A Comparison of Norwegian and American Pupils' English Vocabulary Usage in Upper Secondary Schools

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Abbreviations:

EMT	English as a mother tongue
EFL/ESL	English as a foreign language/English as a second language
L1	First language/mother tongue
L2	Second language/foreign language
SLA	Second language acquisition
CLIL	Content and language integrated learning
BICS	Basic interpersonal communicative skills
CALP	Cognitive academic language proficiency
NL	Norwegian Learners
NS	Native Speakers
W/E	Number of words per essay
VI	Vocabulary Individuality
F	Frequency
VV	Vocabulary Variation
VM	Vocabulary Maturity
VE	Vocabulary Errors

Acknowledgements

1 Introduction and Aims

Vocabulary is a very important, if not the most important element in language learning. Words are the first to be acquired in a language and are used in all types of skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Without a good base of vocabulary a first, second, or foreign language would be impossible to learn. Acquiring a vocabulary is therefore important for learners of English as foreign or second language. A well-developed vocabulary is a pre-requisite for fluent reading, a critical link between decoding and comprehension, and writing and speaking.

Learning the most common and useful words in the vast English lexicon is a mandatory task for English proficiency. Second or foreign English learners in particular may have an insufficient vocabulary, hindering their English proficiency. Recent discussions in the Norwegian media[1] have suggested that Norwegians using English in the work place have a very limited lexicon which may among other things be due to the fact that once an English learner is able to communicate, they stop learning new vocabulary. Building a lexicon is a long, complicated process that is really never completed. Even native English speakers continually learn new vocabulary well into old age. Therefore, why should the acquisition of vocabulary for a non-native be any different? The limited lexicon of Norwegian learners of English, as reported in *Aftenposten*, and a recent interest in vocabulary have also affected the area of applied linguistics and language teaching. Clearly, it is necessary to consider the creation of new and exploration of previous approaches for teaching and learning vocabulary.

In Norway today, English is a required subject from primary school through upper secondary school. Due to the significant role of English in the educational system and the strong influence of this language on Norwegian society, through media, music, and business, the position of English is changing. English in Norway, in the past, has been called a foreign language. Today, although a foreign language is still used to define English in Norway, the term second language is currently emerging as a new or alternative definition. Calling English a second language indicates the important status it

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[1] Norwegian newspaper *Aftenposten:* 7.10.2005 and 10.10.2005.

has in Norway. In addition, it may imply that Norwegians' English skills have reached a higher standard than previously and therefore may be called a second language rather than a foreign language such as French or German. Due to the significant role of English in Norway, I am interested in the consequences this has for the level of the English language skills of upper secondary pupils.

In this study, I am researching the productive English vocabulary usage of Norwegian learners. In order to analyze their vocabulary, I am comparing Norwegian learners' (NL) English to native speakers' (NS) English. The material is a corpus of 50 written essays, 25 written by Norwegian upper secondary pupils and 25 written by American upper secondary pupils. The main focus of this study is on vocabulary or lexis analyzed in the written work of pupils. A qualitative as well as a quantitative research method is used to analyze and study the material produced by upper secondary pupils. Vocabulary analysis factors are used to help compare the texts produced by Norwegians learners of English and native English speakers.

Comparing the written performance of a native and non-native writer may have numerous benefits in the field of language research. However, my main aim with this study is to:

- Obtain information about the English vocabulary usage of upper secondary pupils in Norway.

In addition, I hope to look closer at three sub points, namely:

- To find out some differences and similarities between the English vocabulary usage of English as a foreign language (EFL) pupils and English as a mother tongue (EMT) pupils. More specifically, how near or far are Norwegians' English from mother tongue English?
- How individual, frequent, varied, mature, and correct is the English vocabulary that Norwegian language learners use in their free writing?
- How well prepared are Norwegian pupils for further academic studies in English?

A few comments should be made about the terminology used. I use the words *vocabulary* and *lexis* interchangeably, however *vocabulary* is dominant in this study. Although one can differentiate between their meanings, I will not concentrate on these

differences. I do feel, however, that the term *vocabulary* encompasses a broader range of meaning and is the prevalent definition in linguistic and language didactic research today. The term *L1* is used to label a pupil's first language or mother tongue language. *L2* will therefore refer to a second or foreign language. In addition, as stated above, the label EMT is used for English as a mother tongue and EFL/ESL is used for English as a foreign or second language. For the vocabulary analysis in chapter five the American pupils who wrote essays will be called native speakers or *NS*, as indicated above. I call them native speakers rather than American pupils because their origin is not the focus of this study, but rather the fact that they have English as their mother tongue. Norwegian learners of English will in turn be called *NL*.

Other prevalent abbreviations used in this thesis pertain to the vocabulary aspects used to analyze upper secondary pupils' vocabulary and are used in chapters four, five and six. Some of the abbreviations have been used in previous vocabulary research and others have been amended by me to fit the particular vocabulary aspect. These abbreviations are: W/E = Number of words per essay, VI = Vocabulary Individuality, F = Frequency, VV = Vocabulary Variation, VM = Vocabulary Maturity and VE = Vocabulary Errors.

This thesis is divided into six chapters. This chapter, chapter 1, introduces the topic and aims for this thesis. Chapters two and three provide some linguistic and historical background for the topic of vocabulary. Among other things, the definition and size of vocabulary will be discussed, along with theories of vocabulary acquisition, corpora in vocabulary studies, and some methods of learning and teaching vocabulary. Previous research and theories in the field of vocabulary have been used to aid in the construction of these chapters.

The focus of chapters four and five is on my research of the written vocabulary usage of upper secondary pupils. In these two chapters my research methods and materials will be explained thoroughly. In addition, a vocabulary analysis of the written essays will be made. Vocabulary factors such as the number of words per essay, vocabulary individuality, frequency of the vocabulary, vocabulary variation and maturity, and vocabulary errors will be used to help analyze and compare native speakers to Norwegian learners, as indicated in the abbreviations above. In addition the vocabulary aspects of the

Norwegian learners will be compared to one another to find the correlation and statistical significance of the aspects. The 50 essay corpora, produced by upper secondary pupils will be the basis for the description and analysis in chapters four and five. The final chapter, chapter six, attempts to summarize and conclude the research questions and the data presented in this thesis. I also hope to shed some light on the importance of teaching and learning vocabulary and inspire future research in the field of vocabulary.

2   Vocabulary

The main aim of this chapter is to introduce some basic terms and concepts in the field and analysis of vocabulary. A selection is made of those features of lexical semantics which seem most relevant to an understanding of vocabulary, mainly with regard to second and foreign-language learners. I will look closer at defining vocabulary and the aspects of knowing a word, discuss vocabulary size for L1 and L2 learners of English, and describe frequency. Furthermore, I will explore vocabulary acquisition and vocabulary function in writing and discourse.

2.1   Defining Vocabulary

If we are to understand the process of foreign vocabulary acquisition and thereafter aid pupils in this process, it is necessary to comprehend what makes up a lexicon or vocabulary and be able to analyze its characteristics. More importantly a foreign lexicon entails not only the description of the L1 and L2 lexicon, but also that of their connections.

In the *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, vocabulary is defined as, "all the words which exist in a particular language or subject." This is a definition referring to the word level which includes everything from one particular word to all the words in a language. A second definition is, "all the words known and used by a particular person." This definition of vocabulary encompasses the word knowledge in ones head which is also called a *lexicon*. According to these two definitions it seems logical that in order to understand vocabulary we must understand what constitutes a word. Paul Nation has named four main ways in which a word may be defined and/or counted. He has called these four groups *tokens, types, lemmas,* and *word families* (2001:6, 7).

First there is an orthographic definition, which can be called tokens. This definition says that a word is any sequence of letters enclosed by a space or punctuation on either side (Carter 1998:4). For example, the sentence 'It is easy to read it quickly' would contain 7 tokens. A second way of defining a word is according to type, which means that repeated words are counted as one type. According to this definition the previous sentence 'It is

easy to read it quickly' would have only 6 types as 'it' is counted as one type. Lemmas extend the definition of type to include the headword and its variants. The variants include inflected and reduced forms of the headword. The reduced form includes for example *n't, I'm,* and *he's* and the inflected forms include plural, third person singular present tense, past tense, past participle, *-ing*, comparative, superlative, and the possessive (Bauer and Nation referred to in Nation 2001:10). Finally, word families may be used to define or count words. A word family includes a headword, its lemmas, and its closely related derived forms which include suffixes and prefixes such as *un-*, *-ness*, *-ly*, *pre-*, and *in-*. Lemmas and word families are useful when counting words in order to find vocabulary size. Lexicographers also use word families when counting how many words are in the English language to assemble dictionaries.

These four definitions however do not take into consideration words with several meanings (polysemy), idioms or word chunks. This is important because vocabulary in discourse or writing may contain many different categories such as: single lexical units, compound words, phrasal verbs, fixed phrases idioms, and lexical chunks (Schmitt 2000:2).

The notion of the lexeme can aid in the explanation of what constitutes a word. Lexemes represent all the word forms of one particular base word. When using a dictionary, a lexeme is what one looks up. For example the lexeme FIGHT also represents all the word forms or grammatical variants: 'fight', 'fought', fights', and 'fighting'. Word chunks, multi-word verbs, phrasal verbs, and idioms may also be defined under one lexeme (Carter 1998:7). The English language is full of words and word chunks with multiple meanings. Since the English language has so many words with multiple meanings this aspect is particularly important for learners of English to understand. This makes vocabulary learning an enormously difficult task. After one has learned the meaning of race as in 'to run in a race,' one must also learn a second meaning of 'ethnic race.'

The meaning of words has to do with the relationship between a word and its concept or our idea of what the word means and what it means to each individual person. Context plays a large part in determining the definition of a word. Word associations are words that are commonly found together in context. Sometimes these associations can be

merged together to make one definition. Many word groups may be classified as associations. For example, synonyms, antonyms, and hyponymy all are types of associations (Carter 1998:20). Therefore, word associations are also useful for learners to recognize or be able to use.

Tokens, types, lemmas, word families, lexemes, associations, word chunks, and idioms are some of the different ways one can define and count words. All of these types and more are what makes up a person's vocabulary or lexicon. Each has their strengths and weaknesses in defining the field and analysis of vocabulary. Nonetheless, for learners of English it may be easiest to define vocabulary as words that can be translated with reference to the learner's mother tongue (Nation 1990:30). More simply stated how does one translate an English word or phrase into Norwegian.

2.2   Aspects of Knowing a Word

After clarifying the definition of vocabulary and its ingredients, words, it may also be important to understand what having vocabulary knowledge means. I will look closer at different definitions and types of vocabulary knowledge and why vocabulary knowledge is important. In addition, I will explore the strategies learners use when they lack complete vocabulary knowledge.

Knowing a word or having vocabulary knowledge may have various definitions, ranging from simple recognition of a word to a complete mastery of a word. A mastery of the word includes knowledge of its meaning, orthographical and phonological form, collocations, associations, grammatical behaviors, register and frequency (Nation referred to in Schmitt 2001:4). However, it is important to remember that this type of complete word knowledge is an "unattainable" goal for most native speakers let alone EFL learners. When defining EFL word knowledge, theorists tend to look at a more general definition involving a gradual process. Birgit Henriksen states that a language user's vocabulary involves three levels:

1. Knowing many words (quantity)

2. Knowing a lot about the individual word (quality)

3. Effectively using the words in communication (control)

(Henriksen 1995)

A learner may have one, two or all three of these abilities; however, they might not necessarily be acquired in this order. That means a learner may know exactly when to use (control) the word *walk* in a sentence but have no knowledge that the word is both a noun and a verb (quality). It is also possible that a learner has a partial understanding of some vocabulary. A partial understanding of a word means that one of its possible meanings are understood but not all meanings and contexts or that one of its meanings are not completely understood. This is especially relevant for L2 learners whose language is constantly developing. But to use the language productively one must have some knowledge of all three of these levels.

Vocabulary knowledge may also be divided into categories. There are many different types of vocabularies, for example, academic, technical, specialized, and general. Within these categories there may be specific topics or genres, for example vocabulary for mechanics, or an even more specific topic; cars. There are also formal and informal vocabularies which are more or less appropriate for writing, speaking, reading, and listening. Different people have different vocabularies and they are fashioned for what people use their language for. Norwegian pupils learning English for example will come to have many different needs for the language and therefore different vocabularies. There are many different word lists which have been made for guiding people's specific vocabulary needs. The *Acedemic Word List* (Coxhead, 1998) was specifically made for second language learners intending to do academic studies in English (referred to in Nation 2001:20). The list contains 570 word families which do not occur in the most frequent 2000 English words but occur frequently in a wide range of academic texts

Vocabulary knowledge is important for every person and every type of vocabulary. At a basic level a vocabulary allows people to express themselves in the best most understandable way. Without vocabulary knowledge one risks an inability to communicate. The English language is full of words with different meanings or small

differences of meaning in various contexts. If the word is used incorrectly, grammar knowledge or lexicon size is obsolete in the real world and communication may be severed. A person's own vocabulary knowledge may also affect the definition of a word. A study by Curtis (1987) found that children with a minimal vocabulary knowledge were more likely to define words according to context, where children with a better vocabulary knowledge used abstract definitions to explain words (referred to in Joshi 2005:211). A learner's vocabulary size and varied frequency can be crucial to his or her communication with others.

Knowing a particular word is important but the most important aspect is to know how and when to use what words and in which situations. This aspect of communication has to do with among other things semantics, pragmatics, and style. The study of how things or meanings literally connect to words is known as semantics. Pragmatics goes a step further to study the meaning as communicated by a writer or speaker and interpreted by a listener or reader (Yule 1996:3). Stylistic features cover the entire communicative event and can change the meaning of a word or utterance. Stylistic features include things such as formal and informal style, literary meanings, and slang. A person's intended meaning, assumptions, purposes or goals, body language, culture, setting and much more in addition to vocabulary play a large role in communicating the correct message.

When learners do not have sufficient word knowledge, they use strategies to overcome their lack of vocabulary knowledge. Some example strategies are topic avoidance, message abandonment, and meaning replacement (Linnarud 1986:18). The learner may avoid topics or genres where they lack sufficient vocabulary or decide to abort the message, or replace the meaning with another word (correct or incorrect). Another way a learner fills in a lexical gap is by borrowing from another language or transferring from their own language. An example of lexical transfer of Norwegian to English is the word 'pineapple' or 'annanas' in Norwegian. A Norwegian living/travelling in America might order a pizza and say, "I would like a pepperoni pizza, but no *annanas* please." The Norwegian is unfamiliar with the word pineapple and has therefore transferred the Norwegian word in order to compensate.

Angela Hasselgren investigated how Norwegian learners of English make wrong lexical choices. In her findings she concluded that the learners tended to hang on to words they felt safe with or 'lexical teddy bears' (Hasslegren 1994:237). These 'lexical teddy bears' tended to be either words or phrases which closely resembled their first language or those learnt early or commonly used, or one-to-one Norwegian to English translations. Strategies, such as the mentioned avoidance, borrowing, or sticking to the familiar are commonly used by learners in a situation where they do not know the lexical item. Therefore, it is important to give learners enough knowledge to attempt a variety of vocabulary.

I believe Birgit Henriksen summarized best the difficulty of learning, knowing and using words.

> "Learning words, for both the native language user and the learner of a foreign or second language, is not only a question of amassing isolated words; it is rather a process of constant revision, where the vocabulary is expanded and the existing word web undergoes constant change as the learner gains an ever more precise understanding of a word's meaning and its relation to the other elements in the semantic fields."
>
> (Henriksen 1995:14)

2.3 Vocabulary Size

In recent research, the size of an EFL learner's vocabulary (quantity) has been of particular interest. The English language itself contains between 600,000 to over 2 million words and over 54,000 word families (Schmitt 2000:2, 3). Native speakers' vocabulary size estimates vary across the field, but the average estimate is that an undergraduate student's lexicon is around 20,000 words. An investigation in the United States indicated that the average high school graduate had an oral vocabulary of about 45,000 words (Joshi 2005:212). Paul Nation refers to a study which suggests that learners of English as a foreign language have 1,000 to 2,000 words in their lexicon after a five year period of four or five English classes a week (7th grade in Norway) (1990:11). Although Nation does not suggest an EFL undergraduate's vocabulary size, he does say that there is a significant difference in vocabulary size between native speakers and EFL learners.

Although we can not pin point the known number of words of an EFL learner, we can see when a learner has insufficient vocabulary to write a text. The point at which a learner has sufficient vocabulary knowledge is known as 'threshold vocabulary' (Coady 1997:23). The threshold vocabulary is needed in order to transfer L1 reading or writing strategies. Batia Laufer's research suggests that the level at which good L1 readers can be expected to transfer their reading strategies to L2 is 3,000 word families (in Coady 1997:24). When the threshold is met, a learner is able to use the higher level processing strategies with success. Learners' process strategies may include determination, social, and memory strategies. In addition, cognitive and metacognitive strategies are used by advanced learners (Schmitt 2000:132-136). These strategies will be further discussed in chapter 3, section 3.3.

More important than the actual size of the EFL learners' vocabulary is how many words they need to accurately use written English? If learners need to cover the whole range of English language skills, then a productive vocabulary of around 3,000 word families (the most common or frequent word families) or more are needed (Nation 1990:147). It is not surprising than that the size of vocabulary needed to meet the threshold is the same as the sufficient size to use the language productively. However, as studies in learners' vocabulary size have found, there is always a gap between receptive and productive vocabulary (Nation 1982; Laufer 1991; Coady 1993). Receptive vocabulary must be much larger for comprehension of the written and spoken word, which includes a varied and large vocabulary.

Beyond the suggested basic 2,000 -3,000 word families in a learner's vocabulary, they also need to determine their purpose for knowing English. If the learner has no specific academic purposes but rather for basic communication while traveling and leisure reading, then the basic vocabulary suggested is sufficient and guessing strategies can be used to clarify unknown words. If, however, the learner intends on furthering their education in an academic setting, then there is a definite need for general academic vocabulary knowledge.

2.4   Frequency

A large portion of the most common 3000 word families, which is the suggested threshold, include function words or high frequency words in the English language. High frequency words are the most common words such as; *the, we, they, girl, boy, it, how, because,* etc. It is quite natural that these are the first words a new foreign language student acquires because they are the most common and occur quite frequently in oral use of the English language.

For general English use, the three most frequent words make up 11.5%, the ten most frequent words make up 22%, the 50 most frequent words make up 37%, the most frequent 100 words make up 44%, and the most frequent 2000 words make up 80% of all words (tokens) (Schmitt 2000:73). However, since many of the 2000 most frequent words are polysemous, pupils must learn the many meanings of each word in order to have control over the language. Due to the fact that these 2000 words make up so much of the encountered language, it is critical that they be learned as quickly and early as possible in order to use the language. In addition, these words make up the majority of any discourse so if they are not known, learners will not be able to make accurate guesses about the less frequent words.

Obviously, the most important vocabulary to begin using a language is the high-frequency words. By looking at frequency count lists and frequency dictionaries one can get information about which words will be most useful for learners of English. These lists tell the frequency of the word and the range or the measure of the number of different types of texts in which a word occurs. Words with a wide range occur in many different kinds of texts and fields of study. The most useful for learners are high-frequency words which have a wide range (Nation 1990:20).

In a learning setting, the high frequency vocabulary is also known as the core vocabulary. This refers to the fact that a portion of the English lexicon is more vital in the early stages of acquisition. The core vocabulary is absolutely necessary to begin using the language, productively or receptively. The average number of words suggested for a core understanding is around 2000 words (Henriksen 1995:14). With these 2000 words, about 80% of a text could be understood as stated above.

Low frequency words make up over 5% of an academic text. There are thousands of low frequency words in the English language, by far the largest group of words. Low-frequency words may include proper nouns, technical or specialized vocabulary, and rarely used words. Some examples of low-frequency words are *Ohio, approximately, eponymous,* or s*calpel.* Written texts contain words used much less frequently (lower-frequency words), and EFL students have the least exposure to these words (Weigle 2002:16). But as learners advance and meet academic and technical texts and language a better understanding of low-frequency vocabulary will be needed.

2.5   Vocabulary Acquisition

Vocabulary learning[2] is a mental activity which, like all mental phenomena, can be viewed from many angles. How do foreign words and other lexical units find their way into the learners' mind and how are they organized? The study of vocabulary acquisition looks into the learners' mental lexicon and attempts to explain how the lexicon is built up. There are many different variables that affect second language vocabulary acquisition such as, age, L1, amount of exposure, motivation, aptitude, and culture (Schmitt 2000:116). However, I will not concentrate on these aspects but rather on the topics of second language acquisition (SLA) approaches, memorization, word difficulty, social and academic language acquisition, and interlanguage.

2.5.1   Second Language Acquisition Approaches

In order to understand how learners acquire vocabulary it may be of interest to understand different theories of second language acquisition in and of itself. Theories in the field of SLA are vast and varied, but three models namely, innatist, cognitive, and constructivist; represent a large portion of the most common models and theories of SLA.

According to the innatist model, which is represented by Stephen Krashen's theories, language acquisition occurs in a natural order and is built by extensive input (known as

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[2] The terms *acquisition* and *learning* are used interchangeably to explain how one attains vocabulary.

comprehensible input theory)(Brown 2000:288). In accordance with this theory vocabulary would be acquired by only listening and reading. Stephen Krashen's theory of comprehensible input has been criticized due to the fact that he claims no output is needed for learning a second language. Barry McLaughlin and Ellen Bialystok among others, represent a cognitive SLA model. This model stands for form-focused instruction and differentiates between implicit and explicit language knowledge (Brown 2000:288). Vocabulary in this model should be exposed to the leaner both implicitly (accidental learning) and explicitly (formal leaning). Finally, today the most popular theory is a constructivist theory which includes theorists such as Michael Long, Merrill Swain, and Herbert Seliger (Brown 2000:287). This theory focuses on communicative competence hence promotes interaction, output, authenticity, and task-based instruction.

The constructivist approach to SLA is also called the interactionist approach. In the interactionist approach, interaction is the most important way in which learners obtain data for language learning, in particular vocabulary. Research seems to suggest that the negotiation of meaning within interactive contexts can facilitate vocabulary acquisition by inducing learners to notice unknown words in the input (Ellis in Fuente 2002). This has also shown evidence on the acquisition of new L2 vocabulary. Unlike input, which makes learners focus on semantic processing, output has a form-focusing effect. Maria José Fuente's research on interactive tasks where learners were pushed to produce target lexical output showed evidence of the benefits for oral productive acquisition of L2 vocabulary. Rod Ellis and Xien He (1999) also found that a 'modified output group' achieved higher levels of acquisition of words (both receptive and productive) due to interaction that occurred in the group (referred to in Fuente 2002:90). Both studies found that negotiated interactions aided in vocabulary acquisition. It seems, then, that negotiation that concentrates on lexical aspects of the language may be beneficial for L2 vocabulary acquisition.

2.5.2   What Role Does Memory Have in Vocabulary Acquisition?

In order to remember words and thereafter regurgitate them, memory is used. Psychological research has differentiated between short-term memory and long-term memory (Henriksen 1995:45). The short-term memory is used to store temporary data

such as impressions, information, sentences, and words. The temporary data can therefore be accessed quite quickly. Unfortunately, the short-term memory is just that – short term and the data will be forgotten quickly. The long-term memory, on the other hand, stores information indefinitely and allows one to remember and use the data. According to these descriptions the obvious goal for language learners is to store as many words in the long-term memory as possible. In order to help learners reach this goal, language teachers should understand what factors influence the storage of words in long-term memory. Researchers have named five particular factors:

1. Salient features in word
2. Variation in the form of presentation
3. Webs of associations
4. Depth of cognitive processing
5. Frequency

(Henriksen 1995:46)

The salient features in a word such as sound combination, stress pattern, or spelling can appeal to the learner and make an impression on the learners' mind and will consequently be stored in the long-term memory. Variation in the way vocabulary is presented or taught can create the necessary motivation for learners to store words in their long-term memory. Words with meaningful associations for the learner may also be a factor for long-term storage. As mentioned previously, synonyms, antonyms, and collocations are some possible associations. In order for a word to stick in the long-term memory there needs to be a focus on the semantic aspect. Understanding the meaning of the word and how it connects to other words increases the chances that it will be stored in the long-term memory.

A very common memorization activity is paired words. The paired words contain the new word in the target language and its counterpart (translation) in the mother tongue. These lists are often accompanied by pictures to give the learner a visual representation. Paul Nation (1990) claims that with repetition it is possible that basic vocabulary can be learned and retained in this manner (referred to in Carter 1998:193). However, there are questions regarding learning by memorization with regards to length of retention, type of word knowledge gained, and accurate translations. These questions may be due to word

difficulty which will be addressed in section 2.5.3. The use of memorization seems essential in the first stages of learning a second or foreign language, however may not be sufficient single-handedly.

After memorizing vocabulary or filling the mental lexicon, one must be able to retrieve the lexicon which requires a lot from the working memory (Snellings, Gelderen, and Glopper 2002:725). Repeated exposure to a vocabulary word or chunk lowers the learners' threshold at which identification takes place. Repeated exposure to words, either through receptive or productive means, can lower learners' thresholds or increase familiarity. This repeated exposure may also reduce cognitive effort involved in lexical retrieval in L2 contexts. Students' vocabulary knowledge is also influenced by the amount of words they are exposed to from their very early years. Research by Thomas White, Michael Graves, and Wayne Slater (1990), Betty Hart and Todd Risley (1995), and David Dickinson and Patton Tabors (2001) have revealed that poor vocabulary acquisition in a child's early years may negatively affect their reading comprehension later on (referred to in Joshi 2005:211). Although these studies have focused on L1 acquisition, they may be applied to L2 acquisition, as poor L2 vocabulary learning early on could also affect subsequent reading skills. As beginning L2 learners are far less familiar with the words in the language and therefore have slower retrieval times than advanced learners or native speakers, increasing the familiarity of words is likely to benefit L2 learners.

2.5.3 Does the Difficulty of a Word Affect Acquisition?

The difficulty of words may cause among other things a lack of long term retention, surface word knowledge, and inaccurate translations. For these and other reasons, word difficulty has a main focus in the approaches of learning vocabulary. Frequency, range, sounds, morphology, associations, form, and more can all make a word difficult to learn. So what is the best way to deal with difficult words?

Oral repetition alone is not always an effective way of acquiring new words. One should understand the form and transfer between foreign and mother-tongue words. Words are of different difficulty according to the learner's mother-tongue. Words with similar sounds,

etymology, and morphology are said to be easier to memorize (Nation 1982 referred to in Carter 1988:14). The English words 'tape,' 'telephone,' and 'hound' have many similarities to their Norwegian renditions of '*tejp*,' '*telefon*,' and '*hund*' and therefore should be easy to memorize by Norwegian learners of English. Paul Nation (1982) differentiates between learning vocabulary for writing and reading in the target language (referred to in Carter 1988:14). For writing, a learning sequence of mother-tongue to foreign word is best for producing thoughts. But for reading, a sequence of foreign word to mother-tongue is appropriate due to the importance of recognition for comprehension.

Today, as will be discussed in chapter three, the foreign language learning trend is learning through context. Learning through context can aid learners in understanding and acquiring difficult words. This means that basic word lists alone are not enough to grasp vocabulary meaning, but rather using also context to assist in comprehension and learning. Stephen Krashen's 'Input Hypothesis,' as mentioned previously, claims that continuous input of a language will result in language acquisition. Stephen Krashen himself said, "I argue that the best hypothesis is that competence in spelling and vocabulary is most efficiently attained by comprehensible input in the form of reading" (Krashen 1989:445). This theory obviously advocates extensive reading. Through extensive reading learners are exposed to a variety of vocabulary (difficult and easy) and meanings. However, some claim that learning through context seems to be most valuable for advanced learners who already have the basic vocabulary to understand the surrounding vocabulary (Carter 1988:15). The most satisfactory for acquiring difficult words seems to be a combination of memorizing word lists and learning through context using for example extensive reading.

2.5.4   Social and Academic Language Acquisition

Theorists such as Jim Cummins distinguish between social and academic language acquisition. Cummins (1979) called these two types basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) (referred to in Cummins 2003). The distinction was intended to draw attention to the very different time periods typically required by second language pupils to acquire conversational fluency and academic proficiency in that language.

Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) are language skills needed in social situations. It is the "everyday" language needed to interact socially with other people. English language learners may use BIC skills when interacting socially with native English speakers, for example while talking with English speaking friends, on vacation, playing sports, parties and talking on the telephone. Social interactions are usually dependent on context as they occur in meaningful social contexts and they are typically not very demanding cognitively (Cummins 2003). These language skills usually develop within six months to two years after English immersion has begun (Shoebottom 2003). For Norwegian learners of English this period is probably a bit longer, as Norwegian pupils are not completely emerged in the English language. When a learner has mastered BIC skills it may seem to others and to oneself that the language is mastered. This however is not always the case. The learner has perhaps mastered the language socially, but may still lack cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP).

CALP refers to formal, academic learning. This includes listening, speaking, reading, and writing about academic subject areas (Cummins 2003). This level of language learning is essential for students to succeed in school (primarily upper secondary and higher education) and in some business environments. Academic language acquisition isn't just the understanding of commonly used social words. It includes skills such as comparing, classifying, synthesizing, evaluating, and inferring (Cummins 2003). Academic language tasks tend to be context based as they are typically read from a textbook or presented by the teacher. Academic language is usually more cognitively demanding as it contains new ideas, concepts, and language simultaneously. Students need time and support to become proficient in academic areas and five to seven immersion years are usually required to catch up to native speakers in academic aspects of the second language (Cummins 2003). Achieving CALP skills for Norwegian learners of English may again take longer as they are not completely immersed in the language.

In his research, Jim Cummins has also developed the theory known as common underlying language proficiency (CULP) (Figure 1). He believes that while learning one language a child acquires a set of skills and implicit metalinguistic knowledge that can be employed when working in another language (Shoebottom 2003). As shown in Figure 1, CULP provides the base skills and knowledge for the development of L1, L2, and any subsequent languages. This theory says that any development or new skills obtained in one language will benefit the other language (s). In addition, the theory helps explain why for some it becomes easier to learn additional languages (after L2) (Shoebottom 2003). For Norwegian learners of English for example, their CULP skills help them to learn, understand, and use not only their mother tongue, Norwegian, but also EFL/ESL and subsequent languages such as French, German or Spanish. According to Cummins' CULP theory, Norwegian pupils' English, French, German, or Spanish language skills would benefit from a development in their Norwegian language skills. Additionally, the Norwegian learner would perhaps find it easier to study a third or fourth language such as Russian or Italian than it was to study a second language.
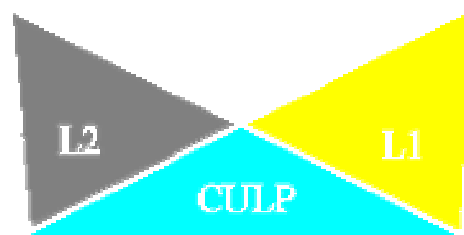
Figure 1: Common underlying language proficiency (CULP) (Shoebottom 2003)

2.5.5   Interlanguage

The concept of interlanguage presents a general explanation of how L2 acquisition takes place. Interlanguage describes the language possessed by a learner of a second or foreign language where the language is neither a first language nor a completely mastered second language. Researchers are interested in how the L2 lexicon is integrated with the L1 lexicon. From this perspective, L1 is viewed as the critical basis for learning the new linguistic system rather than as an interfering agent. The period of interlanguage involves acquiring a new mental lexicon and is therefore an important focus for vocabulary acquisition.

There are individual differences in vocabulary acquisition but there are also similar premises at which L2 acquisition occurs[3]:

> 1. Learners construct their own system of linguistic rules to comprehend and produce L2. This system can also be applied to vocabulary and can be called a "mental lexicon."
>
> 2. Learners grammar and vocabulary is permeable. In other words grammar and vocabulary is influenced from output and input, internally and externally.
>
> 3. Learners grammar and vocabulary is transitional. A learner's vocabulary and grammar changes by adding more rules and words. A series of constructed mental grammars and lexicons is made as learners gradually increase their L2 knowledge.
>
> 4. Learners use different learning and coping strategies to develop their interlanguages. These strategies are used among other things to cope with new and unfamiliar vocabulary.
>
> 5. A learner's vocabulary and grammar is likely to fossilize.
> (Ellis 1997:33, 34 (adapted by me))

A learner's mental lexicon is built up through input and output and should gradually increase, but may fossilize. As learners increase their knowledge of L2, they may need more explicit vocabulary teaching and should not be left to teach themselves, despite their assumption that they have little problem with common words. Learners may not be aware of the gaps in their own vocabulary knowledge (Wong 1983; Laufer 1989), especially in cases where there are direct translations between the words in L1 and L2. They tend to perceive the target L2 items as easy to learn, ignoring the fact that not all words have a direct translation and that some translations have other properties of its own which are distinct from those of its counterpart. This causes many difficulties and learners are easily trapped by the deceptively transparent target items.

Findings in learner strategies such as avoidance have indicated that learners can avoid items where there are no translation equivalents or unfamiliar items. This may lead to

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[3] The premises for L2 acquiaition have been applied by me to that relevant for vocabulary acquisition.

fossilization, as mentioned previously. Interlanguage ceases to develop once the purpose of communication is fulfilled (Selinker 1992). As long as learners get the meaning across, that is enough for them. This observation corresponds to Angela Hasselgren's (1994) findings namely, Norwegian learners can get their meaning across but tend to use words they are familiar with. Once the learner's language becomes fossilized, a potentially negative result is a serious loss of precision in meaning.

2.6 Vocabulary and Writing

Throughout the Norwegian upper secondary school, students are expected to write numerous English texts. Therefore, learners need to be able to produce English through the use of a varied, mature, accurate, and academic vocabulary. I have chosen to concentrate on the written production of English due to the fact that in chapter 5, I am analyzing the written work of pupils.

Productive knowledge (writing and speaking) of a word presupposes receptive knowledge (listening and reading) and more. It involves knowing how to pronounce the word, how to write and spell it, and how to use it in correct grammatical patterns along with the word it usually collocates with (word chunks or collocations). Production also involves knowing when to use a word and not use a word. Furthermore, the student should not use the word too often in the same text if it is a typically low-frequency word as this may seem redundant and unnatural (Nation 1990:32).

Due to the complex nature of being able to write in English, learners meet several common problems. Learners may have a large enough receptive vocabulary but a very limited productive vocabulary or they may have both a limited receptive and productive vocabulary. In either scenario, the learner has problems when attempting to use written English. Because there is little correspondence between spelling and pronunciation in English, spelling in particular is problematic for foreign learners (Schmitt 2000:52). Another typical problem, according to Norbert Schmitt, is that learners often use more basic vocabulary where a good native-speaking writer would use more precise lower-frequency words (Schmitt 2000:155). It is like a surgeon who might use a hacksaw,

where a more delicate surgical instrument fashioned specifically for the task has been invented.

Language production in writing is not just a collection of sentences, but rather a cohesive and coherent text in which vocabulary has an important role. In some ways written production is more difficult than spoken production due to the fact that one participant is absent. Therefore, a writer must be more explicit than a speaker and this of course demands a high control of vocabulary. The learner must not only have control of high and low frequency words, but also the role of these words such as; diexis, reference and inference, cohesive ties, associations and much more in order to write an English text (Yule 1996).

A study by Norbert Schmitt and Paul Meara examined how two types of word knowledge, namely word associations and grammatical suffix knowledge, change over time. They studied the receptive and productive change of 95 upper secondary and post secondary Japanese pupils. The results showed an average gain of about 330 words in one school year after being tested on the same word associations and suffixes at the beginning and end of the school year. The Japanese students produced only 50% of the associations compared to the native speaker norms. In addition, the Japanese students had between 19% and 25% more receptive knowledge than productive knowledge. The conclusion of their study was that suffix and association knowledge have a relationship to the overall size of the learner's vocabulary and general language proficiency. Therefore learners needed to improve their overall understanding of word associations and suffixes to improve their language skills (Schmitt 1997:17-36). This study discloses the increased difficulty of the production of language, i.e. writing and the importance of among other things word associations and suffixes in language production.

3   The Role of Vocabulary in English as a Foreign Language

Throughout history there have been numerous approaches to language learning and teaching, each with a different perspective on vocabulary learning. The importance of learning vocabulary in order to learn English as a foreign language has always been prevalent. However, the emphasis has not always been on the vocabulary aspect of the language. In this chapter, I will look closer at the historical role of vocabulary, particularly in Norway. Furthermore I will discuss the role of corpora, which has assisted and advanced vocabulary studies in L1 and L2. Finally, I will briefly consider some approaches to vocabulary learning and discuss teaching vocabulary in EFL.

3.1   Vocabulary - Historical Role in Norway

During *the grammar-translation method,* which was the main language teaching methodology from the beginning of the nineteenth century until 1925, the main emphasis was on grammar (Simensen 1998:27). According to Zimmermann (1997), vocabulary was mainly used to illustrate a grammar rule and words were selected accordingly (referred to in Schmitt 2000:12). Students were, to a large extent, expected to learn the vocabulary themselves from bilingual word lists. A reform and rebellion against translation and an emphasis on the spoken language led to *the direct method* (Zimmerman 1997 in Coady 1997:7). This method was popular at the end of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century. Listening became the essential skill, and exposure to spoken language a must, the idea being that vocabulary would take care of itself and be acquired naturally through interaction during lessons (Schmitt 2000:12).

During the *pre-scientific movement,* vocabulary was taught explicitly through translation and the use of bilingual vocabulary lists (Simensen 1998:29). The problem with this method is that learners only learn one meaning per word, which may not always be the meaning they meet in every context. The *psychometric-structuralist movement* involved a focus on smaller units in the language and a corresponding discrete measurement of each separate language skill. Learners were taught vocabulary through lists of high frequency words, usually with an emphasis on accurate, oral pronunciation (Simensen 1998:39). This resulted in a focus on pronunciation and language structures and therefore

vocabulary learning was "forgotten." The teaching of structural patterns was the emphasis in *audiolingualism* in the 1940s and 1950s, a method in which the behaviouristic idea of language as habit formation prevailed (Schmitt 2000:14).

Vocabulary learning returned in the *Integrative-sociolinguistic movement*, where vocabulary was taught through language in context. This was the first approach that focused on the concept of "lexical chunks" rather than individual words. Learners would obtain knowledge of words in their semantical surrounding, which very often included more than one word. This communicative, top-down and implicit method of teaching EFL vocabulary has been very influential. This trend continues today in the *communicative method* of language teaching. Although this type of vocabulary exposure is necessary for learners to obtain an in-depth understanding of word meaning, this is only one method of helping learners acquire vocabulary (Schmitt 2001:237).

Vocabulary assessment has also followed the same trends of second language learning. Historically vocabulary assessment began with essay composition, translation, and written responses to questions. This approach to assessment is an example of a *discrete* type of testing, which isolates and tests each part of language knowledge separately. However, vocabulary in particular was not tested separately in these earlier tests. The first evidence of attempts to test vocabulary skills in particular, dates back to the 1920s (Read 1997:99).

With the use of word frequency lists in the psychometric-structuralist movement, second language testing also became standardized and objective. The frequency list led to the breakthrough of the multiple-choice test in America, which made large vocabulary tests efficient and more reliable. The first years of the 1970s were dominated by the integrative approach of testing, which included dictation and cloze procedures. These procedures measured the overall proficiency of the EFL learners (Read 1997:100). Later in the 1970s the communicative approach of language learning was incorporated into testing. Presently, the communicative test in current practice focuses on language in context and overall language proficiency.

Internationally, vocabulary assessment has included a variety of tests that have been used for research, diagnostic testing, placement testing, and proficiency testing. These tests evaluate skills such as: a learner's vocabulary size, depth of word knowledge, quality of a learner's vocabulary knowledge, a learner's word-frequency level, and the overall state of a learner's lexicon (Read 1997 and 2000). However, in Norway there has been very little focus on the assessment of vocabulary and therefore there is a lack of available pure vocabulary tests.

3.2   The Use of Corpora in Vocabulary Studies

The study of vocabulary has improved in recent years due to the use of language corpora. A corpus allows researchers, teachers, and learners to use real data collected in large databases and study it in a more convenient, effective way. Today, technology has made it possible for corpora to be accessed on computers and the internet. A language corpus may contain everything from a single word to an entire book and can include all topics, genres, and varieties of a language. There may be texts collected from students, authors, media, and more. For the purpose of this thesis, I have personally collected a small corpus in order to analyze, compare and contrast the vocabulary usage of upper-secondary pupils. This will be discussed further in chapters 4 and 5.

Corpora have been and continue to be collected around the world which has revolutionized the contrasting and comparing of two or more languages. In Norway for example, corpora have been used to compare and contrast Norwegian and English. *The English-Norwegian Parallel Corpus*[4] contains a variety of texts and includes over 1 million words. It has been used to analyze the errors Norwegian learners of English make, aid in translations, and to compare and study the two languages in order to aid in the acquisition of English. Some of the largest and most influential corpora today include the *COBUILB Bank of English Corpus,* the *Cambridge International Corpus,* and the *British National Corpus* (Schmitt 2000:69). These corpora contain hundreds of millions of words and therefore accurately represent the English language.

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[4] Developed by the University of Oslo: http://www.hf.uio.no/ilos/forskning/forskningsprosjekter/enpc/

Word lists such as Ivor Armstrong Richards' (Richards 1943) *Basic English* and Michael West's (West 1953) *A General service list of English words* aim at providing teachers and learners with an optimal core lexicon to meet general communication purposes (referred to in Nation 2001:11). The applications of such language corpora are vast. One of its most practical and influential use is in the making of learner dictionaries. Other applications include the study of word frequency, collocations, and language structure. Word frequency lists have been produced from corpora studies which have then in turn been used in producing language syllabi. English word frequency lists tell teachers and learners what the most common words are and thereafter which should be taught first.

In Norway, the English Curriculum of 1974 contained a word list which told the teachers what words should be taught. The 1987 and 1997 curriculum's, however did not contain a suggested word list. Norway's new curriculum for 2006 is also void of a vocabulary list. An interesting question maybe what consequences the continued absence of a word list in the national curriculum will have in the teaching and learning of vocabulary in the classroom.

3.3   Methods of Vocabulary Learning

How words are taught has to take into account what we know about how words are learned. In sections 2.5.1 through 2.5.5 second language acquisition was discussed. The summary of all the language learning theories advocate the use of input, output, implicit and explicit learning varieties, interaction, repeated exposure, and variety. Consequently it seems logical that these items should be taken into consideration when learning vocabulary. In this section, I will concentrate on methods of learning vocabulary, more specifically, explicit and implicit learning, and learning styles and strategies. In section 3.4 I will discuss classroom activities which can be used for teaching vocabulary.

Most theorists have divided vocabulary learning into two similar categories, but they have given the methods different names. Alan Hunt and David Beglar have developed a framework for vocabulary knowledge which gives a good explanation of the two main categories. The framework separates between explicit and implicit instruction and learning. Figure 2 below illustrates the framework.
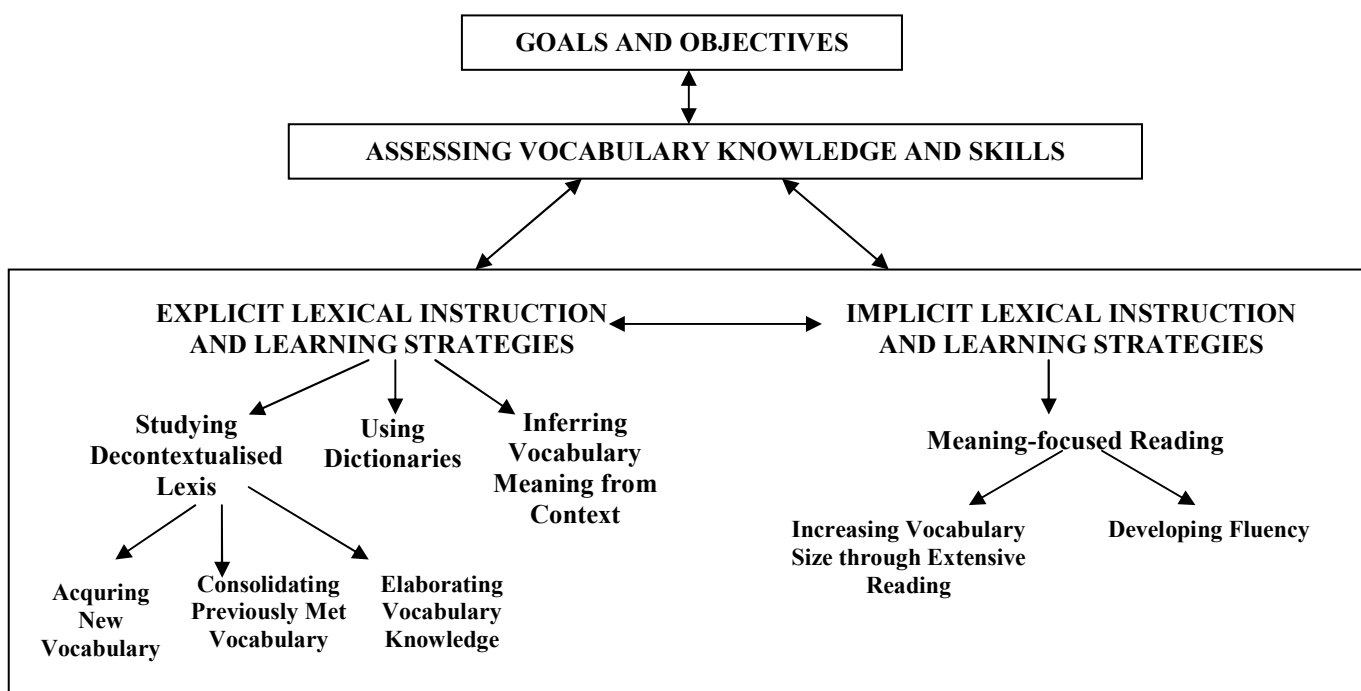
Figure 2: A Framework for Developing EFL Reading Vocabulary (Hunt and Beglar 2005)

"Explicit instruction and learning" focuses on conscious activities where the students study vocabulary using semantics, dictionaries, and words in context. Aud Marit Simensen calls this "*intentional* learning," which most likely involves a bottom-up method of deciphering words (1998:228). "Implicit instruction and learning" is a subconscious process of learning vocabulary primarily through extensive reading, also known as the "top-down method" of learning vocabulary. This is referred to as *"incidental* learning" by Simensen, who claims that a combination of both *"intentional"* and *"incidental"* learning of vocabulary is the optimal goal (1998:228).

The trends have changed over the years in the Norwegian classroom[5], but vocabulary seems to have been taught most of the time, implicitly or explicitly. Nevertheless, some teachers and professors in Norway would suggest that Norwegian EFL learners lack sufficient vocabulary skills. One explanation for this may be that today's teachers are very influenced by either the communicative, implicit method of learning English or by the psychometric-structuralist movement using an explicit method. In other words, very few teachers are combining both explicit and implicit teaching of vocabulary. Studies

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[5] See section 3.1: *Vocabulary – Historical Role in Norway*.

show, according to Schmitt, that guessing words from the context, as often done in extensive reading, does not necessarily result in long-term retention of vocabulary (Schmitt 2001:238). On the other hand, a purely explicit teaching method risks producing pupils with a limited high-frequency lexicon. Without a combination of explicit and implicit learning, learners risk lacking the ability to productively use and remember a varied lexicon.

In addition to explicit and implicit learning, learning styles and strategies should also be taken into consideration when learning vocabulary. As mentioned earlier, there are different variables which contribute to one acquiring a language. There are also different learning styles and strategies that learners rely upon. These styles and strategies may be applied to all subjects and sub-topics. Teachers together with the students should find out what learning strategies and styles work best for learning, in this case learning vocabulary.

Style, as defined by Douglas Brown, refers to consistent tendencies or preferences within an individual for intellectual functioning and personality type (2000:113). These styles may include for example left and right brain functioning, reflectivity and impulsivity, and auditory and visual styles. It is important to make available learning for both right and left brain learning, as according to neurological research, pupils may differ in their brain dominance (Brown 2000:118). Left-brain dominant learners prefer talking and writing whereas right-brain learners prefer drawing and manipulating objects. Hence, vocabulary should be explained both verbally and with pictures or actions, and vocabulary output should be varied. Both multiple-choice tests and open-ended questions should be used to assess vocabulary knowledge because left-brain pupils prefer multiple-choice and right-brain pupils prefer open-ended questions.

Another style, reflectivity and impulsivity, differentiates between learners who make quick, gambling guesses (impulsivity), and those who make slower, more calculated decisions (reflectivity) (Brown 2000:121). Vocabulary learning should therefore be built up so that there is for example both guessing from context and dictionary work. Both learning situations could be timed or not timed in order to permit different learning paces. Auditory and visual learning styles are the preference learners have toward either visual

or auditory input. Auditory learners prefer listening to lectures and audiotapes while visual learners prefer reading, drawing, computers, and movies (Brown 2000:122). This means the vocabulary input should be varied using computers, reading, speech, movies, and drawings in order to accommodate all learners.

Strategies used to compensate for insufficient vocabulary knowledge has previously been discussed (see section 2.2) but there are also strategies which characterize good language learners hence, good vocabulary learners. Douglas Brown has summarized the characteristics of a good language learner described by Joan Rubin (Rubin and Thompson 1982 referred to in Brown 2002). I have then in turn applied the characteristics to vocabulary learning. Good vocabulary learners

1. find their own way, take charge of learning new words.
2. organize information about vocabulary.
3. are creative, developing a "feel" for the language by experimenting with its words.
4. make their own opportunities for practice in using vocabulary words inside and outside the classroom.
5. learn to live with uncertainty by not getting flustered and by continuing to talk and to listen without understanding every word.
6. use mnemomics and other memory strategies to recall words.
7. make vocabulary errors work for them and not against them.
8. use knowledge from L1 to help learn L2 words.
9. use contextual cues to help them in comprehension.
10. learn to make intelligent guesses.
11. learn chunks of language.
12. learn certain tricks that help to keep conversations going.
13. learn certain production strategies to fill in gaps in their own vocabulary.
14. learn different styles of speech and writing and learn to vary vocabulary according to the formality of the situation.

(Rubin in Brown 2000:123 (adapted by me))

This list of characteristics can aid in producing good vocabulary learners. In addition, metacognitive and cognitive learning strategies may be used. Metacognitive learning strategies such as organizing, planning, self-evaluation, and self-monitoring will aid

learners in taking part of their own vocabulary learning, progress, requirements, and deficiencies. In order to manipulate and direct learning tasks and material learners use cognitive strategies. These strategies include repetition, translation, note taking, group work, inferencing, deduction, and contextualization (Brown 2000:125, 126). Now that some learning styles and strategies have been mentioned, I would like to look closer in the next section at some classroom activities which can be used to teach vocabulary.

3.4   Teaching Vocabulary in English as a Foreign Language

As teachers and researchers have come to understand the role of the lexicon in language learning and communication, the increased attention to vocabulary teaching has become more important. Vocabulary teaching is a question of how to get students to learn the vocabulary and then be able to remember and use it productively. There are numerous ways in which vocabulary can be taught and I will therefore concentrate on the most common approaches. I will look closer at teaching vocabulary through context, extensive reading, separate vocabulary activities, and meaningful, self-discovery procedures.

The present-day approach of vocabulary teaching in the classroom according to Aud Marit Simensen emphasizes three elementary principles:

1. learning new vocabulary through meaningful contexts
2. self discovery of vocabulary meaning
3. vocabulary activities involving associations

(1998:229)

In the Norwegian classroom today learning through context is the trend. Many researchers say that most of the words students learn are acquired through context and very few are learnt through direct classroom instruction (Beck & McKeown, Nagy & Herman referred to in Joshi 2005:213).

According to Norbert Schmitt the full meaning of a word can only be realized in context (2000:28). Vocabulary in context includes collocations, which is a term used to describe a group of words which occur repeatedly together (Schmitt 2000:76). During the grammar-translation period words were used and translated in isolation, with little regard to

context. The current belief is that words do not occur as isolated units and that there are in fact regularities as to how they co-occur with other words (Schmitt 2000:77). Take the word *snow* for example. There is a high probability that it will co-occur with words like *winter*, *cold*, *fall*, *white*, *block* ect. Thus these words collocate with one another.

Lexical phrases are also common when learning through context. Lexical phrases or multiword units reflect the way the mind tends to chunk language together in order to make it easier to remember or learn (Schmitt 2000:78). A multiword unit is a cluster of words that has a more regular pattern than the collocations above because it has one single meaning (Schmitt 2000:97). Examples of multiword units may be compound words, phrasal verbs, fixed phrases, idioms, and proverbs. According to Norbert Schmitt, the ability to use preformed lexical chunks allows greater fluency in speech production (2000:102). This may be because native speakers naturally use lexical chunks and thus L2 learners sound more fluent when they use them as well. Words in context may also trigger different schemas. Schema is knowledge of how things in a specific area of the real world behave and are organized (Schmitt 2000:28). Together a learner's schema and the context help decipher the meaning of the word and/or words.

Extensive reading is one of the best ways of increasing a lexicon through context. Carver (1994) discovered that when students read books with challenging vocabulary, they had a better chance to learn new words than if they read easier books (referred to in Joshi 2005:213). This research corresponds to Stephen Krashen's *Input Hypothesis* which says that a stipulation for acquisition is that the language input contains structures which are above (+1) the learners' current level of competence. In the past and perhaps a bit today, associative and rote-memory approaches to vocabulary teaching have been used. According to Malatesha Joshi these approaches can be useful in the beginning stages of vocabulary acquisition but they prove to be less effective than meaning or context based approaches which result in more lasting memory and a better understanding of vocabulary (Joshi 2005:213).

Reading is a major source of vocabulary development but seems to have a stronger effect on good readers with a larger vocabulary. Until the language threshold is met, reading will not increase a learner's lexicon as much as a reader who has quite a large vocabulary.

This phenomenon of good readers acquiring more vocabulary than poor readers is known as a *Mathew Effect* (Stanovich 1986; Walberg & Tsai 1983 referred to in Joshi 2005:213). The outcome of this effect is a hopeless cycle where poor readers continue to have a small vocabulary and good readers continue to increase their vocabulary. Nonetheless, there will always be a need for extra exposure to vocabulary through extensive reading, listening and speaking. A case study by Norbert Schmitt and Maria Pigada confirmed the importance of extensive reading for the acquisition of new vocabulary. Through an extensive reading program with learners of French, the study examined whether one month of extensive reading enhanced knowledge of some specific words' spelling, meaning, and grammatical characteristics. Overall, the study showed an increase in correct spelling, increased meaning, and grammatical comprehension, indicating that more vocabulary acquisition is possible from extensive reading (Pigada 1996). However, it should be remembered that since the lexicon is an independent entity in the mind there is justification for also using teaching approaches which make vocabulary work as a separate learning activity.

Working with vocabulary separately and independent of context may broaden learners' knowledge of words and therefore will have a higher chance of remaining in the long-term memory. Word families for example, may be taught as a separate activity. Research has shown that knowing a base word may simplify the learning and recognition of other members belonging to its family (Schmitt 2000:126). The base word *complete* and its family members or derivations *completely* and *incomplete* can be learned by using charts or word family maps. Gaining knowledge of morphology could simplify the process of acquiring new vocabulary (Schmitt 2000:25). Separate vocabulary activities may also include placing collocations on a grid, grouping words according to topic, one-to-one translations, or word association activities (Simensen 1998:227-238).

Another qualification for learning new words is that they are somehow meaningful to the learner and therefore a self-discovery approach seems appropriate. In order to make words meaningful there are a number of exercises that may be used. For example, synonyms, antonyms, etymology, structural analysis and context clues are some possibilities to achieve meaningful learning. A discovery approach allows students to guess the meaning of words by using the surrounding context. Other activities use an

explanation approach, which permits the learner to demonstrate vocabulary meaning using synonyms, antonyms, hyponyms, collocations, associations, pictures, actions and more (Simensen 1998:229-238). By letting the learners discover the meaning themselves they can relate the words to something they understand and have a connection with. Both approaches allow for many types of activities and a combination will keep the students motivated and make vocabulary learning meaningful.

In summary, a variety and combination of vocabulary exercises and methods should be used for leaning vocabulary. Together with the mentioned learning methods, styles and strategies in section 3.3, learning vocabulary through context, extensive reading, separate vocabulary activities, and meaningful, self-discovery approaches will give pupils the vocabulary knowledge they need to use and comprehend the English language.

4 Research Methods and Materials

In this chapter, I will look more closely at the research methods and materials for this study. First I will explain the aims of my study. Second the methods and materials used for my study will be explained and described. The participants, the essays, and the analysis of the study will be clarified. Finally, I will look closer at the vocabulary aspects of the essays, which will be used to help analyze the vocabulary of upper secondary pupils.

4.1 Aims and Methods

Since the early 80's, English has been taught in Norway beginning from the 2nd grade (age 6-7). This means that Norwegian pupils in the upper secondary school have had formal teaching of English for 10-12 years. In comparison, native English pupils have had formal teaching of English since kindergarten (age 5-6), and therefore will have had between 11-13 years of formal English teaching in the upper secondary school. Of course native pupils are exposed to the English language constantly, not only through school but by family and society in general. Norwegian pupils however, are exposed to less English outside of school. Although it should be noted that Norway has vast exposure to English speaking television, literature, music and native English. So what effect does this vast exposure and long formal teaching of the language have on Norwegians' English proficiency?

Norwegian learners have on average 5 hours of English per week in school. In addition some upper secondary schools also have other subjects which are taught in English. This is known as content and language integrated learning (CLIL), a project based on the results of the Canadian immersion studies. The studies in Canada showed that learners immersed in a language learned faster and obtained an almost native language.

Due to the special role of the English language in Norway, I wanted to look closer at the effects of this in praxis. By comparing Norwegian learner (NL) English to native speaker (NS) English one can compare and analyze their vocabulary usage. Comparing the

written performance of a native and non-native writer may have numerous benefits in the field of language research. However, my main aim with this study is to:

- Obtain information about the English vocabulary usage of upper secondary pupils in Norway.

In addition, I hope to look closer at three sub points, namely:

- To find out some differences and similarities between the English vocabulary usage of EFL pupils and EMT pupils. More specifically, how near or far are Norwegians' English from mother tongue English?
- How individual, frequent, varied, mature, and correct is the English vocabulary that Norwegian language learners use in their free writing?
- How well prepared are Norwegian pupils for further academic studies in English?

In order to study these research questions, I have chosen to compare the written work of Norwegian pupils to native English pupils, i.e. American pupils. The main focus of this study is on vocabulary or lexis. Therefore, this will be the focus in the analysis of the written essays. A qualitative as well as a quantitative research method is used to analyze and study the material produced by upper secondary pupils. Vocabulary analysis factors are used to help compare the texts produced by Norwegian writers and native writers. The vocabulary analysis factors used for this study will be described fully in section 4.3.

It should be noted that the results in this study cannot be claimed to be generally representative as that would require many more participants. The results however do show a general tendency which can be built upon in further research and used to encourage the teaching of English vocabulary in Norway.

4.2   Material

The material for this study consists of 50 written English essays. These essays are comprised of 25 written by native English pupils and 25 by Norwegian pupils. In this section I will explain more closely the participants used for this study, the written essay, and the process of analysis.

The Participants

The Norwegian pupils chosen for this analysis are in the first year of the Norwegian three year, general studies course in the upper secondary school. Most students in the class were age 16 when the data was collected. An entire English class from a high school outside of Oslo, Norway[6] was used for the study. The school and class were chosen because I was working at the school at the time, and therefore it was convenient to conduct the study. All participants filled out a personal profile which will be discussed further in the *essay* section. The Norwegian class was a homogeneous class where all pupils had two Norwegian speaking parents. English grades in the class varied between "3-6," but overall their English was good. On average the pupils in the class had studied English formally for 10 years. A summary of the Norwegian participant's profiles is as follows:

Norwegian Participant Profile Summary

➢ 15 male participants

➢ 10 female participants

➢ 1 pupil with grade "6" in English

➢ 9 pupils with grade "5"

➢ 10 pupils with grade "4"

➢ 5 pupils with grade "3"

The native English pupils chosen for the analysis are American. Because I am American, choosing American high school students made collecting data more feasible. However, collecting data in America was not without its difficulties. Due to the physical distance between Norway and America, establishing contacts and getting the essays was a challenge. First, contact was made with teachers in America working in high schools, some of who were family members. Many teachers were reluctant to help, as their schedules would not permit, or they taught the wrong age group. Others said they would assist in my research but in the end canceled. Finally, I collected the essays personally on a visit to my father's home town in St. Cloud, Minnesota. A second year English class was chosen at a four year, general studies high school[7]. Most pupils were about age 16 when the study was conducted. The American class was also a homogeneous class where

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[6] *Eikeli Videregående Skole* in Østerås, Norway.
[7] *Sauk Rapids-Rice High School* in Minnesota, USA.

both parents have English as their mother tongue. The English grades also varied in the American class between "D-A." These grades are similar to the Norwegian grades "2-6" although not exactly equivalent grading systems; they can be compared as follows.

$$\text{Norwegian } 2 = \text{D in American}$$
$$3 = \text{C}$$
$$4 = \text{B}$$
$$5/6 = \text{A}$$

As second year high school students, the American pupils had studied English formally for 12 years. The American pupils' participant information is as follows:

American Pupils Participant Summary

➢ 14 male participants

➢ 11 female participants

➢ 5 pupils with an "A" in English

➢ 12 pupils with a "B"

➢ 5 pupils with a "C"

➢ 3 pupils with a "D"

Overall, the Norwegian and American classes used for the study have similar profiles and therefore their written work may be more easily compared and analyzed. All the participants used for this study are of course not representative of the entire population of 16-year-old speakers and learners of English, but their written work gives us some idea of the standard of English for both learners and speakers. The NS are generally seen as a norm for what would be the goal for NL of English in the upper secondary school. The written work of the learners and speakers can be compared because the educational system for Oslo, Norway is roughly equivalent to that of St. Cloud, Minnesota. As stated previously, the Norwegian learners will be referred to as NL and the native speakers as NS.

The Essays

The material was collected similarly in both Norway and America. Each class was placed in a computer lab where each pupil had his/her own computer to write on. The students wrote their essays on the computer to begin with, which made the essays easier to collect

and saved time when comparing and analyzing. Each class was told that the essay they were going to write would be used for language research and that they should therefore put forth their best effort. The classes were told to write freely in complete sentences, using essay format, and to write what they could in the time allotted. In addition the classes were then given written instructions for the essay. The instructions read as follows:

Discuss the following statement:
The prison system is outdated. No civilized society should punish its criminals: it should rehabilitate them.

The *Centre for English Corpus Linguistics* (CECL) and the *International Corpus of Learner English* (ICLE) suggest that an argumentative essay is the best for comparative and analytical studies and research (Granger 1995). Several argumentative essay topics were chosen to begin with. Some topics were eliminated because they related to topics that were present in either the Norwegian or American English curriculum. The remaining topics were showed to several English teachers in Norway and America and were ranked in order of popularity by the teacher. In the end, the prison system topic stated previously was chosen.

CECL and ICLE also suggest that a learner profile be filled out by each pupil in order to provide information needed during the analysis. However no names were included on the essays in order to keep each pupil anonymous. The learner profile included:

1. sex
2. age
3. mother tongue
4. number of years of formal English studies
5. last given grade/mark in English

Due to structural considerations a 45 minute time limit for writing the essay was given. This way the essay could be written in one class period. With this time limit CECL and ICLE implied that 500-1000 words could be expected. As shown in section 5.1 this was however not always the case and will be discussed further in section 5.1. To simplify the variables for the analysis no learning aids were used while writing the essay. In other

words, no dictionaries, books, or help from the teacher or neighbor were allowed. Of course there are some correction programs (auto correct and spell check) on most computers and these were allowed but not encouraged to use. Other sources and materials such as previous English exams in the Norwegian upper secondary schools, *Scholastic Assessment Test* (SAT) essay questions, and *Test of English as a Foreign Language* (TOEFL) essay topics seem to agree on these same rules for essay writing. I have also had informal conversations regarding these issues with teachers in both Norway and America and they approved the rules and topic choice. I have chosen to include 10 of the 50 essays, 5 American essays and 5 Norwegian essays, in the appendix for further examination.[8] These essays were chosen in part randomly and in part because they are used as examples in the analysis. I also feel they can generally represent the other 40 essays in the corpus.

The Analysis

In this study, the written essays of Norwegian learners of English and native speakers of English will be compared as noted above. The essays will be compared and analyzed by means of vocabulary aspects which will be presented in section 4.3. The analysis and comparison of essays will be done in chapter 5.

In order to aid in the analysis of the two essays, *Frequency* and *Range* programs were used. This software was programmed by Alex Heatley and designed by Paul Nation to research vocabulary (Heatley 2002). The *Frequency* and *Range* programs are used to analyze the pupils' texts quickly and accurately. These programs use three base word lists to compare the texts too. The source of these lists as described by Nation are "*A General Service List of English Words* by Michael West (Longman, London 1953) for the first 2000 words, and *The Academic Word List* by Coxhead (1998, 2000) containing 570 word families" (as quoted in Heatley 2002). The first base list includes the most frequent 1000 words of English, thus consisting of around 4000 forms or types. This list contains words, plus months, days of the week, numbers, titles (Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms, Mister), and frequent greetings (Hello, Hi etc.). List two includes the second 1000 most frequent words. The

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[8] The entire corpus of 50 essays may be obtained by request to my self, Dallas Elaine Skoglund.

third list includes words not in the first 2000 words of English but which are frequent in upper secondary school and University texts from a wide range of subjects.

All three base lists include the base forms of words and their derived forms. The lists include both American and British spellings. Apostrophes are treated as spaces, so <u>I've</u> is counted as two items, as is <u>Jane's</u>. The word forms in the base lists are grouped into word families under a headword. For example, the headword <u>AID</u> has the following family members <u>AIDED</u>, <u>AIDING</u>, <u>AIDS</u>, and <u>UNAIDED</u> (Heatley 2002). These programs can be used for many different purposes; however in my analysis I have used the results to help discern:

- The number of words per sentence/per essay (tokens)
- The number of types of words per essay (types)
- The vocabulary individuality
- Frequency
- Vocabulary variation
- Vocabulary maturity/density

4.3   Vocabulary Aspects of the Essays

The vocabulary aspects were chosen in order to describe and quantify the differences and similarities between NL and NS. I have chosen to analyze and compare the writing of NL and NS using all of the following vocabulary aspects:

1. Number of words per essay (W/E)
2. Vocabulary individuality (VI)
3. Frequency (F)
4. Vocabulary variation (VV)
5. Vocabulary maturity (VM)
6. Vocabulary errors (VE)
7. Correlation and significance of the vocabulary aspects

The data for all of these aspects, after they have been analyzed either by the *Range* and *Frequency* programs, by hand, or by using *Microsoft Excel 2003,* were entered into a *Microsoft Excel 2003* worksheet. This program has built in formulas for calculating different statistical figures. In addition, the program was used to help construct the tables

and graphs used to help visualize and explain the results. For each relevant vocabulary aspect, I have arranged the results using the following statistical figures:

- **total** = the sum of all essays in a particular group
- **min.** = minimum: the lowest result for a group
- **avg.** = average: obtained by adding all the scores together and dividing by the total number of essays
- **max.** = maximum: the highest result for a group
- **std. dev.** = standard deviation: the amount of variation within a group

4.3.1   Number of Words per Essay (W/E)

The number of words per essay is counted by Nation's *Frequency* and *Range* programs which were discussed in the previous section. These programs include base lists, as mentioned above, which are used to help count and keep an inventory of all the words in each essay. These base lists include the base forms of words, derived forms, and a mixture of families and types. In other words, the program counts words according to an orthographic definition, which is also called tokens. This definition, as mentioned in chapter 2, says that a word is any sequence of letters enclosed by a space or punctuation on either side (Carter 1998:4). The different types of words (types) are also counted by the program, which means that repeated words are counted as one type. In addition the program counts the number of words per line.

Tokens, types and families are counted together and separately in the program. The program then divides the three groups. An example of these results from the program looks as follows in Table 1. For my analysis, I will only be examining the tokens and types. Therefore, the vocabulary aspect W/E is comprised of both tokens and types.

```
WORD LIST            TOKENS/%        TYPES/%         FAMILIES

one                  143/88.8        81/87.1            74
two                    6/ 3.7         5/ 5.4             5
three                  0/ 0.0         0/ 0.0             0
not in the lists      12/ 7.5         7/ 7.5         ?????

Total                 161             93                79
```

Table 1 Word count results

The number of words produced per essay is interesting to compare between NL and NS. Who composes more English in the time allotted? If more words were produced does it necessarily mean the language is varied and mature? These and other questions will be more closely addressed in chapters 5 and 6.

4.3.2 Vocabulary Individuality (VI)

Vocabulary individuality (VI) examines the amount of lexical or content words in the essay that are unique to that writer. Content words include verbs, nouns, adverbs and adjectives. The other words that make up a sentence are known as grammatical or function words which include prepositions, conjunctions, and articles. Grammatical words may be frequent and therefore important to understand, but without content words no message will be conveyed or understood. Both content and grammatical words are necessary to produce a comprehensible sentence. About 90% of grammatical words occur in the first 1,000 most frequent words (Arnaud 1995:158). Therefore base list one used in Paul Nation's *Range* and *Frequency* program is comprised mostly of grammatical words.

In order to only count the number of content words per essay, the *Range* program contains a "stop list" (Heatley 2002). This list allows one to exclude certain words, in this case, function words. The program then generates the data for the number of content words per essay. Due to limitations of the *Range* program, only 32 essays can be compared at one time. I have therefore chosen to examine the vocabulary of the American pupils and Norwegian pupils separately. Hence, I will first examine what vocabulary is unique to each Norwegian writer in the corpus of Norwegian essays (25). I will then examine the vocabulary unique to each American writer in the corpus of 25 American essays. The formula that will be used to measure vocabulary individuality is:

$$VI = \frac{\text{Content words unique to that writer}}{\text{Total number of content words in the essay}} \times \frac{100}{1}$$

(Linnarud 1986:44)

Vocabulary individuality may indicate the breadth of a pupil's or group's vocabulary and how original the vocabulary of each learner is compared to their peers. Using unique

words, when used correctly, may indicate a large lexicon and grasp of the language. VI may be used to compare NL to one another or against the test group, the American pupils. A high VI figure indicates that the writer has a high percentage of words unique in a corpus (25 essays per test group). It may also be a sign of an understanding of lower frequency words, as they tend to be more unique. Of course, it should be noted that a high or low VI score may be accidental and therefore does not mean that pupils always will have the same VI score.

4.3.3   Frequency (F)

In order to analyze and compare the frequency of the pupils' vocabulary Paul Nation's and Alex Heatley's *Frequency* program is used. The program gives the rank order of the words, their raw frequency and the cumulative percentage frequency. In addition the program tells the percentage of words found in each base list. As mentioned previously, the program contains three base lists. Altogether the three base lists contain the 4000 most frequent words in upper secondary school. The program also tells the percentage of words which are not found in any of the three lists, which probably implies either the word is an error or it is of a lower frequency and therefore too low to be included. In other words, if 86% of a pupil's words are found within list one, two, or three, then it may also be said that 86% of the words produced are high frequency or found within the most common 4000 words for upper secondary school pupils. Therefore 14% of the pupil's words are either an error or are of a lower frequency. The frequency of the pupils' vocabulary will be analyzed and compared in section 5.3.

4.3.4   Vocabulary Variation (VV)

An important aspect of using the English lexicon is being able to productively use a large and varied portion of the approximately 2 million words in the English language. Not only do teachers assess the ability to use a varied vocabulary, but it is also important in order to communicate accurately and maturely. A lack of lexical variation (vocabulary variation) in writing may disturb the discourse, style, cohesion, and meaning of a text. In her article "Lexical teddy bears and advanced learners," Angela Hasselgren discusses among other things why Norwegian pupils may not use a varied vocabulary. Many EFL learners cope with a limited vocabulary by repeating or re-using the words they feel

comfortable using (Hasselgren 1994:237). A lack of lexical variation can be a sign of a limited vocabulary. It is therefore useful and enlightening to analyze vocabulary variability in the written student essays.

In order to find the vocabulary variation ratio, the number of different types of words (types) are divided by the total number of words (tokens) in the text and multiplied by 100. The ratio produced from the equation is known as the lexical variation ratio or the vocabulary variation ratio.

$$VV = \frac{\text{Number of different words (types)}}{\text{Total number of words in the text (tokens)}} \times \frac{100}{1}$$

(Nation in Schmitt 2000:74)

The lower the ratio, the more repetition there is, and therefore less vocabulary is needed to understand the text. Norbert Schmitt suggests that a lexical variation ratio of 58.24 or more implies a more lexically complex text. He also says that written texts generally contain ratios over 40 (2000:75). In other words, a high VV score in an essay or group of essays means that there is little vocabulary repetition.

4.3.5 Vocabulary Maturity (VM)

Vocabulary maturity or lexical density as others have called it, is the percentage of content words in the total number of words in a text. Content words were previously defined in section 4.3.2. The formula for finding vocabulary maturity is:

$$VM = \frac{\text{Number of content words}}{\text{Total number of words in the text (tokens)}} \times \frac{100}{1}$$

(Schmitt 2000:75)

A study by Ure (1971) analyzed and counted lexical density in written and spoken texts in English. She found that written texts had on average a lexical density of over 40%. Her conclusion was that written texts contain, of course, a higher count of content words than spoken texts where the average lexical density was under 40% (Ure 1971 referred to in Carter 1998:92). Moira Linnarud found in her study of written compositions that Swedish

learners had a slightly lower average lexical density than native speakers of English but the difference was not statistically significant and therefore no conclusions were drawn (1986:58). She found that Swedish learners had an average of 42.4% for lexical density. NS had an average lexical density of 44%. Both Linnarud and Ure state that compositions which are non-interactive, or no response is expected, should have a lexical density of over 40% or more if written by native speakers (Linnarud 1986:58).
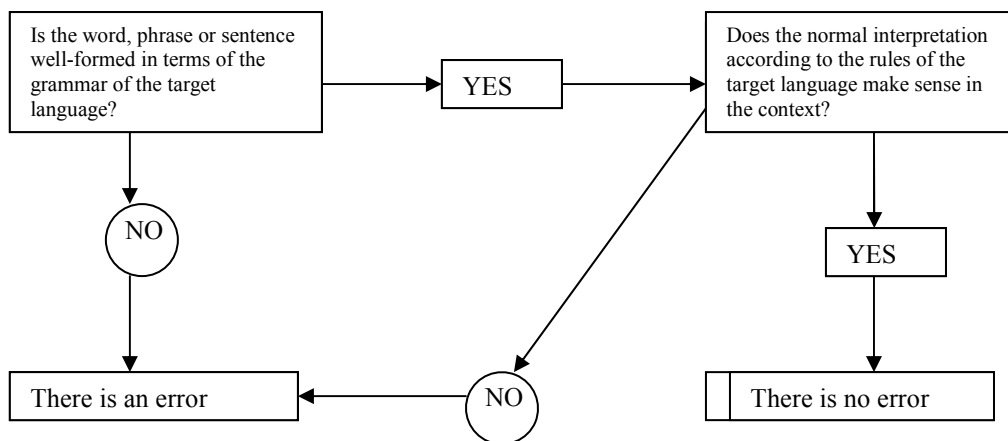
4.3.6   Vocabulary Errors (VE)

Defining an error can be one of the most difficult problems a teacher may encounter. There are so many different types of errors, not to mention distinguishing between an error and a mistake. In this study, I have chosen to concentrate on errors or unintentional inaccuracies in the vocabulary usage. Some of the many types of errors that will be counted in my analysis include:

- the word does not exist
- the word is used in the wrong register
- the word is correct but does not convey the writer's intended meaning
- the word is used in the wrong collocations
- the word is repeatedly spelled incorrectly

<div align="center">(Linnarud 1986:43)</div>

Errors in vocabulary use may sever communication. Therefore, it is important that the correct words are chosen and at the correct times. As previously mentioned, there are many different types of errors. In this analysis, I have counted errors in the old-fashioned teacher way - by counting the number of errors by hand. But, I have adapted the criteria used by Moira Linnarud for what constitutes an error diagram to aid in this process[9]. The diagram looks as follows in Figure 3:

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[9] The error criteria used by Moira Linnarud was modified of Corder's (1981) description of an error.

Figure 3 Moira Linnarud's criteria for what constitutes an error

Despite the many types of vocabulary errors, all types will be weighed equally and thus counted as one error each. Moira Linnarud chose to measure errors in two ways. I will use one of these measurements, as I feel it alone accurately represents the number of errors made according to the length of the essay. The formula used to find the total number of errors according to the length of the essay is:

$$VE = \frac{\text{Errors per essay}}{\text{Words per essay}} \times \frac{100}{1}$$

The number of errors made by NL and NS may then be compared to one another. Of course the presumption before completing the analysis is that the NL will have more errors than the NS. As mentioned earlier in sections 2.2 and 4.3.4 Angela Hasselgren concluded in her studies that Norwegian learners make errors but perhaps not as many as they would if they didn't use as many "lexical teddy bears" as Hasselgren called them. This phenomenon, of using the familiar when using a foreign language, may also be relevant in my study.

4.3.7   Correlation and Significance of the Vocabulary Aspects

In addition to comparing the vocabulary aspects of NS and NL to one another, it may also be of interest to compare the results of one vocabulary aspect to another to find out their relationship. One way of establishing the relationship between vocabulary aspects is by

using Pearson's Correlation Coefficient to find the correlation. A correlation between variables means that as one variable changes we can expect the other to change in a fairly regular way (Correlation and Linear Regression 2006). *Microsoft Excel 2003* is used to calculate Pearson's Correlation Coefficient using built in formulas. The measurements used to determine correlation can be explained as follows:

- **Pearson Correlation** = Pearson correlation coefficient (r): measures the size of correlation between variables (vocabulary aspects).

  r = 0.1 is a low correlation
  r = 0.3 is a middle high correlation
  r ≥ 0.5 is a high correlation (both positive and negative values)
  r ≥ 0.8 is a very high correlation (both positive and negative values)

  (Robson 2002:423)

A correlation coefficient may be positive or negative. A positive correlation, for example 0,815, says that the variables have a positive correlation and we can expect that when one changes the other will change in the same way. A negative correlation, on the other hand, for example -0,644, means that the variables have a negative correlation and therefore when one variable changes we can expect the other to change but in the opposite direction. No correlation found between the variables, for example 2.345, means that they do not affect one another and therefore we cannot predict what will happen to one variable when the other changes (Correlation and Linear Regression 2006). Keep in mind that this is a simplified explanation of correlation and Pearson's Correlation Coefficient.

In addition to the correlation between variables, it is also important to know if the correlations found are statistically significant. Statistical significance, according to Colin Robson, tells you how likely it is that you would get the same relationship between the variables that you did by chance alone in the population from which the data came (2002:400). The result of a statistical significance test can validate that the correlation found is due to actual differences found between the variables and not because of random variation. Just as for Pearson's Correlation Coefficient, *Microsoft Excel 2003* calculates statistical significance using formulas built in the program. The measurement used for significance can be explained as follows:

- **Sig.** = Significance (p): The nearer p is to 0.00 the less likely it is that the correlation is due to chance.

(Robson 2002:401)

As the aim of this study is to examine Norwegian learners' vocabulary usage, I will only analyze the correlation and significance of the vocabulary aspects for NL. Each of the vocabulary aspects described in sections 4.3.1 to 4.3.6 will be compared to one another. Table 8 in section 5.7 contains the data for the correlation and significance of the NL vocabulary aspects.

5 Vocabulary Analysis of the Written Essays

In this chapter, the essays of the NL and the NS will be compared by means of the vocabulary aspects presented in chapter 4. The data will then be presented for each of the vocabulary aspects using graphs and tables to help visualize the results.

There are a number of common preconceived differences between the English skills of NL and NS which should be mentioned before the written essays are analyzed. The NS are thought to be more original in their word choice than NL. Their vocabulary is also perceived to be more varied and of a lower frequency type. NS are thought to use a larger variety of different types of words such as; collocations and idioms. Finally it is commonly presumed that Norwegian learners have more errors than native speakers.

A study by Moira Linnarud (1986) compared and analyzed the compositions of Swedish learners of English to those of native speakers of English. Her findings revealed that the preconceived differences between the Swedish learner and native speaker were for the most part accurate. Apart from lexical density, which showed no large difference between the pupils, the native speakers performed better than the Swedish learners (Linnarud 1986:118).

5.1 Number of Words per Essay (W/E)

On average the NS produced more words per essay (tokens) in the time allotted (45 minutes) than the NL. In total all the NS wrote 13,711 words where the NL wrote 11,214, a difference of only 2497 words (see Table 2 and Figure 4). The minimum number of words written was 251, by a native speaker. Three American pupils wrote less than 300 words, however, none of the Norwegian pupils wrote less than 300 words. The maximum number of words written, also by a native speaker, was 1160. Only two Norwegian pupils wrote more than 600 words, but 11 American pupils wrote more than 600 words in the time allotted. There is a difference of 909 words between the minimum and maximum for the American pupils, which explains the high standard deviation for American pupils. There is a greater variation in the number of words written by the American pupils than the Norwegian pupils. This could mean that the American pupils selected for this study

varied greatly in their English writing skills. The selection of Norwegian pupils for this study seems to be more uniform in their English writing skills than the American pupils. However, they still have a considerably high standard deviation.

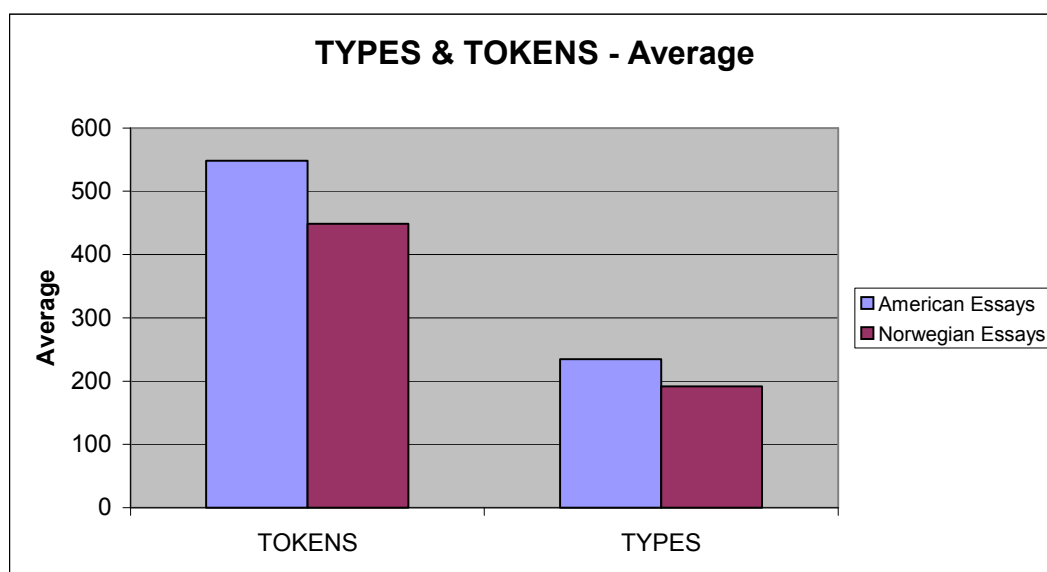|		TOTAL	MIN	AVG	MAX	STD.DEV.
TOKENS	American Essays	13711	251	548,4	1160	207,35
	Norwegian Essays	11214	312	448,6	667	98,97
TYPES	American Essays	5873	115	234,9	370	67,12
	Norwegian Essays	4794	135	191,8	245	32,70

Table 2 Tokens and Types

Figure 4 Types and Tokens Average

The NS also had on average a higher number of different types of words (types) produced per essay. The variation (std. dev.) of the number of types produced was also higher in the American essays. Although the NL on average used less word types in their writing, the difference is not as great as perhaps one would expect.

There could be many explanations for why pupils wrote different lengths of essays. Perhaps the pupils deliberately wrote short essays, or perhaps they didn't really care about the task. Maybe some pupils' language skills are not great enough to produce more English in the time allotted. Regardless of the reason, I would naturally expect NS to produce more language. However, I find it interesting that the difference between the number of words produced by NS and NL is not that large.

5.2 Vocabulary Individuality (VI)

As shown in Table 3 and Figure 5, the average percentage of vocabulary individuality for NL is a bit higher than that of the NS. Although the two groups were not compared directly to one another in the *Range* program, one can conclude that the NL had a higher average of VI scores in their corpus compared to the NS. Just as in the number of words, the American essays have a higher variance between their VI scores. Four NS had a VI score of 0.0, which means they had no unique lexical words in the American essay corpus.

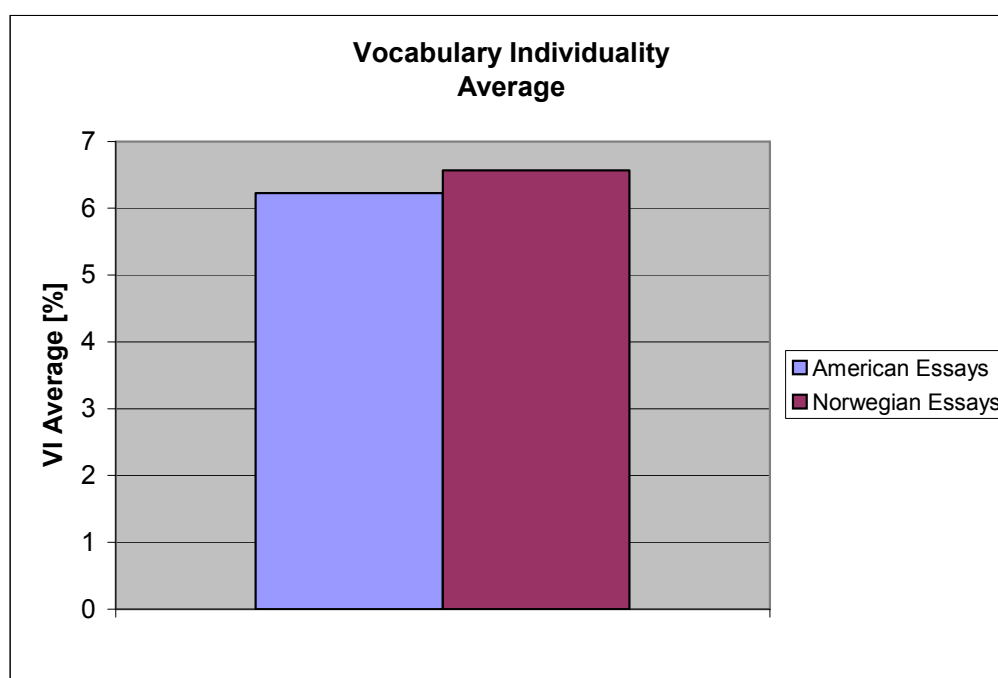| VI [%]	MIN	AVG	MAX	STD.DEV.
American Essays	0,0	6,2	33,1	7,03
Norwegian Essays	1,4	6,6	13,3	2,82

Table 3 VI

Figure 5 VI Average

American essay number 18 (see Figure 7) had an extremely high VI score compared to that of his peers. This essay[10] had only 251 tokens but had 41 unique words. The passage below, for example, contains 3 unique content words and shows unique and varied English despite the fact that there is one minor spelling mistake.

> "In essence, even though capital punishment is dwindling in
> popularity and approval in the United States, it is still
> necessary. No other form od punishment works so well
> against repeat offenders." (American essay #18)

Norwegian essay number 16[11] (see Figure 6) had the highest VI score of the NL. With a VI score of 13.3 and 312 tokens one can see the vocabulary uniqueness in this essay. Although it has some errors and is not as advanced English as American essay 18, the following excerpt contained three words not used by any other Norwegian pupil.

> "There is also the matter about how many prisoners there
> should be together in one prison. We can't keep loading
> prisons full! They will be under qualified, overloads where
> no one could be rehabilitated. Criminals will soon come out
> crazier then they went in, we have to build more prisons
> where there are easier to get help and treatment."
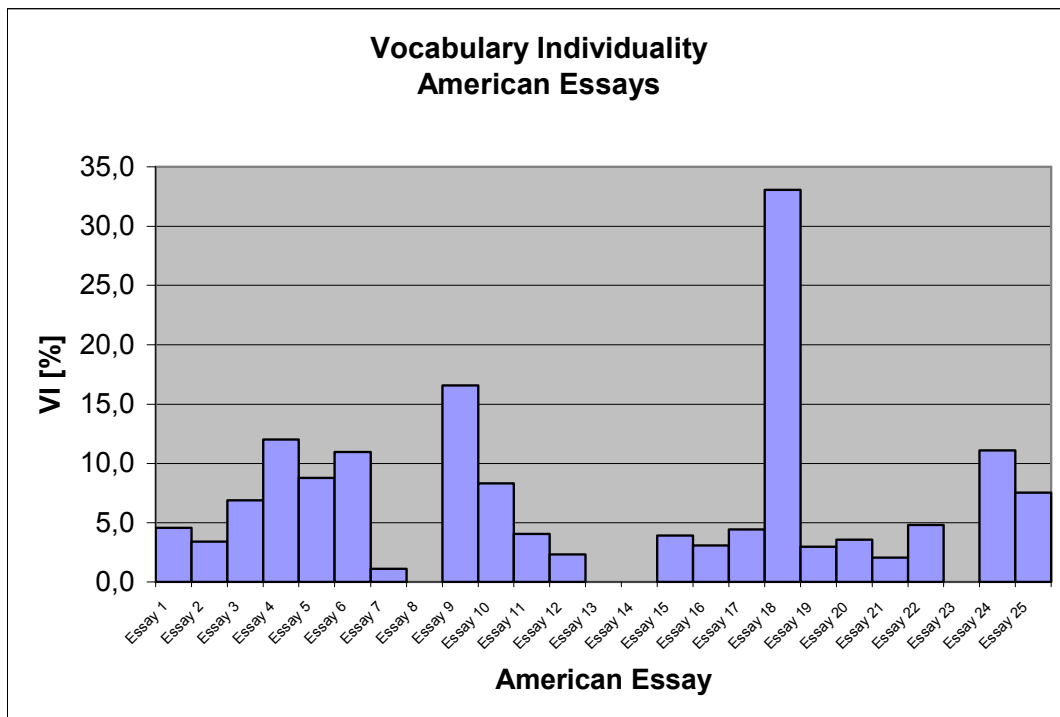> (Norwegian essay 16)

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[10] See appendix 2.
[11] See appendix 3.
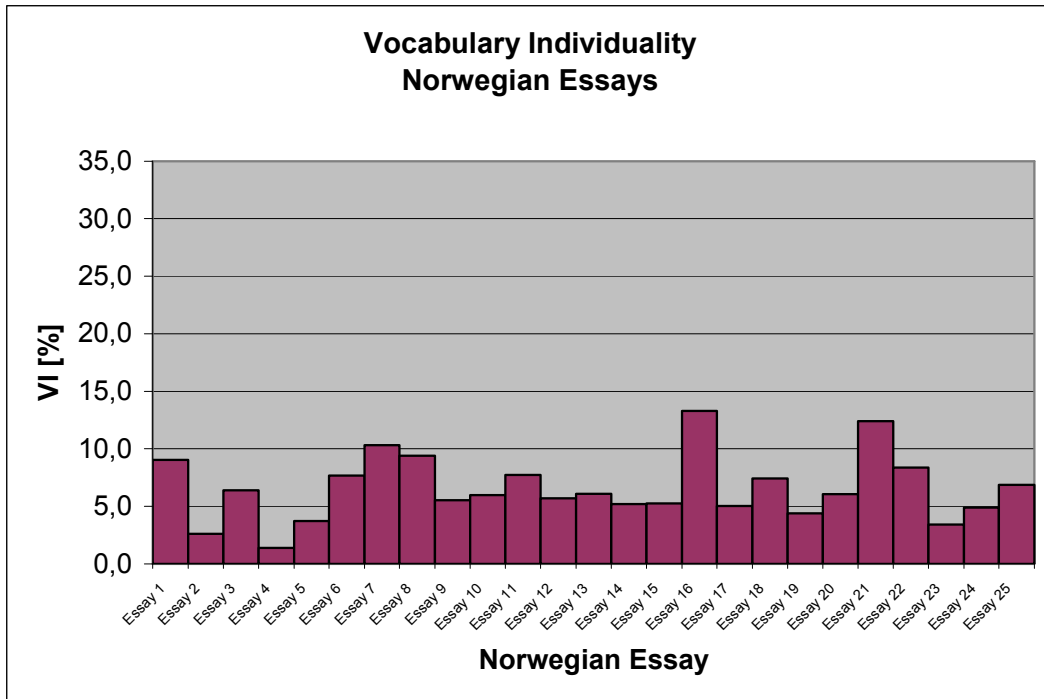
Figure 6 VI Norwegian essays

Figure 7 VI American essays

Vocabulary individuality occurs either in an essay with a unique theme which uses words not thought of by any other pupil or in an essay which contains many unique words. The Norwegian pupils seemed to focus on the topics of prison and criminals in their essays. The American pupils, on the other hand, focused more on the death penalty and serious crimes. The difference in context is probably due to cultural differences rather than vocabulary differences. In general, the American pupils wandered off more from the essay instructions than the Norwegian pupils, who stuck to the topic. Could this be because the Norwegian pupils were insecure about the topic and the vocabulary used for writing about the topic and therefore stuck to the instructions? NL most frequently used words which came from the instructions to the essay. In total the Norwegians used some form of the word "rehabilitate" 75 times and the word "prison" 238 times. The word "society" was used 48 times, "criminal" 112 times, and "system" was used 51 times. All of these words are found in the essay instructions given to the pupils.

5.3 Frequency (F)

According to the results of the *Range* program, an average of 86% of the total words used by the Norwegian pupils are found in list one, which are the 1000 most common words in English (see Table 4). Averages of 82.7% of the American pupils' words were found in list one. This is slightly less than the Norwegian learner but there is only a difference of 3.3%. NS had an average of 9.0% of their words in list two, which contains the second most frequent 1000 words. An average of 7.6% of the NL words were in list two. On average, as shown in Figure 8, 95.1% of the NS words were found within list one, two, or three. NL, on average, had 96.3% of their words in one of the three lists. One could conclude then that because these lists represent between 3000 – 4000 of the most frequent English words, all the pupils in the study have used a productive vocabulary size of about 4000 words or less.

Frequency [%]		MIN	AVG	MAX	STD.DEV.
LIST 1	American Essays	77,59	82,7	93,83	4,78
	Norwegian Essays	82,41	86,0	92,36	2,55
LIST 2	American Essays	4,32	9,0	13,25	2,41
	Norwegian Essays	3,61	7,6	11,55	2,10
LIST 3	American Essays	0,77	3,4	6,21	1,53
	Norwegian Essays	1,28	2,7	4,5	0,86
NOT IN ANY LIST	American Essays	1,08	4,9	8,32	2,25
	Norwegian Essays	1,27	3,7	6,28	1,20

Table 4 Frequency

According to Nation, as previously discussed in section 2.3, 3000-4000 words is a sufficient vocabulary size for producing a coherent English text. However, without a significant improvement in vocabulary production these pupils may struggle to operate at University level. Schmitt says 10,000 word families are needed just to read and comprehend University textbooks. And yet a much stronger vocabulary would be needed to write academic papers (Schmitt 2000:143).

The words not found in any of the programs' lists are either an error in vocabulary or are of a lower frequency and therefore not included in the three lists. An average of 4.9% of the NS vocabulary was not found in any of the three lists (See Table 4 and Figure 8). The maximum percentage of words not found in any list was 8.32%, which was generated by two NS. American essay 17[12] contained 517 words, 2 errors and 8.32% of the words were not found in any list. The following excerpt reveals the individuality and low frequency vocabulary used by this pupil.

> "From King Solomon to our Supreme Court, law and order have existed to keep our world in balance. Offenders of the law have faced their punishments, and though some rulings have come out unfairly, justice generally is served. To challenge the idea of imprisonment of law-breakers is controversial and a drastic change from our ideas of old. Should we rehabilitate criminals, hoping that all will change their ways and letting them return to society? Judging by our world's history, values of the people, and the effects of imprisonment, we should not rely on the rehabilitation of criminals." (American essay 17)
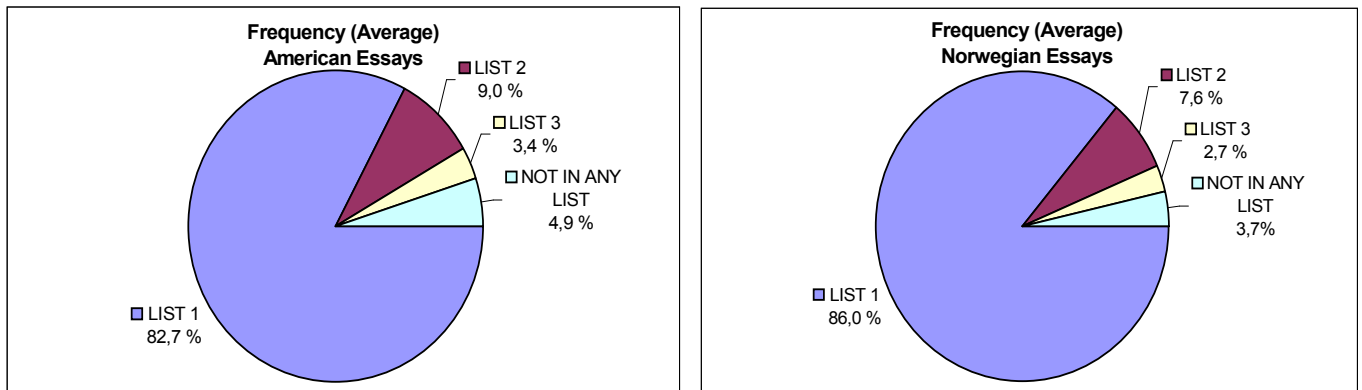
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[12] See appendix 4.

Figure 8 Frequency Average for American and Norwegian essays

An average of 3.7% of the words produced by NL were not found in any list. This is slightly lower than the average for the NS; however the most interesting is to compare the vocabulary used by the pupils with a high percentage of words not found in any list. One Norwegian pupil had 6.28% of their words not in any list. This was essay 18[13], which has 462 words and 14 errors. The excerpt below, from a Norwegian essay, reveals some lower frequency words but it does have many errors, which could be the reason for a higher percentage of words not found in any list.

> "What we need, I believe, is a far more strict system.
> Longer and tougher penalties. THEN people would fear the
> prison, they would think more before they're doing their
> criminal hobbies. Especially in Norway, our worst/best
> penalty is 24 prison years, which compares to 14 normal
> years. So in other words, you can kill and rape as many as
> you reach before you're getting caught, then come out of
> the Norwegian penthouse prison after 14 years. The
> Norwegian prison is a shame; it's almost like a poor-flat.
> America is much better than us when it comes to penalties."
> (Norwegian essay 18)

It is obvious from the two excerpts that there is a difference in vocabulary frequency between NL and NS. Many of the words used by the NS are of a lower frequency and there are very few vocabulary errors. The NL, on the other hand, has some lower frequency words but they are not always used correctly due to many vocabulary errors. In total there is once again a larger variation between the American pupils' frequency than between the Norwegian pupils (see Table 4 and Figure 9 and Figure 10).
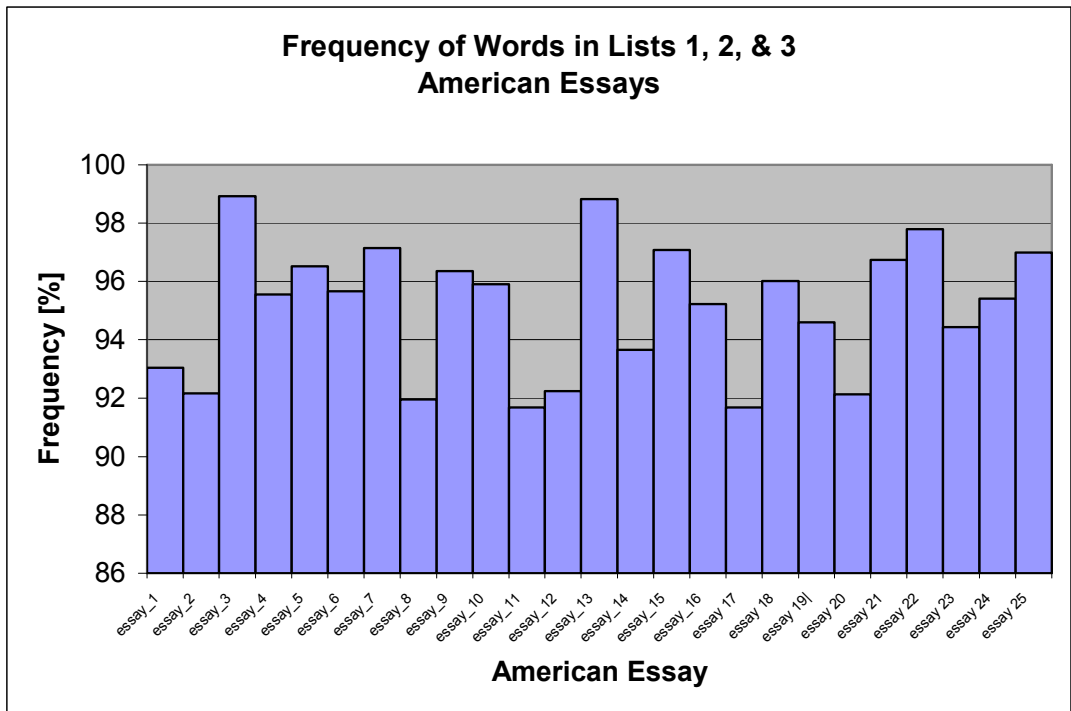
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[13] See appendix 5.

Figure 9 Frequency of words in lists 1, 2 & 3_American Essays
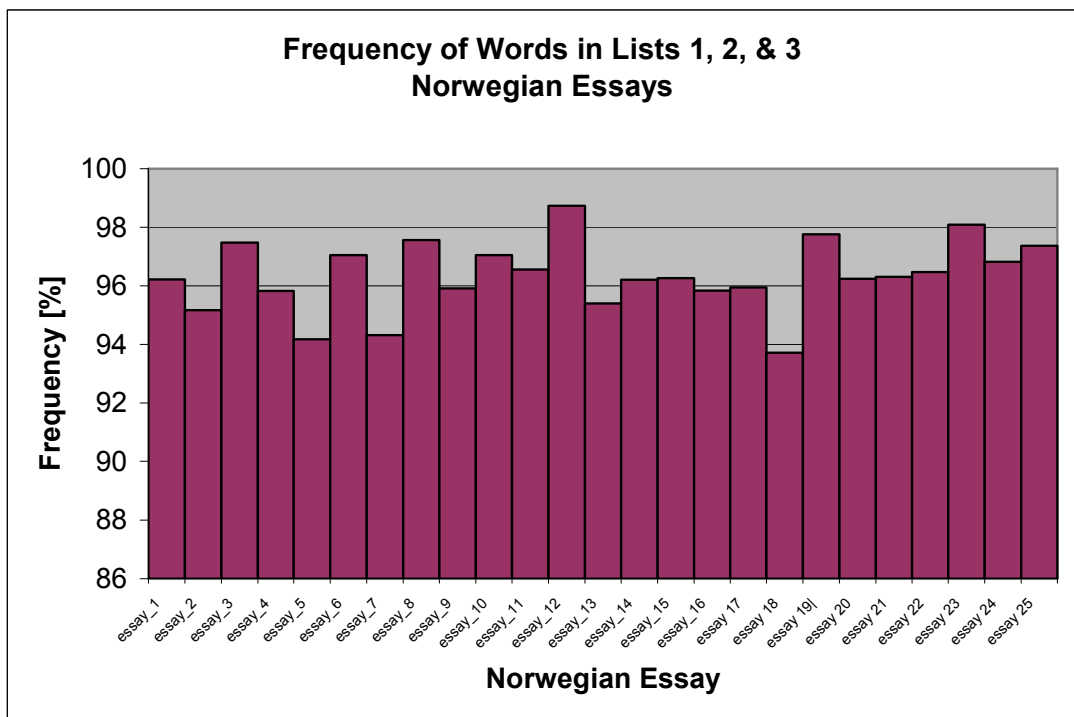

Figure 10 Frequency of words in lists 1, 2 & 3_Norwegian essays

5.4 Vocabulary Variation (VV)

Both the NS and NL have vocabulary variation ratios over 40, which Norbert Schmitt says is the generally acceptable ratio for written texts. It should be remembered that the formula used to figure the vocabulary variation does not take into account the length of the essays, therefore those with longer essays will have a lower VV ratio. The average NS essay had a VV ratio of 44.4% (see Table 5) and NL had an average VV ratio of 43.4%. The explanation for the small difference in VV scores between NL and NS could be explained by the longer length of the NS essays.

VV [%]	MIN	AVG	MAX	STD.DEV.
American Essays	31,9	44,4	57,8	6,77
Norwegian Essays	30,4	43,4	50,1	4,81

Table 5 VV
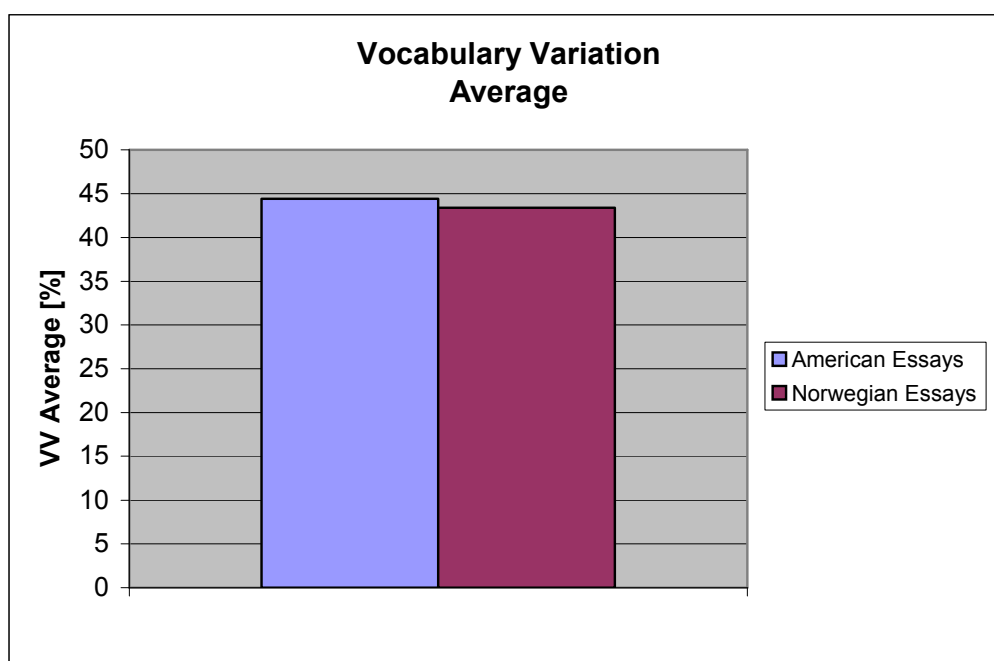
Figure 11 VV Average

The maximum VV ratio for NS is 57.8% and 50.1% for NL. The pupils with these VV ratios are considered to have a more lexically complex text. NS have more pupils with a higher VV ratio (Figure 13). One reason that native speakers have a higher average VV ratio may be that they are more courageous and explore new and varied vocabulary. Norwegian learners on the other hand, seem to lack enough vocabulary knowledge to

vary and explore different vocabulary in their free writing. What is perhaps more interesting is that the minimum ratio for both NL and NS is quite low meaning those pupils have more vocabulary repetition and less variation. Six of the NL essays contained VV ratios under 40 and the NS also had 6 essays with VV ratios under 40. It seems therefore that some of the NL and NS lack the vocabulary to vary their language in writing and need to therefore increase their lexicon to write a more lexically complex text.

The results show that there was more variation between each American essay than between each Norwegian essay (see Figure 12 and Figure 13). The reasons for this are unknown, but one conclusion that could be drawn is that NL are more similar to each other in their free writing. Perhaps Norwegian pupils are getting a more similar English education than American pupils.
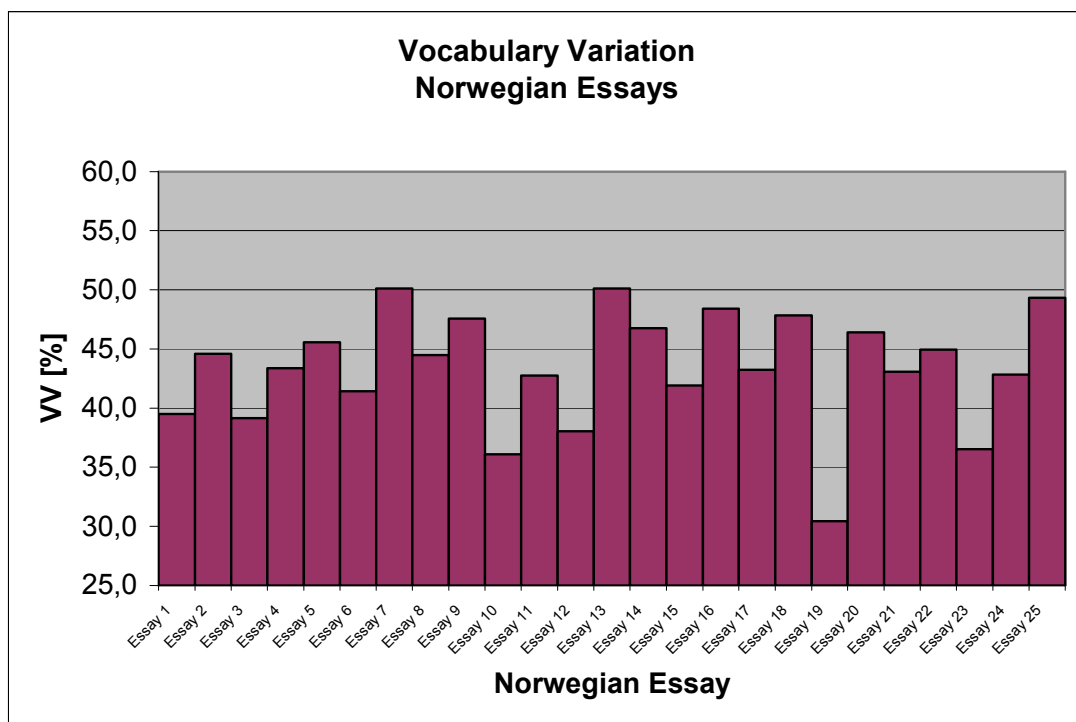

Figure 12 VV Norwegian essays
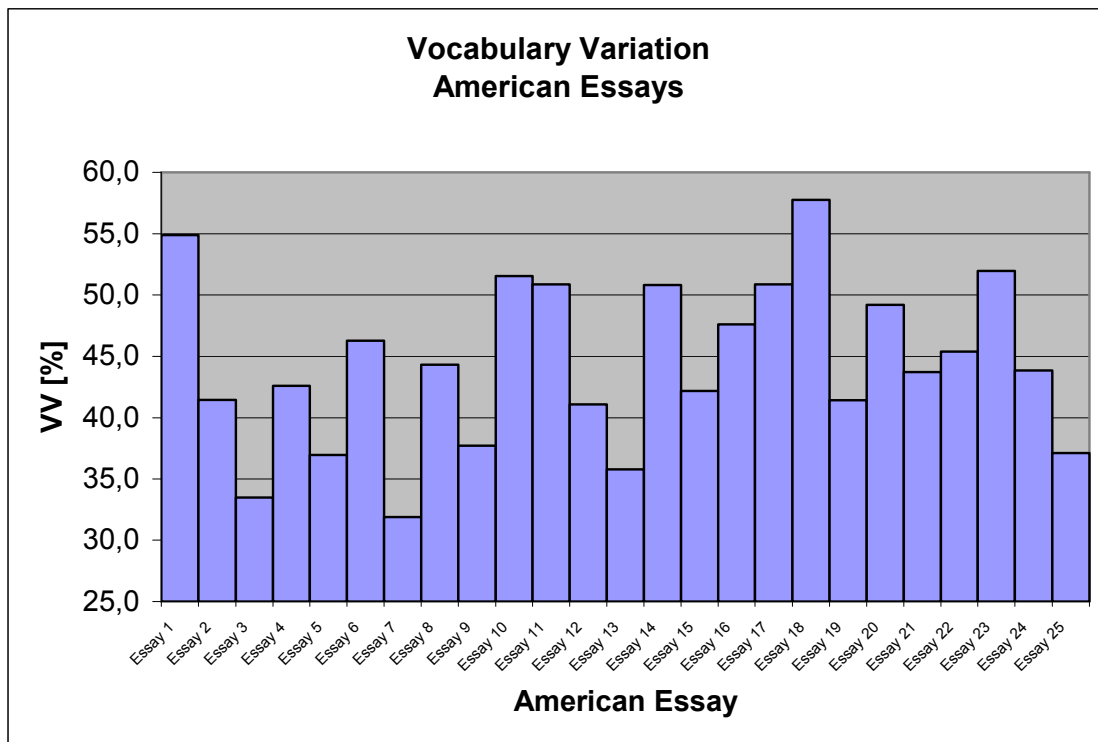
Figure 13 VV American essays

5.5 Vocabulary Maturity (VM)

NS had on average a higher vocabulary maturity ratio than NL. With an average of 44.9%, NS had a 3.2% higher ratio than the NL with an average ratio of 41.7% (see Table 6 and Figure 14). As stated previously, written, non-interactive essays should contain a VM ratio of 40 or higher. Both NL and NS minimum VM ratios fall below this standard. 9 Norwegian essays and 6 American essays had a VM score below 40. It is unknown why 6 out of 50 NS fell below the expected VM ratio. Perhaps they didn't put full effort into the exercise. But why did 9 out 50 NL fall below the average expected ratio of 40? It is possible that once again the NL do not have a large enough vocabulary to grasp the many content words in the language. They do however seem to be familiar with function words, which are naturally the most frequent words in the English language.

VM [%]	MIN	AVG	MAX	STD.DEV.
American Essays	33,6	44,9	52,2	5,56
Norwegian Essays	37,2	41,7	46,7	2,77

Table 6 VM
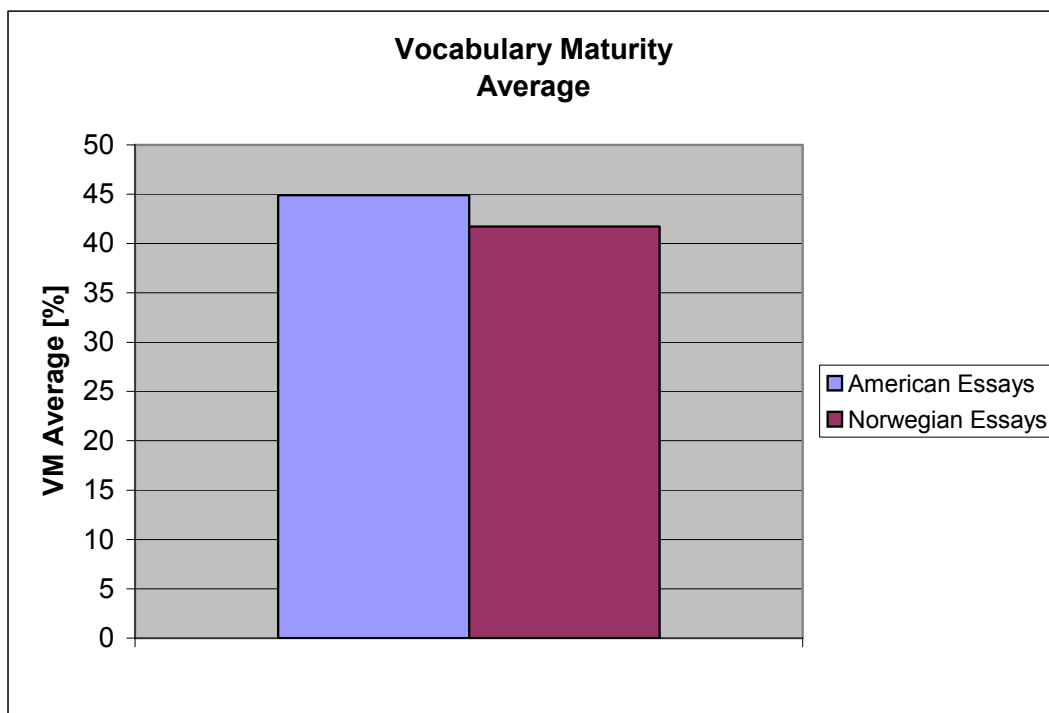
Figure 14 VM Average

There are 3 NS who had a VM ratio over 50, but none of the NL reached this ratio. In order to see the difference in a piece of writing between a NS and NL with a high vocabulary maturity, I will give two examples from the corpus. The following excerpt is written by an American pupil[14] with 610 words, 1 error, and a VM of 50.5%.

> "Even though the death penalty is irreversible, it is a benefit
> to utilitarianism by affirming society's condemnation of
> severe crimes and should be implemented in society."
> (American essay 20)

A Norwegian pupil[15] with 319 words, 5 errors, and a VM score of 46.7% wrote the following excerpt.

> "I think we should build the prisons more like institutions
> and treat the prisoners like patients, with stricter rules. We
> should also make different parts in the institutions so the
> prisoners with the same penalty live together. Its wrong to
> keep someone who stole a car together with someone whos
> killed 50 persons." (Norwegian essay 20)

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[14] See appendix 6.
[15] See appendix 7.

Although not completely comparable, I think one can see that the NS excerpt has more content words of a lower frequency and more variation. Native speakers had a greater standard deviation amid their VM scores than the Norwegian learners.
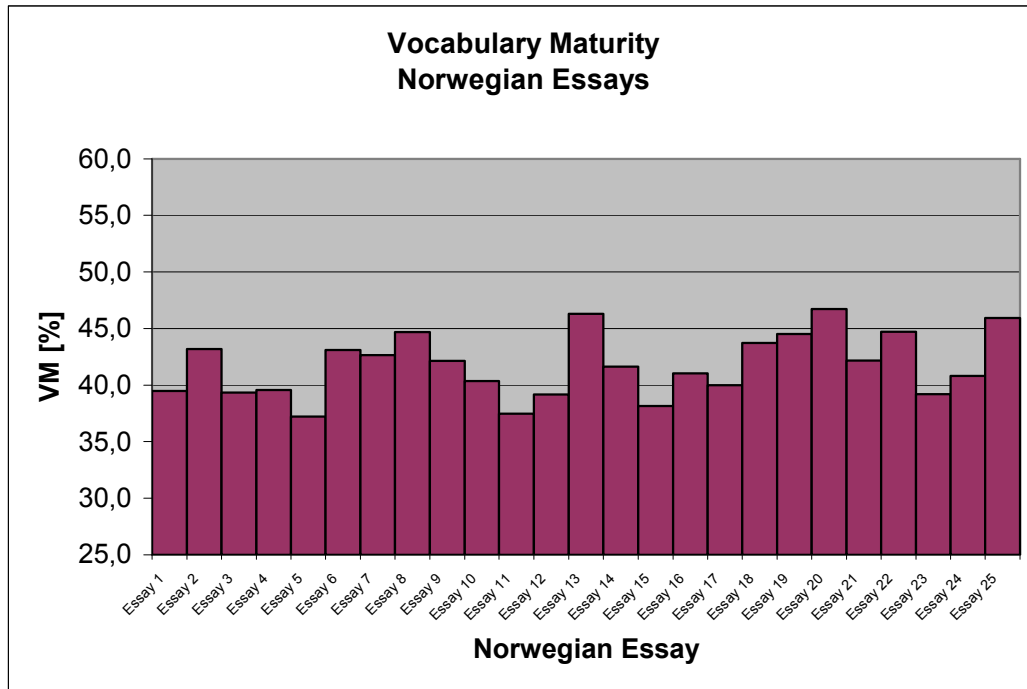
Figure 15 VM Norwegian essays
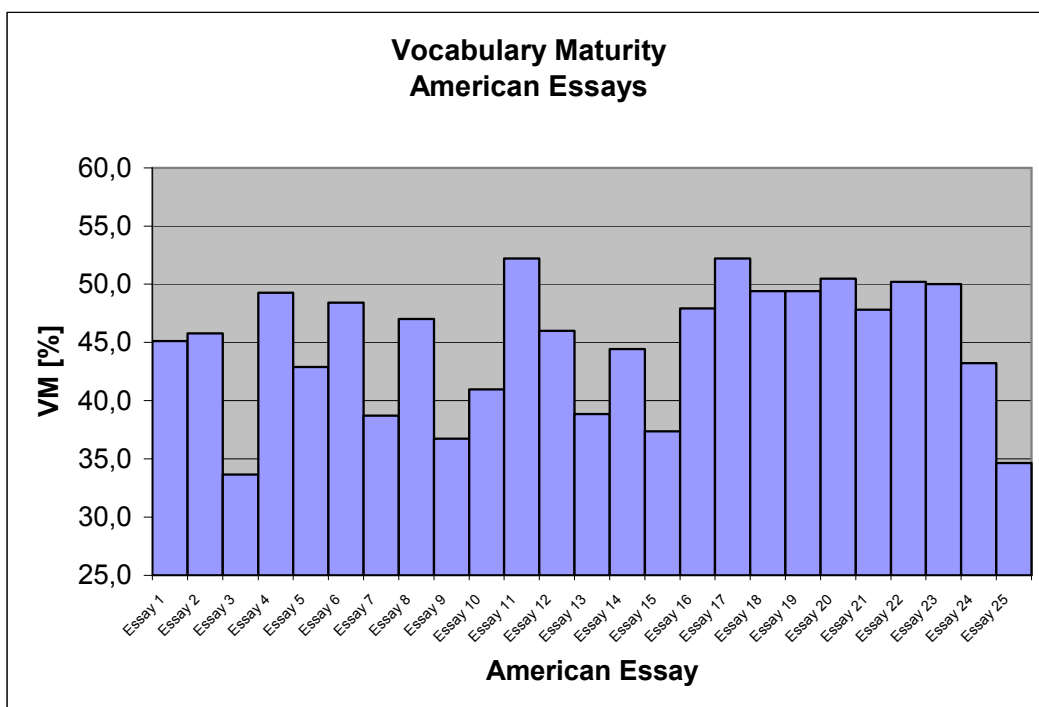
Figure 16 VM American Essays

In this study, vocabulary maturity has been calculated using a formula, but in doing do so, I feel that part of what maturity means is left out. In addition to VM calculating content words, vocabulary maturity also describes the maturity of the writing in general. A mature writer, among other things, uses idioms and collocations correctly. By looking at the types of words used by the pupils, one can determine how advanced their language skills are. Although I will not go into depth in this subject, I would like to note that 5 NS used an English idiom in their free writing. One NL used an idiom in their writing. Look at the following examples of idioms used in the corpus:

> ""An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth," as the saying
> goes, should remain the principle in punishment."
> (American essay 11)

> "You shall do to others what you want others to do to you."
> (Norwegian essay 4)

As idioms and collocations help define a mature writer, it is important that pupils use and understand these parts of English.

5.6 Vocabulary Errors (VE)

Errors in vocabulary use may sever communication. Therefore, it is important that the correct words are chosen and at the correct times. As discussed in chapter two, there are many different types of errors. All the types of errors listed in section 4.3.6 were taken into consideration using the criteria for what constitutes an error to help define the errors (Figure 3). In total, the Norwegians had many more errors than the Americans. Out of all the vocabulary aspects VE produced the greatest difference between NL and NS. The average VE for the NS is 1.0% and 2.9% for the NL (see Table 7 and Figure 17). The minimum VE, 0%, was produced by a NS and the maximum VE, 5.9%, was produced by a NL. The standard deviation is higher for the NL due to the variation between learners. This means that some pupils have a much better control of the language, therefore fewer errors, than other pupils, who have many errors.

VE [%]	MIN	AVG	MAX	STD.DEV.
American Essays	0,0	1,0	2,6	0,71
Norwegian Essays	1,0	2,9	5,9	1,23

Table 7 VE
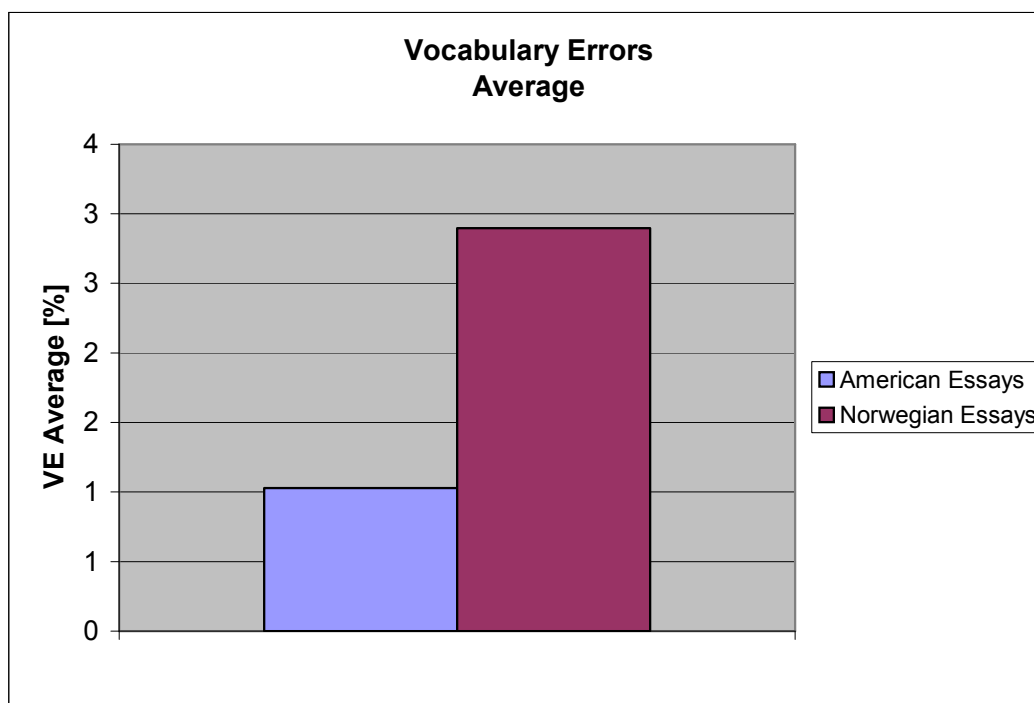
Figure 17 VE Average

The VE ratios do not necessarily explain the level of the Norwegian pupils' vocabulary knowledge but when they are evaluated in conjunction with the ratio of words from word list one (high frequency words) an interesting point comes forward. An average of 86% of the NL words came from list one, meaning from the 1000 most frequent words. One could say then that the learners made many mistakes for using such a basic vocabulary. One might also conclude that the NL in this study do not have a full grasp of the three levels of vocabulary knowledge mentioned in section 2.2. A much more comprehensive vocabulary knowledge is needed to avoid errors. It is important to note however, that for the most part, the errors made by pupils in this study do not hinder communication, as all the texts are understandable. Nevertheless, will this many mistakes be tolerable in higher education?
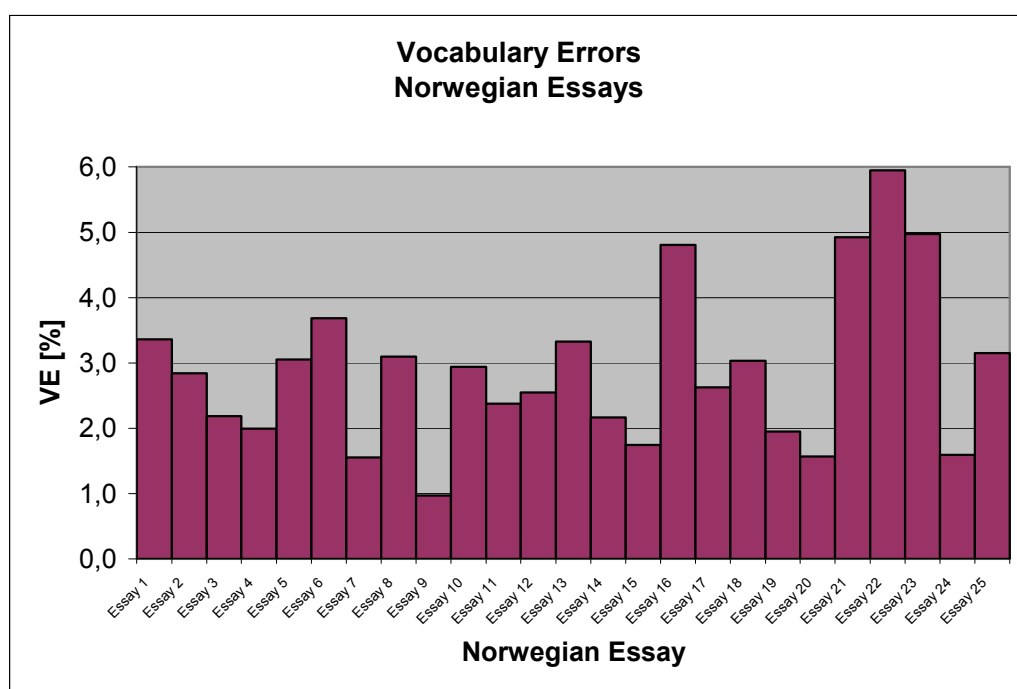
Figure 18 VE Norwegian essays
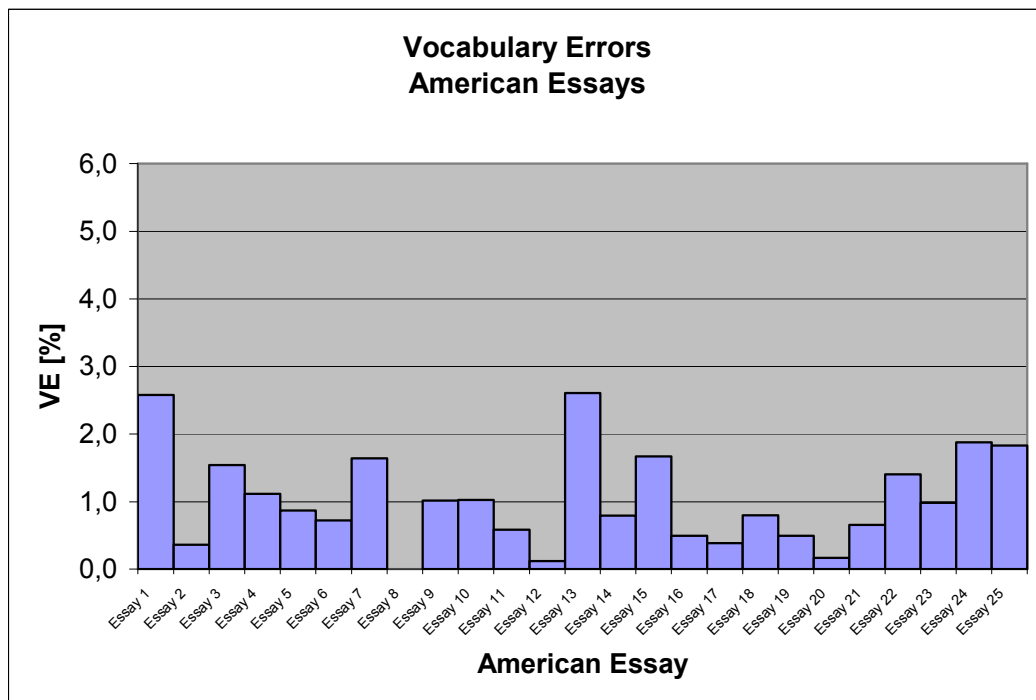
Figure 19 VE Norwegian essays

Errors made by the Americans tended to be more mistakes rather than unintentional inaccuracies. Many of the American errors are due to incorrect preposition choice, spelling, or wrong word choice. Look at the following examples from the NS corpus. The error is in bold type:

> "Part of myself thinks that criminals should be **punish** if they are in prison for **quit** some time." (American essay 13)

> "If someone were to commit a horrible thing like a rape and all they had to do because of it would be to go to rehabilitation sessions every day for a year or **to**, that's like slapping them on the hands and saying don't do it again." (American Essay 15)

> "A large group of human beings rotting in **some lonely cages with** only cares about when their life is to be punished is not incredible motivation towards a civilized society, and a revision of the imprisonment policies should be carefully planned." (American essay 1)

"Actually in our society we have kind of started a system like this of which we do have people **be rehabilitated** and we set them forth back out into the streets and live life as they should, the problem is it **don't** work." (American essay 25)

"In towns **that used** to **house little crime** there has been new reports of **break out crime**. It makes a person think **what should be going on with our governments** laws of punishment, should we send our criminals away to camps and places for rehabilitation or should we sentence **then** to death." (American essay 7)

Norwegian errors are made up of, among other things, wrong word choice, wrong verb tense and conjugation, spelling, and incorrect use of "it/there." Although not hindering, the NL errors overpower the text much more than the errors of NS. The following are excerpts from the corpus of Norwegian texts. The errors are highlighted in bold:

"But **on a another side**, I **mean** that this should not be used on prisoners that are serial murders or at a stage were we can not be sure they will convert to be good and friendly peoples. Also one thing I do not understand is that the laws are very different from **a country to another**." (Norwegian essay 6)

"A lot of people will get rid of prison because they **mean** the system **it's** too old and outdated." (Norwegian essay 2)

"Why should a person who has been **illegally** and **criminally** get another chance?" (Norwegian essay 4)

"You want justice and revenge that is the nature of human beings to believe in those **to** things." (Norwegian essay 11)

"This isn't what we have tried to **learn** them." "I think **that** is a better way of solving this. **Cause** if we use our brains a little bit, and think of the prisons we offer the people committing crimes, it is **deafeningly** not that bad." (Norwegian essay 12)

"**There for** I think it would be smart to make an upgrade in the **rehabilitate** system." (Norwegian essay 16)

"I think the death penalty should stay, so people **no** the consequences of there actions." (Norwegian essay 17)

"These are brutal consequences for committing a crime, but they get people around the world to think twice before doing something stupid and I think if the death penalty had not been around, the people that **has** for example killed someone and **and sentence** a few years in jail, will maybe do the same thing again when they get **realized**, they won't learn a lesson, that is what they are afraid of in Norway." (Norwegian essay 17)

"A rehabilitation centre would cost a lot more to **drift**." (Norwegian essay 18)

"You'll get the punishment **buy** the other prisoners." (Norwegian essay 21)

"Then **his** can work **fore** the world today." (Norwegian essay 22)

"Maybe we should concentrate more on helping the criminals instead of, worst case scenario, killing them on **death road**. **Death road** is outdated; it's not a good way to reprove people for their crimes." (Norwegian essay 25)

It seems logical that the reason NL have made so many vocabulary errors is because of insufficient word knowledge. They perhaps have heard a word used but do not know how to spell it, which is the case in the example from Norwegian essay 25. The pupil has heard of death row but has perhaps never actually seen it spelled or wrote it. Another explanation for why NL make errors is that they do not know were in a sentence to place the word or phrase or they have used the wrong word or phrase due to a lack of word understanding.

5.7 Correlation and Significance of the Vocabulary Aspects

It is expected that many of the vocabulary aspects correlate with one another, as some of their definitions overlap. There are some however that has a higher correlation than others. I will concentrate on the correlations that are high and very high ($\geq 0.5, \geq 0.8$). All of the results in the correlation table are considered statistically significant, which means, as stated previously, that there is less than a 1% chance that the correlation found was accidental and would not be found again in the population. However, it should be noted that the small selection (25 Norwegian essays) used in this study makes it more likely to

be statistically significant than if a larger collection of data was used. Table 8 contains the data for the correlation and significance of the NL vocabulary aspects.

Correlation Norwegian Essays								
		TOKENS	TYPES	VI	FREQ IN LIST 1, 2, & 3	VV	VM	VE
TOKENS	Pearson Correlation		0,815	-0,370	0,504	-0,617	-0,146	-0,198
	Statistical Significance		0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000
TYPES	Pearson Correlation	0,815		-0,279	0,173	-0,066	0,004	-0,257
	Statistical Significance	0,000		0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000
VI	Pearson Correlation	-0,370	-0,279		-0,067	0,289	0,193	0,426
	Statistical Significance	0,000	0,000		0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000
FREQ IN LIST 1, 2, & 3	Pearson Correlation	0,504	0,173	-0,067		-0,644	-0,045	0,103
	Statistical Significance	0,000	0,000	0,000		0,000	0,000	0,000
VV	Pearson Correlation	-0,617	-0,066	0,289	-0,644		0,354	-0,017
	Statistical Significance	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000		0,087	0,000
VM	Pearson Correlation	-0,146	0,004	0,193	-0,045	0,354		0,095
	Statistical Significance	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,087		0,000
VE	Pearson Correlation	-0,198	-0,257	0,426	0,103	-0,017	0,095	
	Statistical Significance	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	

Table 8 Correlation and Significance of the Vocabulary Aspects for Norwegian essays

The only very high correlation occurs between tokens and types. It is an obvious correlation saying that the greater number of words written, the greater number of different types of words produced. There is a high correlation between tokens and the frequency of words that occur in base lists 1, 2, or 3. When a large amount of words are written then the majority of words will be found within base lists 1, 2, or 3 (the 4000 most common words in English). Tokens and VV have a high negative correlation, which means that the greater the number of words in a text, the lower the vocabulary variation ratio. This means that writing many words does not guarantee that the essay will have variation. Vocabulary individuality and vocabulary errors also have a high correlation. Pupils with a large VE ratio also have a high VI score. This means that Norwegian pupils with vocabulary individuality also have many vocabulary errors. A possible explanation is that the pupils who tried to use unique words, failed and made an error or took more chances in general and therefore had more errors.

6   Summary and Conclusions

The motive for this thesis was due to the significant role of English in Norway today. I was interested in the repercussion this important role has on the English language skills, vocabulary in particular, of upper secondary pupils. My main aim was therefore to obtain information about the English vocabulary usage of upper secondary pupils in Norway. I also wanted to learn more about the size of the Norwegian EFL pupil's productive lexicon and how individual, frequent, varied, mature, and correct a vocabulary they use in their free writing? Finally, I wanted to find out some differences and similarities between the English vocabulary usage of Norwegian pupils and native pupils. More specifically, how near or far are Norwegians' English from native speakers' English and are Norwegian pupils therefore ready for academic studies involving English? In an attempt to answer these questions, I compared and analyzed the written vocabulary use of 25 Norwegian learners to 25 native speakers.

I will first summarize the results of this study focusing on the aims of my study and then draw some conclusions which may be useful for further research in the field of vocabulary and for the teaching of vocabulary. Below in Table 9, I have summarized the result averages for NL and NS according to each of the vocabulary aspects.

Average Results							
	TOKENS	TYPES	VI [%]	FREQ. [%] TOTAL IN LIST 1, 2, & 3	VV [%]	VM [%]	VE [%]
American Essays	548	235	6,2	97,9	44,4	44,9	1,0
Norwegian Essays	449	192	6,6	98,1	43,4	41,7	2,9

Table 9 Result averages for all the vocabulary aspects

Number of Words per Essay (W/E)
In general Native speakers produced more words and more types of words than the Norwegian learners when given similar guidelines. The difference, however, between NS and NL was not as large as expected. I therefore draw the conclusion that according to this study Norwegian learners need to be able to produce more English to contend with native speakers. But on the other hand, perhaps NL have enough English to write nearly the same length essay as NS and are perhaps in close proximity to achieving native skills.

Vocabulary Individuality (VI)

In the Norwegian learner corpus, more pupils had on average a higher VI score than the native speakers had in their corpus. Therefore among their peers NL seem to use more unique vocabulary than NS either because of a unique theme choice or because of more unique words. Although the NL had on average a higher VI, they tended to stick closely to the essay instructions, using very little of their own interpretations. This leads me to the conclusion that Norwegian learners have in fact vocabulary individuality amongst their peers and are therefore capable of writing a text with unique vocabulary. On the other hand, compared to NS, NL used little of their own interpretation and vocabulary individuality in their free writing, perhaps due to a lack of vocabulary.

Frequency (F)

A slightly higher percentage of the NL words were found with in list one, two, or three, which represents the 3000-4000 most frequent words in English. The difference between NL and NS was however not as large as expected. NS did nevertheless have a higher percentage of words not found in any of the three lists, which means they had more words of a lower frequency, as they had very few vocabulary errors. In general, the conclusion is that all the pupils in this study need to expand their vocabulary, as University studies and many business jobs will require a much larger vocabulary than 3000-4000 words.

From this study, one can assume that Norwegian upper secondary pupils (age 16-17) have a productive English vocabulary of 4000 or less words. Is this enough vocabulary considering the English language has somewhere between 600,000 and 2 million words? From the results of this analysis and the common knowledge of Norwegians general English proficiency, I believe that Norwegian upper secondary school learners do have enough English vocabulary to communicate and survive. In other words, they have basic interpersonal communicative skills as discussed in section 2.5.4. But, it does seem that they are using a higher frequency vocabulary with little variation and therefore need to increase their English vocabulary if they are to compete and achieve at a University level or in the business world. This would require cognitive academic language proficiency as mentioned in section 2.5.4. On the other hand, one may say that from the results of this study the vocabulary knowledge of Norwegian pupils is adequate as they do not differ significantly from native speakers.

Vocabulary Variation (VV)

Both NS and NL had generally acceptable vocabulary variation ratios for written texts. On average NS had a slightly higher VV ratio than NL, but this could be because NS wrote longer essays on average. Although the difference in VV ratios was minimal between NS and NL, by reading the essays in the corpus one can see that generally NS have more lexically and varied texts than NL. I conclude therefore that in general Norwegian learners of English do not have enough vocabulary to write a lexically complex and varied text. It should be noted that both groups of upper secondary pupils could use some work in this area.

Vocabulary Maturity (VM)

NS had on average a higher VM ratio than NL, meaning that they used more content words. NS also used more idioms and collocations in their free writing, which is an important part of having mature English. In conclusion NL need to learn and work with idioms and collocations in order to use a more mature English. In addition, NL seem to repeat familiar function words and therefore need to expand and be comfortable using more content words.

Vocabulary Errors (VE)

Out of all the vocabulary aspects examined in this study, vocabulary errors produced the greatest difference between NL and NS. Norwegian learners had many more vocabulary errors than native speakers. More importantly they had many errors for using only 3000-4000 of the most common words with little variation, individuality, or maturity. NL chose the wrong words, misspelled words, put words in the wrong register, and chose words that did not convey their meaning. In conclusion, Norwegian learners do not have enough control and understanding of English vocabulary to write an essay free of errors. To the Norwegian learners' credit, all the essays were comprehensible and I would therefore conclude that they could be understood in simple written communication around the world. On the other hand, I feel this simple English full of errors would be insufficient for University studies and business interaction. After all a common assumption is that what we say and how we say it can reflect how educated, intelligent or well read a person is.

In conclusion, according to all the vocabulary aspects examined in this study, Norwegian learners of English need to expand their vocabulary and their vocabulary knowledge to improve their writing. In general, NL used little variation, lacked maturity and individuality, used high frequency words, and had many errors in their vocabulary usage. Furthermore, this leads me to the inescapable conclusion that although NL seem to be narrowing the gap between themselves and native speakers' English knowledge, they are not completely ready for academic writing, taking higher education, using proper English in business or studying abroad.

If this is the case, what can be done to improve Norwegian learners' English vocabulary? It seems that there is a need to stress the importance of teaching and learning vocabulary and inspiring future research in the field of vocabulary to draw attention to this issue. To begin with if 10,000 word families or about 20,000 words at the end of upper secondary school in Norway is the goal for pupils taking higher education, English teachers have a great challenge ahead of them. Although not all words (high and low frequency) need to be known to be a successful language user, it is very important that language learners continue to increase their vocabulary size. One must ponder whether or not it is possible to expand ones vocabulary from 4000 words to 20,000 words in a classroom with 4-5 hours a week of study in two short school years? Most teachers would say this is an impossible task given the classrooms perimeter. However, some awareness of this issue could persuade both teachers and learners to begin intensive vocabulary learning at a much earlier age. Things such as extensive reading, more writing, more vocabulary tasks (high and low frequency), spelling exercises, and more work done by the pupil outside of the classroom are needed to reach the goal of proficiency at the college level. Then, the Norwegian students will be better prepared for their college years using the English language not only in their studies but beyond the University in the new global world.

So what is being done in the English classroom? Different methods of teaching vocabulary, implicit and explicit, have been present in the English classroom in Norway, but perhaps there is a lack of variety and combination of these and other methods being used. A combination of methods used for the teaching and assessment of vocabulary could increase a learner's lexicon, accurately assess vocabulary knowledge, and help the learner to continue to learn new vocabulary.

While there is no doubt about the importance of enlarging Norwegians' vocabulary size, it would be worth noting that there seems to be a need for further research to learn more about EFL/ESL learners' acquisition, learning, and retention of vocabulary. In addition, perhaps English teachers could benefit from research in the area of teaching vocabulary. Are English teachers in Norway familiar with the advantageous ways of teaching vocabulary? Are they themselves comfortable enough with the English vocabulary to warrant in-depth teaching of vocabulary to inquiring minds? Further research needs to be developed in order to aid in these important questions and topics. Furthermore, it seems necessary to ignite awareness to both teachers and learners of English of their important role in increasing vocabulary and vocabulary knowledge among Norwegians.

In conclusion, the data presented in this study reveals two interesting points. First, my initial assumption was that Norwegian learners of English and native speakers of English would have a large gap between their written vocabulary skills. It proved however, that the gap between these two groups is not as large as expected. Is the English of Norwegians improving due to the significant role of this language in society and in education? Or is the English of native pupils, i.e. American pupils' deteriorating? Either way the gap between NS and NL seems to be minimizing. Maybe in the near future of Norway English will be a second language rather than a foreign language? The second point revealed from this study, in contrast to the first, is that Norwegian learners of English have a relatively small vocabulary and a lack of vocabulary knowledge. This deficiency could hinder Norwegians in the future, but with the help of further research, improved teaching, and interest from all parties concerned, vocabulary skills could improve. An expanded English lexicon will assist in the creation of intelligent, educated, and well read English speaking Norwegians.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Instruction Letter to American High Schools

Dallas Skoglund
Christian Michelsens Gate 40
0568, Oslo
Norway

May 15th, 2006

Dear Pupils and Teacher:

First, I would like to thank you for agreeing to participate in this project. Your help is greatly appreciated and is going to be very useful for my Masters thesis and perhaps further language studies in Norway. The essays you write will be compared to essays written by Norwegian pupils studying English in Norway. They will write an essay on the same topic as you, therefore it is very important that you take this seriously and do your best.

The instructions for the essay are as follows:
- ✓ Use a computer to write the essay.
- ✓ Write the essay using complete sentences and essay format (paragraphs).
- ✓ You have 45 minutes to write an essay on the given topic. Try to write as much as possible without hindering your writing skills.
- ✓ Write your profile information on the top of your essay:
    1. Your age
    2. Your sex (male or female)
    3. Your mother tongue (language spoken at home)
    4. The number of years you have studied English (f.ex. kindergarten – 10th grade)
    5. The essay topic.
    6. Grade in English
- ✓ Do not write your name, as the essay will be anonymous.
- ✓ You may not use any outside help to write your essay. No dictionaries, no help from the teacher or your neighbour!
- ✓ You may however use any automatic correction on the computer (spell check and grammar check). But, you should not spend time using these correctors.
- ✓ After the pupils are finished (45 minutes), the essays should be saved on a disk or the computer. The essays should not be changed or corrected after they have been turned in.

The essay topic is on the second page of this letter and may be distributed to the pupils after the instructions have been explained or handed out. Thank you again for your help and happy writing!

- ✓ **Discuss the following statement:**
  The prison system is outdated. No civilised society should punish its criminals: it should rehabilitate them

Sincerely, Dallas Skoglund (High School English teacher in Norway)

Appendix 2: American essay 18

Male
Age: 16
Mother Tongue: English
Number of Years of English: 11 years
Grade in English: D

Capital Punishment
    Capital punishment has been around for as long as humanity has been recording history. It has and will always serve as an influential and correct punishment for heinous crimes.
    As stated above, the death penalty has always been present in the world. The only aspects that have changed are the methods chosen and the crimes deemed punishable by death. Capital punishment sets an example as to what will happen when someone is caught committing certain crimes, such as murder.
    When asked, the average person probably would not want to spend money on a convicted murderer. However, that is what is happening when a criminal is life without parole. American tax dollars go towards keeping the convict sheltered, fed, and healthy. How is this fair, when that person has denied those rights to another human being in the act of murder?
   Some individuals may say that the death penalty is barbaric. Some say that people can change and deserve a second chance. It is true that people can change. However, this does not change the facts. The facts are that even though someone may change after killing someone, it is still true that the crime was committed. This individual must still face the consequences.
    In essence, even though capital punishment is dwindling in popularity and approval in the United States, it is still necessary. No other form od punishment works so well against repeat offenders.

Appendix 3: Norwegian essay 16

The prison system is outdated.

Age: 16
Sex: Male
Mother tongue: Norwegian
Year I have studied English: 8
Topic: Prison system
Grade: 4

The prison system is outdated, it don't help them to be better citizens. In prison you should be rehabilitated and helped out in to work, so that you can become like a normal person again.
We often hear about people that get released and join criminal envierment. It is horrible that the government don't give more money to rehabilitating criminals and making it safe for us on the outside. We have to be safe and if that means we have to load more money in to the justice system, so be.

When you break the law you go to prison, and every body knows it. There for any one who does it have to be a little mest up on the inside (I am talking about series crimes). A person that kill some one, need some kind of rehabilitation. They can't just serve there punish and be let out; we need to know that they don't do it again. There for I think it would be smart to make an upgrade in the rehabilitate system.

There is also the matter about how many prisoners there should be together in one prison. We can't keep loading prisons full! They will be under qualified, overloads where no one could be rehabilitated. Criminals will soon come out crazier then they went in, we have to build more prisons where there are easier to get help and treatment.

This is a very series problem and the only way to get it to go away is to donate more money to the legal system. They need money to hire people that at professional in the subject and more space so that the prisoners can feel that they are in a safe envierment.

Appendix 4: American essay 17

16 years
Female
English-speaking
Kindergarten-10th learning English
Grade: A

Essay topic: The prison system is outdated. No civilized society should punish its criminals: it should rehabilitate them.

From King Solomon to our Supreme Court, law and order have existed to keep our world in balance. Offenders of the law have faced their punishments, and though some rulings have come out unfairly, justice generally is served. To challenge the idea of imprisonment of law-breakers is controversial and a drastic change from our ideas of old. Should we rehabilitate criminals, hoping that all will change their ways and letting them return to society? Judging by our world's history, values of the people, and the effects of imprisonment, we should not rely on the rehabilitation of criminals.

Throughout history, many societies dealt justice to criminals, with punishments becoming less brutal as time wore on. Torture, hanging, branding, amputations, and other tactics have made their mark on judicial history. While society is better off not resorting to such morbid tactics, the idea of imprisonment has lasted through countless ages. While the duration an offender may sit in a cell can range from one day to a lifetime, reasons existed to keeping perpetrators behind bars. Murderers have been kept safely locked away from taking further lives; financial criminals have paid their time for embezzlement or fraud. Prisons have evolved from dank, dark, dangerous pits to relatively safe and humane facilities, but the main message still stands: Keeping criminals away from the rest of society benefits all.

Another reason to enforce imprisonment comes from the values of people. If a group of people were asked, "Would you mind having a murderer live next door to you?" the majority would probably respond with yes, of course they would mind. These people probably would not care if the murderer had been "rehabilitated". They would want that person back in prison, away from society. People instinctively judge others and base their views of a person on that person's past actions. Many people have encountered a person that, through their upbringing, will not change for the better, which reflects the idea that to some criminals, no amount of rehabilitation will change them positively.

To consider the effects of rehabilitation versus imprisonment, it is best to examine the effects of each on society. While some cases of rehabilitation result positively, the majority of cases end the same way, with the "rehabilitated" person committing more crime. Why has the rate of crime in America drastically risen of late? Criminals have learned that through the drawn-out trial system, the loopholes and attorneys, many guilty parties hardly receive their due consequences. With "real" punishment (imprisonment, hard labor, etc.), criminals learn quickly that to spare the punishment, they should amend their ways. Ironically, it seems that applying hard punishment rehabilitates perpetrators much faster and more effectively than the idea of "rehabilitation".

"An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth," as the saying goes, should remain the principle in punishment. Throughout history, imprisonment has remained a reliable consequence, matched the values of society, and resulted in positive effects for all.

Appendix 5: Norwegian essay 18

Age: 17
Sex: male
Mother tongue: Norwegian
Years studied English: 9 years
Grade: 3
Topic of the essay:

The prison system is outdated. No civilised society should punish its criminals: it should rehabilitate them.

I don't agree with this statement! It's not at all outdated; it has been in our history since god knows how. Although; I can see the point in this statement. But not everybody can be, what should I say cured? Many of our prisoners do probably have mental problems. Those should've been sent to rehabilitate places.

What we need, I believe, is a far more strict system. Longer and tougher penalties. THEN people would fear the prison, they would think more before they're doing their criminal hobbies. Especially in Norway, our worst/best penalty is 24 prison years, which compares to 14 normal years. So in other words, you can kill and rape as many as you reach before you're getting caught, then come out of the Norwegian penthouse prison after 14 years. The Norwegian prison is a shame; it's almost like a poor-flat. America is much better than us when it comes to penalties.

Anyway, what if a non-mental guy kills x persons for example and the judge says he need 5 years with rehabilitation. If you don't have mental problems, this would be a dream! It wouldn't help him at all.
If this had been the case, no prisons, it had occurred far more criminals.
- A what the fuck, he fucked my wife, he deserves to die, and I'll only get two years with rehabilitation.

Another point is, imagine that you're driving home from your job, want to come fast, so you're in a hurry, and bam! You drove too fast past a police control. You drove 12,43 mph too fast. Then how would a 3 weeks penalty in a rehabilitation centre help?! It would only be unnecessary money for our country! Our fragile society had been a mess. I like the kind of punishments you have in the USA. I even like the lifetime penalty. It's a god damned shame we don't have it in Norway. I even dare to say u support death penalty. But it should be a rare thing. And it should be 110% that you have the correct man.

A rehabilitation centre would cost a lot more to drift. Much more work for the employees, to get to know every single prisoner, and not just know like friends, but know what's going on inside their mind.

So my conclusion is that we have the correct type of penalties, just MUCH more strict! Prison should be like hell, not like an apartment in Grorud dalen (Grorud dalen compares with a apartment in Bronx or something) as in Norway.

Male
Age: 16
Mother Tongue: English
Number of Years of English: 11 years
Grade in English: B

Capital punishment, or the death penalty, is often the subject of quarrelsome debate. Opponents of the death penalty argue that it violates the basic human right to life, and doesn't allow for a person to think about what they did; being an easy way out. Supporters insist that the penalty is justified in many ways including having more room in prisons so that we wouldn't have to keep building them. Another argument is that our taxes won't have to pay for a murderer to sit and eat food tax payers paid for. Even though the death penalty is irreversible, it is a benefit to utilitarianism by affirming society's condemnation of severe crimes and should be implemented in society.

Opposition of the death penalty tends to argue that life imprisonment is an effective substitute, that capital punishment may lead to irreversible taking of life, or that it is inhumane. Cesare Beccaria once said "The only result of the execution of a murderer is that you have two corpses instead of one." Other arguments include the amount of cases that were overturned due to rising evidence, saying that how many people have already died before more evidence such as DNA testing was discovered. Slowly, support for the death penalty has been decreasing, and this is for a number of reasons.

In the U.S., surveys have long shown a majority in favor of capital punishment. An ABC News survey in July 2006 found 65 percent in favor of capital punishment, consistent with other polling since 2000. Abolition was often adopted due to political change, such as when countries shifted from authoritarianism to democracy, or when it became an entry condition for the European Union. In the United States, about 13,000 people have been legally executed since colonial times. Thomas Jefferson in the case of the US, that the original argument was that people form implicit social contracts, ceding their right to the government to protect natural rights from being abused. Therefore, protection from abuse is the basis of such rights and those who violate such rights automatically forfeit them.

There are grounds for applying the death penalty. The death penalty is reserved as a punishment for premeditated murder, espionage, treason, or as part of military justice. In some countries with a Muslim majority, sexual crimes, including adultery and sodomy, carry the death penalty. In almost all states that perform executions, the death penalty is limited to cases involving aggravated murder. Seeing that the death penalty is reserved for only the worst members of society, it proves beneficial to a Utilitarian society. Utilitarianism is a theory of ethics that prescribes the quantitative maximization of good consequences for a population. In effect, it asserts that the issue of the death penalty ought to be decided solely on the ground of its cost and benefit to the society rather than on the ground of a priori argument such as right or retribution.

The death penalty should only be used in cases where it is as clear as day that the person is guilty. The death penalty should also be a choice to a prisoner; if he is facing life without parole, he should have the choice to not waste tax payer's money by rotting away. If a murder has taken away a person's right to life, he should have to forfeit his. By killing off societal parasites we then make more room in our jails, spend less money, and can live knowing that the prisoner will never have a chance in hurting anyone else ever again.

Appendix 7: Norwegian essay 20
Age: 16
Sex: female
Mother tongue: Norwegian (bokmaal)
I have studied English for 6 years.
Grade: 3

PRISON SYSTEMS

I agree that the prison system is outdated! We should not punish our criminals, we should try to rehabilitate them. My opinion is that they are psychological sick and they need help accepting the societies rules and laws. They need to learn how to behave correctly!
They need to learn how to respect other human beings.
The criminals punish society by stealing or killing, and the prisons does the same thing when they torture the prisoners. I'm not saying all the prison guards are hitting them, but I believe its common. By torture I do not only mean hitting, but the cells they live in are awful, and they live in those cells for many years!
Off course this is not the case in Norway, but I believe its common around the world.
Its not only the cells who is bad, it can also be the food, the people who work there and the other criminals), they force the prisoners to work, and so on…
And how would the prisoners learn to do the right thing, when the prisons are corrupt? Many guards are corrupt and the prisoners pay them to get better food, better cells, and radios and so on. What would the prisoners learn from that? Just that illegal actions pays off…
Do we want them to learn that?

I think we should build the prisons more like institutions and treat the prisoners like patients, with stricter rules.

We should also make different parts in the institutions so the prisoners with the same penalty live together. Its wrong to keep someone who stole a car together with someone whos killed 50 persons.

Summary: I think we should build new prisons and the treat the prisoners as patients. We should get rid of the corruption and separate the different kinds of prisoners.

Appendix 8: Norwegian essay 4
Age: 16
Sex: Female
Mother tongue: Norwegian
Number of years I have studied English: 9 years
Grade in English: 5
Topic of my essay: The prison system

Introduction
Should a criminal get a chance to start over, by rehabilitating, or should he or she be punished for ever of what he or she has done? In this essay I have discussed both sides of it, and made a conclusion at the end.

Against rehabilitating:
Why should a person who has been illegally and criminally get another chance? Most probably, this person knew the consequences before, so there's no need to feel sorry for them- they knew they would be punished, so it is too late to "suddenly" be a good person and start over. A newborn child is born innocent. A newborn has every possibility to reach the top of happiness, and this is something every person in the world has had once- and also has- if they not mess it up themselves.
I don't think criminals belong to the society anymore, after doing a criminal action. But of course it depends on what wrong you have done. Have you committed a murder, or hurt somebody, there's no question. But smaller criminal actions, such as stealing candy should not be punished in the same way, of course. I also think killing as a punishment is a good punish, but only if the person has killed someone him/herself. Have you taken somebody's life; your own is not worth anything. You shall do to others what you want others to do to you. My main point is; you start with one opportunity, and only you can destroy it.

For rehabilitating:
The Bible says everyone can be forgiven- also the criminals. I mean the society needs as many inhabitants as possible. We're like a clock; it contends many peaces with different skills and schedules, and it needs every peace to work. A person, who has done something criminal, is not always a mean person. He or she is always able to change. I mean, the person can become a better person after a while, so he or she should not be punished forever. He or she should get another chance. Many countries and states, like some states in the USA, are punishing some cases with killing the criminal. This is wrong in all ways. A person is changing throughout life, so there is no right in judging a person after one action.
Youngsters: They learn how to fit in the society. They learn by failing. They should have the opportunity to learn. No one is born perfect. Eve and Adam is the proof of this. They ate the forbidden apple, which is the picture of the failing human-race.

Conclusion:
There are reasons why the society should rehabilitate its criminals, and why they should not. I am a little unsecured of my final opinion about this, because it's a very difficult ethic question. But what I am sure about is that I am totally against killing as a punishment. This should not even be a question, from my side. If you're the one who kill

the criminal person, you're also a criminal. Taking someone's life will never be the best solution to anything- it just makes other conflicts!

Appendix 9: American essay 13

1. 16 years old
2. Female
3. English
4. kindergarten- 10th grade
5. Grade: B
6. Topic: The prison system is outdated. No civilised society should punish it's criminals: it should rehabilitate them

Essay

My opinion goes both ways when it comes to if criminals in the prison system should be punished or not. Part of myself thinks that criminals should be punish if they are in prison for quit some time. For example, they should of thought clearly of what they did before they came into the prison system. Also, if they don't follow the rules they should be punished. If the criminals don't behave well they also should be punished.

On the other side, some criminals know what they did was wrong. Some criminals are there for the wrong reason. The criminals know what they did wrong, and what some help, but don't want help by being punished. I know the prison is supposed to be a bad experience, but some how I think it's a good experience. Why I think that is because they get the help they need, and can change for the better not the worst by getting emotional since there getting punished most of the time.

The society just thinks, since the criminals are in prison they should be punished no matter what because they think most criminals are bad and they won't change. What I think is that most can change, but it should not come down to punish them to make everything be better. They can help the criminals become better without punishing them or hurting them. They can help by giving therapy, and see what is on there minds, and how they came to that is against the law. Maybe inside of them, their depressed, hurt, sad or there under an influence.

I think it should not come down to the way everyone sees it as criminals being punished badly. The society could do something at the prison that can teach the criminals lessons instead of making it a bad place, but still make it a place where they realize what they did was wrong. It doesn't change for the better if the criminals are getting punished and hurt, when most still don't behave well. Some advice that could change the prison system is by just talking to the criminals can help them get back on track, and help them start a new life instead of their old life's. The prisonsystem should change for the better by not punishing the criminals.

Appendix 10: Norwegian essay 25

The Prison System:

Age: 16
Sex: male
Mother tongue: Norwegian
Studied English: 9 years
Grade: 5

The prison system is outdated. No civilized society should punish its criminals: it should rehabilitate them.

This is a very important question we all can ask us selves today. Is prison made for cruelty and punishments or to help the criminals not be criminals? Maybe we should concentrate more on helping the criminals instead of, worst case scenario, killing them on death road. Death road is outdated; it's not a good way to reprove people for their crimes. Criminals must get help. They need to learn that crimes are not right, and psychiatrists can assist them. We were not created to be perfect, everyone do mistakes. I do not say killing people is the right thing, but you surely shouldn't be killed for it. The reason for people killing each other is because they are not normal. They may perhaps have voices in their heads or some serious physiological problems. Assist are what they need, for some people in the society, to reach out their hand and help them on the way out of criminality and misery.

Punishment in prisons has been a very common thing in the past centuries. But is it right to punish a guy who stole bread, with cutting of his arm? No, your just making him suffers. Therefore you are also doing a crime. Violence is not the solution, violence is a crime in it selves. On the other hand criminals must know what they did wrong, somehow they need to realize crimes are incorrect. Countries like U.S.A. still have death road in some states. No civilized society should punish its criminals. Prison is a rehabilitate center where breakers of the law learn and see that crimes are useless. It is a reason we have laws and rules in the world. Without them, the planet would be a mess. However, the prison needs to take more care of its prisoners. I imagine a cell with only one bed and grey walls surrounding you.
I will say rooms and living conditions like that, drives them mad instead of helping them. Not every prisoner manages to deal with their problems on their own. Give them a hand, do not punish them.

Appendix 11: American essay 25

• 16
• Male
• English
• Kindergarden-10 grade
• Grade: A
• Essay topic: the prison system is outdated. No civilized society should punish its criminals: it should rehabilitate them.

The Cell Life

In most places of the world when you are convicted of doing a crime or breaking a law that has been established by your country you are placed in a prison cell. When you are placed into this cell you are given certain clothes to wear, a bed, TV, books to read, and even sometimes a chance to go outside. I believe that this is a reward to the prisoners not a punishment. Our prison style of doing things is not out of style its more in style then some people's homes. Another thing is why would we want to rehabilitate a prisoner? Because if I had a mass murder in my neighbor hood that was caught, proven guilty, and put in prison I know it would not make me feel any better to know that this person is going to be let out in a few months and do it again. A great example of this would be sex offenders. They let them out of prison and yet most of them still have the guts to do it two or three more times.

People in prison have many advantages over the people whom aren't because they have there home paid for by the tax dollar of the honest citizen they have Televisions with more channels then our school district and they are allowed free time to talk to other inmates and get out side of there cell. If we were to rehabilitate people while in jail what good would it be doing? The prisoners would just go through there rehabilitization and not get anything out of it and possibly do there crime all over again. Then our intelligent ones that came up with this idea would be complaining because there are too many murders and thieves on the street. This can also be viewed by an example of a parent and their kids. In most cases not all if the kid is really obnoxious and doesn't listen to anything anyone tells them I can bet that their parents do not punish their kids for doing the things they have done wrong. Where as those who have punished their children for their wrong act have learned from their mistakes and they don't make them again. Putting this in prospective the prisons are the kids that have not been punished for what they have done wrong and rehabilitation would not do them any good, because it is not a form of punishing them for their actions.

The prisons are not outdated in anyway because they have actually gotten more lenient on how they can treat their visitors to their jail/prison. Even though the crime rate is still going up. Rehabilitization would not be effective I can prove this by the best prison in the U.S. this was Alcatraz the people almost feared of going there and the ones who did didn't get off the island and their punishments were much harsher then all the others and the inmates were not given anything that would entertain them what so ever. They even had a prison cell that was totally dark and you could be able to spend a few days in there not seeing a single person or a speck of light throughout your whole stay in that cell.

Actually in our society we have kind of started a system like this of which we do have people be rehabilitated and we set them forth back out into the streets and live life as they should, the problem is it don't work. It's like a person that goes to war when they return home to their families nothing is the same. They always have memories of what they did and how and it tears them apart. The same thing goes for the prisoners if we were to do rehabilitization to them. They would still have memories of what they had done in the past and they would feel the edge to do it again.

In conclusion I believe that the prison system we have is not outdated, civilized society should punish their criminals and that rehabilitating the prisoners would not do any good. In matter of fact the prisons should go back to the days when the government didn't protect those who have done wrong but they trusted those who have done good and or no bad in their life.