with sections titled “Language work” and “Improve your writing”. These sections are designed to develop students’ language skills by providing grammar rules, examples, and writing exercises created to improve the writing abilities of the students. Both sections involve both explanations and accompanying tasks. However, whereas the tasks are presented in English, the surrounding explanations are provided in Norwegian.

4.5 *Tasks in Stages 8, 9 and 10*

The tasks in *Stages 8-10* are categorized into task types such as “understanding”, “vocabulary”, or “text analysis”. These task types serve as headings for the tasks throughout the books. The categories do not follow a set pattern, and the headings vary across the different books. Additionally, the tasks are structured numerically, with accompanying letters to assist in navigating the tasks. Like the tasks in *Engelsk 8-10*, the tasks following the texts are referred to as “regular tasks” in this study, since they cover the largest group of tasks in the books. In addition to the regular tasks following the texts, the series also involves tasks labeled “starting point” preceding the texts. While the tasks after the texts focus on working with the text itself and other valuable learning activities, the “starting point” tasks work as an introduction to the text or the topic of the text. The “starting point” category used in *Stages 8-10* corresponds with the category called “before you read” in *Engelsk 8-10*, as both categories describe tasks that function as an introduction to the various texts in both series.

4.5.1 Regular Tasks

Books:	Total number of tasks	Tasks where students need knowledge of an additional language to complete the task:		Tasks specifically mentioning Norwegian as the additional language:		Tasks where the students can choose the additional language without Norwegian being mentioned:		Tasks including Norwegian and an additional language in the same task:	
		tasks	%	tasks	%	tasks	%	tasks	%
STAGES 8	381	22 tasks	5,7%	21 tasks	5,5%	1	0,07%	0 tasks	0%
STAGES 9	481	30 tasks	6,2%	24 tasks	5%	3	0,2%	3 tasks	0,2%
STAGES 10	447	20 tasks	4,5%	18 tasks	4%	1	0,08%	1 tasks	0,08%
All books in total	1,309	72 task	5,6%	63 task	5,1%	5	0,4%	4 tasks	0,3%

Table 6 - Regular Tasks, Stages 8-10

Overall, *Stages 8-10* have 1,309 tasks in total, whereas 72 tasks require the students to possess knowledge of a language other than English. Among these 72 tasks, 63 tasks involve translation between Norwegian and English, 5 tasks allow the students to choose the additional language, and 4 tasks include both Norwegian and an additional language. Further, looking at the individual books, *Stages 8* has the lowest total number of tasks, while *Stages 9* has the highest. *Stages 10* features slightly fewer tasks than *Stages 9* and contains the lowest number of tasks requiring knowledge of other languages, considering both the number and percentage of all the books. The tenth-grade book includes 20 tasks that require knowledge of an additional language for completion. However, 19 of these tasks specifically require the knowledge of Norwegian skills. While 18 tasks only involve Norwegian and English, one task also involves an additional language. This task instructs the student to translate something into Norwegian, followed by a question asking if the student knows how to translate this into other languages as well. In addition to these 19 tasks, one task does not involve Norwegian. This task simply directs the student to translate something without specifying the translation language.

As shown in *Table 6*, *Stages 9* is the book with the highest number of tasks in total and tasks requiring language skills beyond English, both in terms of quantity and percentage. The book involves 30 tasks requiring knowledge of languages other than English, with 27 of these tasks requiring translation between Norwegian and English. Out of these 27 tasks, 24 include explicit translation between Norwegian and English. The remaining three tasks of the 27 tasks requiring an additional language involve Norwegian and potentially other languages. These tasks initially instruct the students to translate something into Norwegian, before encouraging the students to include other languages they may be familiar with. The ninth-grade book also

includes three tasks unrelated to Norwegian skills, where the instruction is to translate something, without specifying which language to be used for the translation.

The eighth-grade book involves the lowest number of tasks in total and it features 22 tasks requiring additional language skills beyond English. An interesting aspect regarding these 22 tasks in the eight-grade book, is how *Stages 8* falls only slightly below *Stages 9* when comparing percentages. The 22 task in *Stages 8* cover 5,8% of all tasks, while the 30 tasks in *Stages 9* cover 6,2% of all tasks. Out of these 22 tasks, 21 tasks specifically involve Norwegian skills to complete the tasks. The remaining task among the 22, allows the students to choose the additional language without involving Norwegian. This task instructs the students to translate something without specifying the language of translation. It does not appear to be any tasks in *Stages 8* where both Norwegian and the option to include other languages are present.

4.5.2 “Starting point” Tasks

The series contains 151 “starting point” tasks in total, distributed throughout the books. From the eighth-grade book and up to the tenth-grade books, the number of these tasks increases slightly with each book. *Stages 8* includes 49

Books:	“STARTING POINT” TASKS			
	Total number of tasks	Tasks where students need knowledge of an additional language to complete the task:	Tasks specifically mentioning Norwegian as the additional language:	Tasks where the students can choose the additional language without Norwegian being mentioned:
STAGES 8	49	4 tasks (8,2%)	2 tasks (4,1%)	0
STAGES 9	50	1 task (2%)	1 task (2%)	0
STAGES 10	52	4 tasks (7,7%)	1 task (1,9%)	3 tasks (5,8%)

Table 7 - "Starting point" Tasks, Stages 8-10

“Starting point” tasks. In *Stages 9* this number increases to 50, while *Stages 10* features the highest count with 52 such tasks. The ninth-grade book includes the lowest number of tasks requiring knowledge of languages other than English, with only one such task. As illustrated in *Table 7*, this task involves Norwegian as the predetermined additional language and does not offer students the option to choose the additional language. The eighth-grade and tenth-grade books feature an equal number of tasks that require knowledge of other languages, with four such tasks in each book. However, when comparing the total number of “starting point” tasks in the books, *Stages 8* includes the highest percentage of these tasks considering all three books.

Out of these four tasks in the eighth-grade book, two tasks specifically state Norwegian as the additional language, while the remaining two tasks focus on other languages. One task centers around the German language, while another task involves multiple languages. The tasks

involving multiple languages required students to match the correct translation of five ghost sounds to the corresponding language, the languages including Norwegian, Japanese, Spanish, English, and French. Neither *Stages 8* nor *Stages 9* allow the students to choose their additional language in any of the “starting point” tasks in the books. *Stages 10* is the only book that allows the students to choose the additional language in some tasks, featuring one task specifically stating Norwegian as the other language and three where the additional language is not specified. These three tasks simply instruct students to, for instance; “Translate the underlined words”, without stating which language one must translate to (Pettersen & Røkaas, 2021b, p. 38).

4.6 Overview of *Engelsk 8-10* and *Stages 8-10*

The subsections to this point have presented the results from both series, involving specific results from each textbook. The following section presents the overall results of both series, combining the results from all analyzed books. The results from each textbook provide valuable insight into the tasks, however, it is also useful to get an understanding of the series as a whole. The curriculum presents competence aims students should accomplish after years 2,4,7 and 10, not including specific aims for years 8 and 9. (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, pp. 5-9). As a result, textbook series designed for years 8, 9, and 10 are all made according to the competence aims after year 10, designed to fulfill the competence aims through the course of three books.

Types of tasks:	Engelsk 8-10, Cappelen Damm		Stages 8-10, Aschehoug	
The total number of tasks	1,345 tasks		1,309 tasks	
Tasks where students need knowledge of an additional language to complete the task	51 tasks	3,8 %	72 tasks	5,6%
Tasks specifically mentioning Norwegian as the additional language	51 tasks	3,8%	63 tasks	5,1%
Tasks where the students can choose the additional language without Norwegian being mentioned	0 tasks	0%	5 tasks	0,4%
The number of tasks including Norwegian and an additional language in the same task	1 tasks	0,07%	4 tasks	0,3%

Table 8 - Overview of Regular Tasks in Both Series

Table 8 illustrates the overall results from the regular tasks found in the two analyzed series. Both series include approximately the same number of tasks in total, with *Engelsk 8-10*

involving a few more tasks. However, looking at the category of tasks requiring knowledge of an additional language, a noteworthy difference occurs. While *Stages 8-10* include 72 of these tasks, *Engelsk 8-10* include 51. Additionally, in both series, the majority of tasks involving additional languages beyond English are associated with the Norwegian language. In *Stages 8-10*, 63 tasks explicitly state Norwegian as the additional language, and in *Engelsk 8-10* all 51 tasks are related to Norwegian. Regarding tasks allowing the students to choose the additional language without Norwegian being involved, *Stages 8-10* include 5 of these tasks whereas *Engelsk 8-10* do not involve this category of tasks at all. *Engelsk 8-10* do incorporate one task involving both Norwegian and an additional language, and *Stages 8-10* comprise 4 of these tasks.

Common to all books in both series were the introduction tasks appearing before texts. These tasks are included in the task group referred to as additional tasks in this study, although they are named “before you read” in *Engelsk 8-10* and “starting point” in *Stages 8-10*. Table 9 presents an overview of all the “Before you read” tasks in *Engelsk 8-10* and “Starting point” tasks in *Stages 8-10*.

Books:	Engelsk 8-10	Stages 8-10
Total number of introduction tasks	94 tasks	151 tasks
Tasks specifically mentioning Norwegian as the additional language:	1 task	4 tasks
Tasks where the students can choose their additional language.	0 tasks	3 tasks

Table 9 - Overview of "Before you read" & "Starting point" Tasks

There is a noteworthy discrepancy between the two series, regarding the total number of introduction tasks. As illustrated in Table 9, *Stages 8-10* include a significantly higher number of introduction tasks compared to *Engelsk 8-10*. Overall, 151 introduction tasks are featured in *Stages 8-10*, whereas *Engelsk 8-10* involve 94 introduction tasks. This difference between the series is also evident regarding the tasks involving additional language knowledge. *Stages 8-10* include 4 tasks requiring Norwegian skills to complete the tasks, in contrast to *Engelsk 8-10* which only includes one task requiring skills in Norwegian. Additionally, there are no “before you read” tasks where the students are encouraged to choose the additional language for the task. However, *Stages 8-10* feature 3 tasks allowing the students to choose the additional language.

4.7 Overall Overview of English Competence Aims

The entire English subject curriculum comprises 61 competence aims in total, spanning across all ten years. The following discussion is based on the overall overview of all the competence aims as illustrated in *Table 9*. Among the 61 competence aims; 10 aims connect the English language with other languages. These 10 aims can be categorized into two groups of aims: 6 aims allow students the choice of which language they want to relate English with, while 4 aims explicitly mention Norway. However, it is important to note that as mentioned

Types of aims:	The total number of aims all years combined:	Percentage of the total number of aims all years combined:
The total number of aims:	61 aims	N/A
Aims relating English and other languages	10 aims	16,4%
Aims where students can choose which language to relate English with	6 aims	9,8%
Aims where Norway/Norwegian is mentioned specifically	4 aims	6,6%

Table 10 - Overview of Competence Aims

earlier (section 4.1), these competence aims mentioning Norway, are primarily related to cultural awareness rather than linguistic learning. None of the competence aims specifically state a connection between the English and the Norwegian language. Furthermore, looking at *Table 9*, 16,4% of all the competence aims connect English to other languages, while 9,8% of the aims allow the students to choose the language to relate English with. Considering these results with the overall emphasis on multilingualism being a resource in the curriculum as a whole, it is evident the curriculum accentuates the value of other languages being present in EFL learning.

5 Discussion

With globalization, the Norwegian population has become increasingly diverse (Andreassen et al., 2013). Consequently, the recent changes to the Norwegian curriculum in 2020 reflect a clear inclination towards valuing multilingualism and the importance of language proficiency (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017, 2019). However, some research on Norwegian EFL textbooks has shown tendencies where publishers follow the textbook genre, rather than align their content with the revised curriculum (Bakken & Andersson-Bakken, 2021, p. 734). The overall aim of this thesis is to explore textbook tasks designed for lower secondary schools, concerning the inclusion of diverse linguistic backgrounds in a classroom and to assess their alignment with curriculum guidelines. The following part discusses the findings of the analysis in regard of the theoretical framework for the present thesis and the curriculum guidelines. Two questions guide the discussion, and the following questions are reformulations of the research questions for this thesis. The last part of this section discusses the limitations of this study and suggests aspects for further research.

5.1 Do the Textbooks' Tasks Align with Curriculum Guidelines?

In an attempt to answer whether the analyzed textbook tasks align with curriculum guidelines, it is important to be aware of the curriculum guidelines. By looking at elements of the reformed curriculum of 2020, it is clear how the Norwegian educational system aspires to reflect inclusive approaches toward diversities present in society. This is, for instance, communicated explicitly in the core curriculum by arguing how “A good society is founded on the ideals of inclusiveness and diversity” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017, p. 6). A significant part of the diversity present in Norwegian society is related to linguistic variation, which is also reflected in the core curriculum. By stating 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. 6), the curriculum guidelines emphasize the value of linguistic proficiency. Two formulations within this specific excerpt are noteworthy, these being: “All shall experience (...)” and “(...) in a number of languages (...)” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017, p. 6). These formulations explicitly state that the students should experience the value of proficiency in multiple languages. Following this interpretation, it is not enough for the students to be aware of linguistic diversity, the curriculum guidelines require the students to actually experience it.

The statement regarding proficiency in multiple languages is not followed by a specific approach to achieve this in the classroom. Considering teachers' autonomy in classroom instruction and learning approaches, this curriculum directive can be upheld by various approaches. However, considering the broad use of textbooks in EFL teaching, as presented in section 2.7 of the present study, this thesis argues that Norwegian EFL textbooks should provide tasks and learning activities where this aspiration is upheld. Moreover, there is another important aspect regarding the curriculum guidelines. As discussed in this section, the core curriculum communicates various statements emphasizing the value of linguistic diversity and inclusiveness in society. Considering how the core curriculum entails a whole section named: "Identity and Cultural Diversity" (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017a), the argument of how the curriculum clearly states linguistic inclusion is reinforced. Additionally, the curriculum includes a distinct curriculum for the English subject. Considering that there are no competence aims (see *Table 10*, section 4.7) or other instructions in the curriculum, claiming that Norwegian is necessary for linguistic learning, further reinforces the curriculum's emphasis on linguistic inclusiveness.

Therefore, comparing the overall overview of the regular tasks of both series presented in *Table 8*, with the overall overview of EFL competence aims presented in *Table 10*, both book series show tendencies that do not correspond to the curriculum guidelines. The most evident discrepancy between the analyzed textbooks and the curriculum is the tasks regarding only Norwegian and English. Considering the lack of competence aims, and other instructions in the curriculum connecting Norwegian to linguistic learning, both series include a relatively high quantity of tasks where Norwegian skills are necessary to complete the tasks. Furthermore, the majority of tasks concerning other languages appear to be translation tasks between Norwegian and English in both series, without the possibility of including other languages the students may be familiar with. As discussed previously, the curriculum requires the students to experience the value of proficiency in a number of languages. By mostly involving Norwegian and English, arguably two languages that likely are familiar to many students, the experienced variety of languages becomes limited.

There are a few distinct differences between *Engelsk 8-10* and *Stages 8-10*. Overall, both series include a similar number of tasks in total, with the *Engelsk 8-10* series only including a few more tasks. However, *Stages 8-10* include more tasks involving additional languages beyond English, compared to *Engelsk 8-10*. Furthermore, *Engelsk 8-10* comprise no tasks where the students can relate English to a language of their choosing, without also requiring Norwegian skills. There is one particular task appearing in *Engelsk 9*, which includes both

Norwegian skills and the option of including an additional language. However, besides this particular task, neither *Engelsk 8* nor *Engelsk 10* entail any tasks including languages beyond Norwegian and English. Continuing the comparison of the two series, *Stages 8-10* involve a higher number of tasks where Norwegian is explicitly stated as the additional language, along with a higher number of tasks providing students the option to choose the additional language. *Stages 8-10* also include a higher number of tasks where Norwegian is specified as an additional language, while the task also encourages the students to include other languages they may know. Following this line of reasoning, *Stages 8-10* reveal tendencies that align slightly closer with the curriculum guidelines, compared to *Engelsk 8-10*. However, both series display some discrepancies from the curriculum.

The results discussed to this point are from the regular tasks in the books. Comparing the results from the “*before you read*” and “*starting point*” tasks with those from the regular tasks, the introduction tasks show similar tendencies of limited alignment with the curriculum. Similar to the results from the regular tasks, additional tasks in *Stages 8-10* include a higher number of tasks related to additional languages compared to the additional tasks in *Engelsk 8-10*. While the *Stages 8-10* series reveal four introduction tasks explicitly stating Norwegian as the additional language, it also involves 3 tasks allowing students to choose the additional language (see *Table 9*, section 4.6). In contrast, *Engelsk 8-10*, does not include any tasks where the Norwegian language is not involved. Based on these findings, it appears that *Stages 8-10* still align more with the curriculum than *Engelsk 8-10*, including the introduction tasks as well.

Considering the results from all the regular tasks, and additional tasks, *Stages 8-10* appear to be more aligned with the curriculum guidelines for linguistic inclusiveness. Despite high quantities of tasks explicitly stating Norwegian as the additional language, the series involves a higher number of tasks involving other languages beyond Norwegian and English. Concerning all the tasks in *English 8-10* there is not one task opening for linguistic variation without Norwegian being included. Although one task allows the students to include other languages in addition to Norwegian, this quantity is too low to be in alignment with the curriculum guidelines.

As explained in the introduction, Haugen (2023) also analyzed *Engelsk 10* and *Stage 10*, focusing on intercultural competence promotion in the tasks and their alignment with the curriculum. The topics of linguistic diversity and intercultural competence target different aspects of a multicultural and multilingual society. However, they are within the same area, and Haugen (2023) reached similar results as the present study. According to Haugen’s findings, *Stages 10* included a higher number of tasks that promoted intercultural competence, compared

to the tasks in *Engelsk 10*. Additionally, both books revealed limited alignment with the curriculum's emphasis on intercultural competence, similar to the results of the present study regarding linguistic diversity and inclusion. Drawing on Goodlad's understanding of curriculum theory, there appears to be a difference present between the different levels of the curriculum. Although the curriculum emphasizes linguistic inclusivity and diversity, these ideas are less apparent in the realized part of the curriculum.

5.2 Do the Textbook Tasks Facilitate Different Linguistic Backgrounds?

Norwegian EFL classes typically entail a number between 26-30 students. These students all represent a diversity of learner characteristics and abilities, which must be addressed through facilitating practices. Considering all included tasks, both regular tasks and additional tasks, this study has analyzed 2,944 tasks. Although 2,944 is a substantial number of tasks, it is important to acknowledge the various goals of textbooks and how they are expected to accommodate a broad specter of different learning characteristics. This study focuses on the group of tasks requiring additional language proficiency for task completion, which covers a relatively small quantity of all tasks in the books, both in terms of number and percentage. However, despite being part of a smaller group of tasks, these tasks occur regularly throughout all the books. As a result, EFL students will likely encounter these tasks in varying degrees in their EFL learning. The following part discusses how/if the textbook tasks facilitate different linguistic backgrounds present in an EFL classroom.

Guidelines present in the core curriculum apply to all subjects and are to be reflected in all classrooms. However, English might be one of the subjects most responsible for fulfilling the directives involving linguistic diversity and inclusiveness in the classroom. Considering how English is both a foreign language and a lingua franca, the English subject has a natural position to help students experience the value of extended language proficiency. It is natural to assume that Norwegian EFL classrooms typically involve a majority of students considering Norwegian as their own language. Regardless, EFL classrooms reflect the diversity within Norwegian society, resulting in diverse linguistic backgrounds. Looking at the results from the task analysis, a reoccurring trend in all books was the involvement of Norwegian skills. As discussed in section 5.1, most tasks involving additional language skills were related to Norwegian, with limited encouragement toward linguistic inclusion beyond Norwegian. Given this frequent occurrence of tasks involving Norwegian as the additional language, it is evident that the textbook tasks facilitate students considering Norwegian as their own language.

A relevant argument for including a considerable number of tasks that specifically require Norwegian skills could be the student's proficiency level in English. Although the Norwegian educational system starts the EFL learning at an early age, it is natural to assume a gradually increased English proficiency among the students each year. Following this line of reasoning, eighth-grade textbooks would involve a higher quantity of tasks relying on the students' Norwegian skills, compared to ninth-grade and tenth-grade books. The "lightbulb" tips presented in *Engelsk 8-10* follow this pattern of reducing the number of tips encouraging the students to rely on their Norwegian skills each year. As the students develop their English proficiency, the involvement of Norwegian is reduced. However, this is not an occurring pattern found in the regular tasks in either of the series. Both *Stages 9* and *Engelsk 9* comprise the highest number of tasks requiring Norwegian skills for completion, compared to the remaining books in both series. The eighth-grade books in both series do include more tasks requiring Norwegian skills than *Stages 10* and *Engelsk 10*, however, this difference is barely present. Not considering *Stages 9* and *Engelsk 9*, the books designed for eighth-grade and tenth grade involve almost the same number of Norwegian-requiring tasks. These findings do not appear to confirm the argument that the student's proficiency in English explains the significant number of tasks relying on Norwegian throughout the books.

All books include various forms of support surrounding the tasks. Although these elements arguably are considered outside the scope of tasks, they are included in the analysis. This is because the context surrounding the tasks likely influences the tasks and these supportive elements received attention

Books:	Tips related to the tasks		
	Total number of tips	Tips mentioning other languages than English:	Tips specifically mentioning Norwegian:
ENGELSK 8	89	9 tips = 10%	9 tips = 10%
ENGELSK 9	97	5 tips = 5%	5 tips = 5%
ENGELSK 10	69	3 tips = 4,3%	2 tips = 2,9 %

Table 11 - "Lightbulb" Tips, *Engelsk 8-10*

during the pilot analysis. This attention was gained due to a noteworthy involvement of Norwegian. The publishers have included different forms of support in their books, however, they both seem to follow a pattern of relying on Norwegian. *Engelsk 8-10* surround their tasks with "lightbulb" tips and the entire series entails 255 "lightbulbs". All these tips are written in English and 17 tips involve additional languages. 16 of these tips are related to Norwegian without involving other languages beyond this. One tip occurring in *Engelsk 10* encourages the students to rely on an optional language, beyond this, the tips offer students help by encouraging the students to rely on their Norwegian skills. The remaining "lightbulbs" in the books were unrelated to the discussion of language involvement, given the

English formulation of the tips making them available to all regardless of linguistic background. Considering this pattern, the supportive elements in Engelsk 8-10 show similar tendencies as the tasks, where the scaffolding is aimed toward students with Norwegian as their own language and shows limited inclusion and facilitating for linguistic skills beyond Norwegian.

These tendencies of task scaffolding relying on Norwegian, is more evident in *Stages 8-10*. In *Stages 8-10* each chapter ends with a part explaining different grammar and writing skills, labeled as grammar and writing courses. An interesting aspect of these courses finishing all chapters, is the extensive inclusion of Norwegian. Although the tasks comprised in these grammar and writing courses are formulated in English, all the surrounding text is written in Norwegian. This results in multiple pages, present in every chapter, where the students must be familiar with and understand the Norwegian language to participate. Furthermore, these pages can be considered to be crucial for the learning of English rules and skills. Having these pages written in Norwegian could lead to a divided classroom, where students proficient in Norwegian have a significant advantage. Although the majority of students in a Norwegian EFL classroom typically consider Norwegian as their own language, students with different linguistic backgrounds might consider Norwegian as a foreign language in addition to English. These students therefore face two foreign languages, compared to solely English. Lower secondary school students have completed several years of English teaching before they start eighth-grade. Furthermore, considering CEFR's influence in Europe and English as a Lingua Franca in the world, one could argue that most students will have sufficient English skills to understand English-dominated textbooks, regardless of linguistic background.

Further, this connection between grammar teaching and Norwegian use was also explored by Krulatz et al. (2016) in their study on primary school-level teachers. Their study revealed common patterns among EFL teachers where the teachers used Norwegian to teach grammar. Although primary school students are younger than lower secondary school students which naturally entails a lower English proficiency, this correlation between Norwegian and grammar teaching is interesting. Perhaps the involvement of Norwegian in EFL teaching approaches and textbook tasks is connected to the historical status of English as a foreign language in Norway. Officially, English is still considered a foreign language in Norway. However, following the population's increased diversity and multilingualism, the status and necessity for English skills have changed. This field of tension raises an interesting question as to how the English subject should be taught. Should English be taught as a foreign language, or would it be more valuable to consider English as a Lingua Franca? Following the argument of inclusivity of linguistic diversity in the classroom, teaching English as an international language

may increase inclusive classroom environments. The students would be able to participate in the EFL teaching without their linguistic background being an obstacle. However, teaching English as a foreign language does not necessarily exclude linguistic diversity but it might require a more thoughtful approach to EFL teaching. By limiting the tasks explicitly relating the target language to Norwegian, and rather include more inclusive formulations, diverse linguistic profiles would be attended to.

Continuing the discussion regarding the support surrounding the tasks, Vygotsky's sociocultural learning theory involves some relevant perspectives. Following this learning theory, the support for the tasks can be considered scaffolding for the students. Considering the proximal development zone, using a familiar language as scaffolding may make the target language less challenging and within the students' PDZ. This could be an explanation for the substantial involvement of Norwegian, especially considering the grammar and writing courses in *Stages 8-10*. A central principle of the proximal development zone is for students to maintain, use, and develop their knowledge through appropriate support. This principle supports the importance of tasks facilitating a spectrum of linguistic backgrounds, as opposed to solely Norwegian. Students' existing language knowledge could be tied to their own language, given this is the language they are most proficient in. Following this line of reasoning, students would benefit from task support, given that this support involves an additional language the students are familiar with.

The argument of involving the students' own languages in textbook tasks is supported by a study by Brevik and Rindal (2020). In their classroom study targeting lower secondary schools in Norway, the authors investigated language use in the EFL classroom. The students included in the study reported the use of Norwegian by the teacher as helpful regardless of the amount used (Brevik & Rindal, 2020, p. 925). These results only describe trends related to Norwegian, however, the results are still relevant to this thesis. If the students reported the use of Norwegian as helpful because it was the majority's own language, this has transmission value to other languages as well. Given that the students reported the Norwegian use as helpful due to their own language, one can assume that students with other linguistic profiles would report similar results regarding their own language. Therefore, the results from Brevik and Rindal help support the value of own language inclusion in EFL textbook tasks. On the other hand, one can also use these results as argumentation for relying on Norwegian skills in textbook tasks. However, this issue is too comprehensive to discuss further in the present study.

Another relevant find by Brevik and Rindal (2020) in the same study, revealed similar results as the findings of this study. Brevik and Rindal reported limited inclusion of other

languages besides Norwegian and English, with only brief linguistic repertoires in some classrooms (Brevik & Rindal, 2020, p. 925). This is similar to the results of this study's analysis, where the tasks show limited inclusion of languages other than Norwegian and English. Whether there is a correlation between the content of textbooks and language use in EFL classrooms cannot be answered by these two studies. However, the results do argue the need for future research exploring whether textbook formulation influence EFL teachers' involvement of language in the classroom.

5.3 The power of task formulation

Considering the textbook tasks, the tips involving Norwegian, and the scaffolding related to or written in Norwegian, one can argue that students can use or involve their own language regardless of formulation or instruction. On the one hand, this may be true. However, this would not be following the reformed curriculum guidelines. By including tasks that embrace linguistic diversity, EFL students may be more interested in participating in classroom instruction. As described in section 2.5, a fundamental goal of CEFR is to “work to ensure quality inclusive education as a right to all citizens” (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 21). Ensuring inclusive education for everyone is an extensive goal. Regardless, small changes may contribute to valuable and bigger results. Task formulation can be an example of following this logic. By changing the task wordings, the tasks may be perceived as inclusive to all linguistic backgrounds.

For instance, many tasks examined in the analyzed textbooks were formulated as “Translate the words to Norwegian”. Tasks formulated in that matter limit the linguistic repertoire to only Norwegian and English. By changing this into “Translate the words to a language you know well”, the students can still translate the words into Norwegian, but the formulation also encourages students to involve their own language. A central competence aim the students are expected to master after year 10 is as follows: “use knowledge of similarities between English and other languages the pupil knows in language learning” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p. 10). This competence aim is an example of inclusive formulation, encouraging a connection between “(...) English and other languages the pupil knows (..)” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p. 10). Task formulation and supportive elements surrounding the tasks can be powerful and influence EFL learning motivation.

Continuing the discussion of task formulation and its influence, Lightbown and Spada (2021) discuss central elements. Lightbown and Spada examine how social factors can influence foreign language acquisition. Factors like group dynamics and ethnicity are considered significant in EFL acquisition by the authors and task formulation can influence these factors. In addition to the arguments by Lightbown and Spada (2021) considering social factors, Norton and Toohey (2011) discuss the role of identity in EFL acquisition. Norton and Toohey (2011) emphasize the complex relationship between individuals' identities and language learning. Students' identities will shape their language experiences and learning outcomes. Considering the potential impact of social factors and the role of identity, task formulations can have significant and crucial ramifications for learning environments in EFL classrooms. This substantiates the argument for thoughtful approaches to task design. Task formulation can foster inclusive practices or negatively reinforce linguistic differences and social dynamics among the students.

Considering the impact of task formulation beyond the realm of foreign language learning, task design can embrace and welcome linguistic diversity. The curriculum clearly states the value of including several languages and demands classroom approaches where students experience language knowledge as a resource. Inclusive task formulations will encourage student to use and include their own languages in the EFL classroom, creating environments where various linguistic diversities can be experienced and explored. By incorporating opportunities for linguistic inclusion, the tasks will set powerful examples where linguistic diversity is valued and embraced.

5.4 Limitations and Further Research

One limitation to consider regarding the findings of this study is the absence of classroom practices. Although it is natural for a textbook analysis to solely focus on textbooks, the results uncovered in this study do not necessarily reflect the use of textbooks in classrooms. Textbook analyses uncover valuable information about textbook content; however, the findings cannot reveal actual classroom practices. With this said the results may suggest certain practices based on the analysis and trends revealed in the textbooks. Considering the considerable autonomy Norwegian teachers comprise in choosing methods and teaching approaches, it is challenging to predict the actual influence textbooks have on the English subject. Furthermore, another limitation of the present study is its narrow scope. Considering the limited scope of the study, only two textbooks are included in the analysis. Norwegian publishing houses do not have to follow any rigid guidelines determining textbook content, except from the national curriculum.

Since the understanding of the curriculum relies on interpretation, this analysis can only indicate results describing these specific textbooks. This study may reveal existing patterns present in other textbooks as well, however, this is not certain and the findings from this study are not generalizable to all Norwegian EFL textbooks.

All content presented in this study is interpreted by one researcher. Especially regarding the interpretation of the curriculum. My understanding and interpretation of the curriculum have guided this entire analysis, which is a noteworthy limitation. Related to the limitation due to interpretation, the analysis process also requires interpretation and the need for interpretation can unknowingly introduce bias to the research. Furthermore, since the analysis has been conducted by me alone, there could be errors in the counting process and the interpretation of tasks. Based on this possible limitation, the reliability of the study would be enhanced if another researcher also independently conducted the analysis. This would also validate the findings further. Considering the digital revolution of educational material and classroom practices, most publishers today offer digital resources accompanying their textbooks. This study does not include any digital resources and only focuses on the physical copies of the textbooks. The inclusion of digital teaching material would enhance the results of the study, and this exclusion is therefore considered a limitation for this study.

This study mainly focuses on linguistic learning and inclusivity regarding textbook tasks. In the curriculum, language learning and culture are often described together, however, this study does not include the cultural aspects. This is also a limitation of this study. As shown in the analysis of the competence aims for the English subject, Norway is specifically mentioned in some aims related to culture and identity. It could be both interesting and valuable to exceed the research questions and methodological approach for this study into also including the cultural aspects apparent in the curriculum. Since this study does not explore classroom practices, an interesting direction for further research could involve observing classroom practices and the implementation of textbook tasks in EFL teaching. Another interesting direction for further research could be exploring EFL teachers' beliefs and attitudes on textbook tasks. Interviews with teachers about their classroom instructions and lesson planning could reveal valuable information regarding their choices around the tasks. It would be interesting to explore which tasks teachers choose to implement in their teaching and which they choose to skip. Following this idea, it would also be valuable to interview lower secondary school students on their perspectives on textbook tasks and how they perceive linguistic inclusiveness in the tasks. Both teacher and student interviews can contribute to a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of EFL textbooks.

6 Summary and Conclusion

This study aimed to explore EFL textbook tasks designed for lower secondary schools (years 8-10) in Norway. Through a textbook analysis, the research sought to address the following research questions:

1. Do the tasks in textbooks used in Norwegian grade 8-10 classrooms align with the curriculum's emphasis on linguistic inclusion?
2. To what extent do EFL textbooks used in Norwegian grade 8-10 classrooms facilitate toward students with diverse linguistic backgrounds?

After the curriculum reform of 2020, new textbooks were designed to accommodate the updated guidelines. The new curriculum places a strong emphasis on the value of multilingualism and inclusive classroom practices, following the increased globalization of the world. A highly used research material in EFL learning and teaching is textbooks, making EFL learning strongly influenced by textbooks. Considering this, the present study has explored whether the tasks in six textbooks published after 2020 align with curriculum guidelines on linguistic inclusion and the study has examined how the tasks facilitate students with diverse linguistic backgrounds. The analyzed textbooks make up two complete series, designed by two different publishing houses, aimed at lower secondary schools.

Regarding the first research question of this study, the findings indicate that there is some alignment between the textbook tasks and the curriculum regarding linguistic inclusion, however, this alignment is limited. Although both series entail a noteworthy high quantity of tasks requiring Norwegian skills to complete the tasks, there appears to be a significant difference between the two analyzed series. While *Stages 8-10* appear to include a higher number of tasks allowing students to choose the additional languages necessary for task completion, *Engelsk 8-10* barely include any of these tasks. Therefore, this study argues that *Stages 8-10* align more with the curriculum's emphasis on linguistic inclusion and multilingualism compared to *Engelsk 8-10*. Furthermore, these findings also indicate limited facilitation toward students with diverse linguistic backgrounds, as examined in the second research question. The majority of tasks requiring additional linguistic knowledge beyond English are related to Norwegian skills, encouraging limited inclusion of linguistic diversity besides Norwegian and English.

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