

Reading in upper secondary;

What do they read, how is it taught, and what are the teachers' attitudes towards the teaching of reading?

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UNIVERSITETET I OSLO

Vår 2009

Abstract

The topic of this thesis is reading instruction in English in upper secondary school. More specifically I wanted to find out, what and how much is read, how reading is taught, and what the teachers' attitudes towards the teaching of reading are.

I used a qualitative research method and a phenomenological research design. However, before I started the practical aspect of information gathering I needed to look into how the process of reading works, what reading strategies are and why they are important, and what demands to and views of reading that are presented in the previous R94 syllabus for the English foundation course and the current LK06 syllabus for Vg1 English. Based on this theory I developed the semi structured interview guide that I used for the interviews.

My findings from these interviews show that there are serious shortcomings in the reading instruction given by most of my informants. First of all, there is only a limited amount of reading being done in most informants' classes. Secondly, they show a lack of focus on reading, and that this is most likely due to inadequate knowledge of the importance of reading and reading strategies. The teachers need a clear goal to focus the reading instructions towards in order to make the instructions effective and less time consuming.

However, as I discuss in my thesis, the results from this survey are not automatically transferable, they only show how my informants work on reading. However as nine out of 12 informants answer the questions with regards to reading and reading instructions quite similarly, it would be interesting to conduct a large scale follow-up survey with enough respondents to ensure the transferability of the results. This and possible implications for reading instruction in English is what will be presented in my conclusion.

Sammendrag

Det overordnede målet for denne oppgaven er leseopplæringen i den videregående skolen. Mer konkret ønsket jeg å finne ut hva og hvor mye som leses, hvordan lesing undervises og hvordan lærernes holdninger til leseundervisningen er.

For å finne ut av dette brukte jeg en kvalitativ forskningsmetode og et fenomenologisk forskningsdesign. Men før jeg startet på det praktiske aspektet ved forskningen, nemlig å samle informasjon, måtte jeg finne ut hvordan selve leseprosessen fungerer, hva lesestrategier er og hvorfor de er viktige i tillegg til hvordan lesing sees på og hvilke krav som stilles til lesing i den tidligere R94 læreplanen for grunnkurset og den nåværende K06 læreplanen for Vg1 engelsk. Basert på denne teorien utviklet jeg så den semistrukturerte intervjuguiden til intervjuene mine.

Funnene fra disse intervjuene viser at det er alvorlige mangler i leseopplæringen hos de fleste av mine informanter. For det første leses det bare en begrenset mengde i klassene der disse informantene underviser. For det andre viser de et manglende fokus på lesing, noe som mest sannsynlig skyldes manglende kunnskap om hvor viktig lesing og lesestrategier er. Lærerne trenger et klart definert mål å fokusere leseundervisningen mot for å kunne effektivisere undervisningen og gjøre den mindre tidkrevende.

Like fullt, som jeg også diskuterer i avhandlingen, er disse resultatene ikke automatisk overførbare. De viser kun hvordan mine informanter jobber med lesing. Alikevel mener jeg at siden ni av 12 informanter svarte på spørsmålene om lesing og lesestrategier relativt likt ville det være interessant å gjennomføre en stor kvantitativ oppfølgings undersøkelse med nok respondenter til å sikre overførbarhet av resultatene. Dette og mulige følger for leseundervisningen blir presentert i konklusjonen.

Acknowledgements

When writing this thesis it has sometimes been difficult to believe that this would ever be a finished product. However, here it is, and now the time has come to thank all the people that helped and supported me through this long and sometimes difficult process.

First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my thesis supervisor Associate Professor at the University of Oslo Glenn Ole Hellekjær. Needless to say, I would not have been able to do this without your invaluable help and support. You have not only given me good constructive feedback throughout the various stages of this process, but also encouraged me and made me believe that what at times seemed impossible was actually possible.

I would also like to express my thanks to the teachers that took the time out of their hectic schedule to meet me and answer my many questions. The information you provided me with is invaluable. Without your help there would have been no finished thesis.

On a more personal level I would like to thank my family for their support, both morally and financially. Mum and dad, you are always willing to lend an ear when I feel like the world is going against me. Thank you so very much!

Another big thank you goes to my good friends who never gave up on me, even though I kept cancelling on them with the same excuses over and over again. How many times have you heard “I am sorry, I have a deadline” or “I am not going to make it”? Well, not anymore. I promise to make you a priority again, starting right now.

Last, but certainly not least, I would like to thank you Ola, for your great attitude throughout this entire process. Thank you for sharing your positive attitude to life with me, and reminding me time and time again that everything will be fine in the end, and that the world will not come to an end just because I missed a deadline. Thank you for taking such good care of me.

Bærum, mai 2009

Linn Hovd Faye-Schjøll

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1. Introduction

“I read and read, but I can’t remember anything”

The quote above came from one of my fellow students in an entry level course of European History during my second semester at the University of Oslo, and was also the first time I started to realize that something had to be wrong with the reading instructions of upper secondary school. For this particular course almost the entire reading list was in English, including a long and demanding book entitled “A History of the Modern World” by Palmer, Colton and Kramer. This book formed the main part of the curriculum, and it was also the main reason why many of my fellow students either failed the exams or dropped out of the course. The authors of this work has chosen to use an abundance of low frequency words that made the reading slow and laborious, and in many cases slowed down the reading to a degree where text comprehension became difficult.

My next encounter with the apparent inadequacies of the reading instructions in English in upper secondary school came a few years later when I participated in a course on English didactics with Hellekjær as the course leader. This was the first time I heard of his PhD thesis “The Acid Test” (2005), where he had conducted five different quantitative surveys to check whether or not the reading instructions in upper secondary school actually prepare the students for the reading that will be demanded of them at institutes of higher education. The most interesting of these five surveys to me was the one entitled “English reading proficiency in upper secondary school: A seven school sample”. Here Hellekjær tested the reading proficiency of 217 senior upper secondary pupils using the IELTS Academic Reading Module. This IELTS test is a placement test used to see whether potential students have the reading proficiency needed to be accepted into British and Australian Universities. Of the 217 respondents for this survey 178 had received ordinary EFL instructions only. Going through the tests results of these 178 respondents Hellekjær found that two thirds of these respondents failed to achieve the equivalent of the IELTS Band 6 score that is the usual minimum requirement for admission to British and Australian universities (Hellekjær, 2008, p. 1).

Upon closer examination Hellekjær discovered that this was mostly due to the pupils possessing inadequate processing skills for reading in English. They failed to achieve the required score because they worked too slowly, and because of this ran out of time (Hellekjær, 2005, p. 214). Hellekjær attributes these poor results to weaknesses in the EFL instruction “[...] where reading is neglected, where students do not learn to adjust how they read to reading purpose, and where they do not learn how to handle unfamiliar words to avoid disrupting the reading process” (Hellekjær, 2008, p. 1).

Above, I have described two of the most defining experiences I have had with the inadequacies of EFL reading instructions. These experiences awakened my interest in the subject, and led to my choice of topic for this thesis. What I was interested in was to see whether Hellekjær’s conclusions with regards to the EFL instructions were correct or not. Is reading neglected in the EFL instruction? Are the teachers not teaching the pupils to adapt the way of reading to the reading purpose? And do they not teach their pupils how to handle unfamiliar words? These questions that were inspired by Hellekjær’s article “A Case for Improved Reading Instructions for Academic English Reading Proficiency” (2008) formed the inspiration for my own research questions that will be presented in more detail in section 1.1 below.

1.1 The research questions and their purposes

The research statement for this thesis is “Reading in upper secondary; what do they read, how is it taught, and what are the teachers’ attitudes towards the teaching of reading?” This is a large and complex research statement, and in order to answer it, I had to start by breaking it down into smaller and more manageable questions. I decided on the following three questions:

- 1 Reading; what and how much is read?
- 2 Are reading strategies taught? How/why not?
- 3 What are their attitudes towards the teaching of reading and reading strategies?

The purpose for question 1 is to find out what amount of reading goes on in the EFL classrooms. I am also interested in seeing what is read, whether this is mostly textbook texts, or if the teachers use texts of their own choice as well.

Next, I move on to look at reading strategies and whether or not the informants work with these. The intention behind this is to find out how reading is taught. The reason why I have chosen to look at reading strategies specifically is that according to Roe (2002) strategic readers are better readers than non strategic readers, and it is in fact the reading strategies they employ that make them better (Roe, 2002, p. 104). In addition to this there is an increased focus on reading strategies in the LK06 syllabus compared to the old R94 one. Reading strategies are now mentioned in several of the competence aims for Vg1 English, where as in the R94 syllabus for the foundation course they were not (LK06 p. 6). If I find that the informants do work on reading strategies I want to find out how they do it, in order to see whether or not this is done in an effective way. If I find that they do not work on reading strategies I am interested in why they have chosen not to work on this, even though it is clearly stated in the competence aims in LK06 for Vg1 English that they should do so (LK06 p. 6).

1.2 Limitations

My aim for this thesis was to find out how reading was taught in upper secondary school. However, I have chosen to limit this to looking at the reading instructions that takes place in Vg1 English. The reason for this is that Vg1 is the last year where English is a compulsory subject, and that because of this Vg1 is the last English instruction, and subsequently also the last reading instruction in English, many pupils will receive before starting higher education. As a result of this decision I have also limited myself to look at the Vg1/foundation course requirements to reading when examining the LK06 and R94 syllabi.

1.3 Key definitions

I will start by defining the abbreviations I have used in this thesis:

1. EFL: English as a foreign language
2. L1: A person's first language
3. L2: A person's second languages, for this thesis English
4. LK06: The new Knowledge Promotion curriculum or English syllabus
5. R94: The former Reform 94 curriculum or English syllabus

Next, I will move on to look at important terms I have used. As mentioned in the section above, this thesis is concerned with how reading is taught in the first year of upper secondary school. When talking about these courses I have chosen to refer to them as the foundation course (Grunnkurs in Norwegian) for the R94 syllabus and Vg1 for LK06 syllabus.

I use the terms reading strategies and reading skills frequently throughout this thesis. These two terms mean essentially the same, they are only differentiated by the level of consciousness needed to employ them. The definition I have chosen to use for this thesis is that reading strategies are conscious plans for how to work with a text, whereas reading skills are more or less unconscious automatic actions (My own translation Pearson as cited in Roe, 2002, p. 104). For a more detailed definition of these two terms I refer to section 2.5.2 of this thesis.

When presenting the two syllabi in chapter 3 I have decided to use the Latin form syllabi as the plural for syllabus, and equally curricula as the plural form of curriculum. This choice is based only on personal preference and not because I see the forms syllabuses and curriculums as inferior to their Latin versions. A more detailed definition of what I mean by the words syllabus and curriculum will be returned to in the introduction of chapter 3.

Furthermore I refer to learners as pupils up to the stage of graduating from upper secondary school, and students after this point of their education.

1.4 An outline of the thesis

The research statement of this thesis is, as mentioned, “Reading in upper secondary; what do they read, how is it taught, and what are the teachers’ attitudes towards the teaching of reading”. In order to investigate these issues I will start by looking at theory on how the reading process works, what reading strategies are, why they are important to work on, and how they should be worked on. This will be presented in chapter 2. Next, I will look at reading in the old R94 syllabus and the current LK06 syllabus. I will concentrate on how reading is viewed, what demands to the amount of reading that is stated in both these syllabi, and also what demands are stated with regards to reading strategies in both of them. The results of this investigation will then be presented in chapter 3.

Based on these two theory chapters I will then present the semi structured interview guide that will work as a guideline for my interviews. The process of developing this interview guide and the research process itself will be discussed in detail in chapter 4. In chapter 5 I will proceed to present the results of my survey, focusing on what and how much is read in my informants’ classes, their understanding of, and how they work on reading strategies, what their attitudes towards this teaching are, and how they work on specific competence aims related to reading in the LK06 syllabus. I will also present two case studies based on the results from the same interviews in order to show the difference between how one informant that stood out in a positive way and the majority of informants work on reading. These will be presented in chapter 6.

In chapter 7, I will move on to discuss the issues with the reading instructions that I have uncovered. Here I will return to the question of whether or not the reading instruction provided by my informants will prepare the pupils for the reading required of them at institutes of higher education. Other issues that will be discussed are what a good reader is and how that can be translated into possible goals for the reading instruction, what the best way of teaching reading instructions is, and whether or not the informants’ reasons for not working on reading strategies are valid. In chapter 8, I will make suggestions for follow up

studies of reading instruction, and possible implications the results of my survey might have for the EFL reading instruction in upper secondary school.

2. Reading

2.1 Introduction

With this chapter my initial intention was to give an overview of the field of reading and reading in a foreign language. That proved to be impossible due to the sheer size of the field, at least within the limits of this thesis, so I have had to narrow it down and focus on the aspects of reading that are the most relevant to the teaching of reading. I will therefore begin by trying to define what reading is based on the literature I have read. Then I will give a short overview of the history of reading, with a focus on the function of reading. After that I will look at the three different models of reading that have dominated the reading research in the past century. These are the Bottom-Up, Top-Down and Interactive models, and they will be presented in this order. The next step is to look at reading strategies. This is important because there seems to be a consensus among researchers that in order to be a good reader you have to be a strategic reader. Last, but certainly not least, I will look at reading in an L2 with a focus on how reading in a second language differs, or does not differ from reading in the first language.

2.2 What is reading?

In order to understand how to teach reading it is important to understand what reading is. Can reading be defined only as the act of decoding letters into words, or is there more to it? According to Ivar Bråten it is not as simple as this (Bråten as cited in Hellekjær, 2005 p. 21). He defines reading as “the active creation of meaning in an interactive process between the information given in the text on the one hand, and the knowledge of the reader on the other” (Bråten as cited in Hellekjær 2005 p. 21). This focus on the interaction between the information in the text and the reader shifts the focus from the simple decoding of words to whether or not the reader has understood the text and, more importantly, to their interpretation of the text in a process where the reader’s background knowledge contributes to the reader’s understanding of the text.

Another researcher, William Grabe, simply says that reading involves understanding a printed text (Grabe, 1999, p. 12). However, as he himself points out, this does not tell us what must be done in reading, or how it is to be done. I am going to look more closely at the reading process in section 2.4 below. I will, however, make a short list of what Grabe sees as defining features of fluent reading.

- Reading is a rapid process.
- Reading requires processing efficiency.
- Reading requires strategic processing.
- Reading is interactive.
- Reading is purposeful.
- Reading requires sufficient knowledge of language.
- Reading requires sufficient knowledge of the world and of a given topic (Grabe, 1999, p. 12).

To sum up we see that both researchers agree that a simple definition of reading as no more than decoding letters into words does not suffice. The understanding of a written text occurs from an interactive process in which the reader contributes with background knowledge, reading strategies and knowledge of the language in order to establish meaning from the written text. All of the above mentioned features will be discussed in further detail later in this chapter, but are mentioned here in order to establish an understanding of what reading is and what reading requires.

2.3 History of reading

In section 2.2 above, we have seen that, today, reading is defined as an interactive process involving both the reader and the text itself. Next, I am going to look at whether or not this has always been the case. In order to understand reading and the reading process as it is defined today it is important to look at how reading was defined in earlier days. If we look at the history of reading we see that the definition of reading is closely linked to the purpose of reading. In addition to this it can be helpful for teachers to know the history of reading in

order to better their understanding of the reading pedagogy of today (Strømsø, 2007, p. 22). This is what I want to accomplish in this chapter.

The way we look at reading has changed dramatically throughout history. In earlier times reading was a skill reserved for the elite. The most common form of reading was reading out loud and the reader was not expected to interpret any meanings into the text other than the ones explicitly stated by the writer. In fact any attempt at doing so was seen as rebellious, and the reading out loud functioned as a control mechanism against this. As reading was a skill for the elite, it became a way of organizing society and maintaining control. Rules and regulations were distributed in writing, and they could only be read by the few who mastered the skill of reading. In addition it allowed laws to be distributed more widely and accurately than the previous oral tradition had (Strømsø, 2007, p. 20-21).

In western countries reading was used as a tool through which the church could keep its' control over society. This is clearly shown through the focus on reading and learning religious texts by heart that we find in the first alphabetizing campaigns in Norway in the 1700s. In the 1800s children were to learn how to read, as this was seen as important for their intellectual development, but the focus was still on the meaning stated by the author, and no focus was given to individual interpretation of the text. Today we see reading as increasingly important; it is almost seen as essential to participation in society (My own translation Strømsø, 2007, p. 21). Reading is no longer a skill reserved for the elite. All people are expected to be able to read. The main purpose of reading today is learning. From the day we enter into school we start to learn how to read and as we grow older it is expected of us that we master this skill and are able to use it to acquire new knowledge.

2.4 Overview of reading research

Today research into reading is a vast area with a multitude of different approaches. We can part this area into two large branches: One branch that focuses on reading comprehension, and the other on the text itself, more specifically its' readability (Strømsø, 2007, p. 22). As

the focus of this thesis is on reading instruction in the upper secondary school in Norway I am going to focus on the research into the first branch. This focuses on how the reader works with the letters and the text to create an understanding of a text about for example a historic event, and is as I see it the most relevant research to provide a platform for developing better ways of teaching reading to our students.

2.4.1 1900-1960

In the early 1900s researchers were interested in how the eyes moved across the page and speed of reading. They discovered that speed of reading is not only a question of technical skills, but also of how meaningful the text is to the reader. Another thing researchers were interested in at that time was the size of the readers' visual fields, in other words how much of the text the eyes focus on. They found out that the size of this field did not cohere with speed of reading (Strømsø, 2007, p. 24).

It was only in the second half of the 1900s that comprehension became an important topic in the research into reading. As early as in 1932 Frederic Bartlett published the book *Remembering* in which he discussed how peoples' understanding of and memory of texts were connected to their expectations of what they were going to read (Strømsø, 2007, p. 25). The results of his research indicated that the information extracted from the text was stored according to topic, and that earlier experience was important to this organization. These earlier experiences were called schemata. A schema is in other words earlier experiences that are stored in the readers mind, and that can be reactivated when reading a text. These schemata influence our understanding of the text we are reading. When a schema is pulled out during reading, it may result in a reconstruction of the text instead of the memorization of it (Strømsø, 2007, p. 25). In practice this means that the knowledge we already possess is essential to how we understand a text. Another approach to reading comprehension was presented by Rosenblatt in 1938 (Strømsø, 2007, p. 26). She claimed that meaning was not something hidden in the text or the reader, but rather something created through an interaction between reader and text during the process of reading. This view of reading influenced the psycholinguists of the 1960s who will be presented in the section below.

2.4.2 The 1960s

While the behaviorists, who dominated the research area in the first half of the previous century, were occupied with the observable aspect of reading and how it could be divided into parts to be learnt through award systems, the psycholinguists who followed them in the 1960s were more occupied with reading being a process through which one seeks meaning (Strømsø, 2007, p. 27). The development of reading skills was increasingly looked upon as a natural process, as long as the child grew up in an environment rich on meaningful written resources. In 1965 Goodman claimed that one does not decode first and then try to understand, understanding is involved on all stages of the reading process. The reader uses his or her knowledge of content and sentence structures as a support for guessing at words. To be able to make a qualified guess a reader needs some familiar pegs on which to hang the information, in other words he or she should be allowed to read texts with a familiar content, beginner readers in particular. A reader can only search for meaning when the text is linked to something he or she already is familiar with. In this way the psycholinguists' focus on reading as a meaning seeking process made reading comprehension central to their approach, and the readers' knowledge and a meaningful context became important to the understanding of texts. However, at the same time reading was seen as a natural process, therefore they did not focus on any specific instructions to enhance reading comprehension (Strømsø, 2007, p. 27, my translation). This view of reading is an extreme form of the Top-Down Model which will be presented in more detail in section 2.5.1 below.

2.4.3 The 1970s

As mentioned above, in the beginning of the 1970s there was an increased focus on the importance of what the reader already knew about the subject. This was a result of the realization that reading was a tool for acquiring knowledge. Consequently, there was a lot of research conducted into how knowledge is organized and stored in the reader's mind, and into how we acquire knowledge through reading. This research was linked to the growth of cognitive psychology. The cognitive psychologists focused more on phenomena like memory, learning and problem solving than linguistic aspects. Schema theory became one of the most popular areas of research in the field of reading in the 70s. Schemata is the readers organized knowledge of the world (Strømsø, 2007, p. 29). According to this theory a reader will be able to understand a text when he or she can activate a schema that explains the

phenomena the text is about. The activated schema provides a foundation for understanding the text in a way that encompasses all the relevant phenomena and the relationship between them. In addition, the understanding has to be complete and consistent, and the reader has to activate a schema that can explain everything in the text. However, the situation described in the text might not be exactly like your own experience with the phenomena (Strømsø, 2007, p. 30). To give an example, imagine if you read someone's description of a day in school. It would probably not be an exact match to how you yourself experienced a day in school, but still you are able to understand the text. This illustrates that schema do not necessarily cover specific events, they are of a more general or abstract character that makes it possible to cover several situations with similar aspects. Our knowledge in the form of schemas makes it possible for us to draw conclusions that allow us to understand even the details. These kinds of schema can be connected to each other and in this way knowledge is organized in a network of schemas and not as isolated pieces of knowledge. Schema make it possible for us to recognize the content of a text, and they help us focus on what is important in a text. No text describes every detail of a situation. The reader is expected to fill in the blanks and schema help us draw conclusions that create coherence. Schema can create expectations as to what is to come in a text in other words they prepare the reader for what is to come. When knowledge is organized in schema, it makes it easier for the reader to retrieve and reconstruct information from memory (Strømsø, 2007, p. 30-31).

To sum up we can see that not only the way we understand the process of reading, but also the purpose of reading has changed. In the earlier years the general purpose of reading was to study mostly religious texts and the reader was not supposed to draw conclusions on his or her own. Even though I have not found any reading pedagogy from this time it is easy to see that reading was seen as the simple decoding of letters, and that the only correct meaning of a text was that intended by the writer. As reading was concentrated on learning religious texts by heart it became, as mentioned above, a tool through which the church could control the society. This view on reading started to change in the second half of the 1900s. Reading was now understood as a meaning seeking process through which the reader combines his or her background knowledge, or schema as it was called during the 1960s and 70s, with the information given in the text to form meaning. How we view the reading process and how we weight the different components of this process has changed since the 70s, however

researchers still claim that reading is a process which involves both the background knowledge of the reader and the information given in the text. This will be presented in more depth in the section 2.5, entitled “The reading process” below.

2.5 The reading process

Over the past century there have been two main models of the reading process; the Bottom-up and the Top-Down models. According to Alderson there has been a focus on the apparent dichotomy between these two different approaches in the reading research that has taken place over the last twenty years or so (Alderson, 2000, p. 16). Today, on the other hand, it seems like the most common approach to reading is the Interactive model. This model combines elements from the Bottom-Up and the Top-Down model in order to describe the reading process. As this chapter is about understanding the process of reading in order to be able to teach it, I will present all three of these models in more detail below.

2.5.1 Older research; The Bottom-up and Top-Down models

Bottom-Up:

Alderson defines the bottom-up approaches as serial models, where the reader begins with the printed word, recognizes graphic stimuli, decodes them into words and decodes meanings. Each component involves subprocesses which take place independently of each other and build upon prior subprocesses. Subprocesses higher up the chain cannot, however feed back into components lower down (identification of meaning does not lead to letter recognition, for example). This approach was typically associated with behaviorism of the 1940s and 50s (Alderson, 2000, p. 16-17).

Grabe describes the bottom-up model somewhat differently, as starting with three subcomponent processes:

- 1 The recognition orthographic structure
- 2 The recognition of morpheme structure
- 3 The processing of phonemic information

The first subcomponent involves the recognition of letter forms, letter groups that typically cluster together and spelling patterns (Grabe, 1999, p. 13). In other words recognizing that the lines written on the paper are actually letters, and that these letters form words. He says that this ability has a moderate, but consistent influence on reading abilities, and is typically developed from constant exposure to reading itself (Grabe, 1999, p. 13). The second subcomponent does not only represent aspects of word forms (e.g. –ed, -tion, -ize and so on), but also specific syntactic and semantic information that needs to be incorporated into comprehension (Grabe, 1999, p. 13). The third subcomponent involves the matching of sound segments with orthographic symbols or words (Hellekjær, 2005, p. 65).

These three subcomponents start simultaneously when visual information is perceived, and work together as a part of word recognition, one of the key processing components for reading. It is important to be fluent at word recognition to be a fluent and proficient reader. As the reader reads he or she has to see word forms and access the appropriate meaning both quickly and accurately. If a reader has to guess at the meaning of too many words in a text, the pace of the reading is slowed down and this could endanger the reading comprehension. According to Grabe fluent word recognition provides the building blocks for comprehension of the text as a whole (Grabe, 1999, p. 15). This means that vocabulary knowledge is absolutely essential to reading comprehension.

Next, as lexical information begins to enter the working memory new processes are activated. These are

1. Syntactic parsing
2. Propositional integration

Syntactic parsing involves the mental reconstruction of the grammatical construction of the sentence (Grabe, 1999, p. 16). As with word recognition the reader needs to possess the necessary grammatical knowledge for syntactic parsing to proceed rapidly and without conscious effort. If not, it may slow down the reading and compromise comprehension (Hellekjær, 2005, p. 65). Parallel to this propositional integration takes place, which Grabe describes as “producing a propositional structure, or network, from the lexical forms and syntactic information” (Grabe, 1999, p. 16). We assume it works this way: We read a word and the meaning of this word is activated in the long term memory. Then the structure of the clause is constructed and the meanings of the words are integrated into a larger meaning unit; the proposition (Grabe, 1999, p. 16). What we end up with after all this has taken place in our long term memory is the meaning of the sentence.

To sum up, there seems to be a general consensus in the reading research with regards to the lower level processing. So far everything seems simple and clear. However this model focuses upon how the reader gains information from the text, it does not include anything about how the reader constructs his or her own meaning based naturally on the text itself, but also on their background knowledge. As we shall see below the top-down model focuses on this perspective.

Top-down model:

As mentioned above the top-down model focuses on the contribution of the reader to the reading process. In other words, the reader's background knowledge is the most important factor in this model of the reading process and based on this background knowledge the reader creates goal for reading and expectations to the text before reading. After that the

reader only samples the text to confirm or reject these expectations (Grabe & Stoller, 2002, p. 32). To illustrate the top-down model I have chosen to present Goodman and Smith's theories as they are prime examples of the top-down model, and according to Marva Barnett, the most cited first language models in second language reading literature (Barnett, 1989, p. 19).

Goodman:

Goodman sees the reading process as being a psycholinguistic process; in fact he refers to the reading process as "a psycholinguistic guessing game" in which the reader interacts with the text in an attempt "to reconstruct the message from the writer" (Goodman as cited in Barnett, 1989, p. 19). So what does this mean? Goodman sees the reading process as parted in four: predicting, sampling, confirming, and correcting. In other words the reader makes predictions of what information or meaning he or she is going to find in a text, based on their background knowledge, before even reading the text. Next the reader samples the text to confirm their predictions. Based on what the reader finds during sampling he or she either confirms their predictions or rejects them (Barnett, 1989, p. 20).

Smith:

Smith also emphasizes the readers need to predict when reading. He says that people read for specific reason or with specific goals, and that because of this the reader naturally pays attention only to what is important to that purpose or those goals. He agrees with Goodman that readers bring prior knowledge to the reading process and then add to it, whether in support of or contradiction to that prior knowledge (Barnett, 1989, p. 20).

Generally we can say that top-down models assume that reading is primarily directed by the reader's goals and expectations. To end this section on the top-down model I would like to cite Grabe and Stoller who, in my opinion sum the top-down models up very accurately: "Top-down models characterize the reader as someone who has a set of expectations about text information and samples enough information from the text to confirm or reject these

expectations” (Grabe & Stoller, 2002, p. 32). In the section on bottom-up models above I mentioned that there seems to be a general consensus in the reading research with regards to the lower-level processes that this model describes. This however is not the case with the higher-level processes described in this section. Researchers claim that there is more to the reading process than what is offered by both the bottom-up and top-down models. Therefore we now have a new model of the reading process called the interactive model. This is essentially a combination of the earlier separate top-down and bottom-up models.

2.5.2 Recent research: The Interactive Models

As mentioned above the interactive models combine features from both the bottom-up and top-down models, these are now referred to as respectively lower- and higher level processes.

The higher-level processes involve working with larger units of information and information constructed by the reader (Grabe, 1999, p. 17). As we can see the reader is given an active role in the reading process. As in the top-down model the question is no longer only which information the reader is given by the text, but also what the reader can contribute with in order to understand the text. As mentioned before, there seems to be a general consensus among reading researchers at lower-level processes of reading. This however is not the case with the higher-level processes. Here issues are less clear and more controversial, and up until now there has been a lot of disagreement. Now there seems to be some agreement on a number of central ideas, however there is still some disagreement over the specifics (Grabe, 1999, p. 17). There are several higher-level reading processes promoted by several different researchers on the area, but because there is still a lack of disagreement as to the specifics of the area, I have decided to concentrate on what Grabe calls the central ideas.

Grabe claims that most researchers agree that some form of text comprehension network, a text model, is generated by the reader. This text model closely reflects the textual information. They also agree that there is a second model, the situational model, which includes much more reader background knowledge, and individual interpretations of the text

information. In addition, most researchers agree that some kind of inferencing is necessary while reading, and that the textual context contributes to text interpretation (Grabe, 1999, p. 17). As mentioned before, these are the central aspects of higher-level processing; the specific processing mechanisms are still subject to discussion. I will look into both the text model and the situation model more closely below.

Text model:

This is the information gathered by the reader from the text. As mentioned in the section on lower-level processes the reader sees a word, activates the meaning of this word and integrate it into a larger meaning unit; the proposition. If we read a text we create a number of these propositions. Each new proposition created at the sentence level is integrated into a textual propositional network, a text model of comprehension, in the working memory of the reader. This model gives a close mental representation of the information given by the text, up to that point in the reading. All of these sentence level propositions are entered into a hierarchical network where they are gradually restructured to include higher-level macropositions that capture the main ideas of the text (Grabe, 1999, p. 17-18). As new propositions enter the network the macroposition is adjusted. What happens is that the reader recognizes and understands the information of the text (Grabe, 1999, p. 19).

The situational model:

At the same time a different model is constructed. This model, the situational model, represents the reader's interpretation of the text information. This is where the reader's background knowledge plays a more distinct role. Here the information given in the text is supplemented by the reader's knowledge of the topic, given by texts the reader has read before. The reader evaluates the information given in the text with regards to goals for reading, background information, reader attitudes and so on (Grabe, 1999, p. 18). In other words the reader creates an interpretation of the text that is unique to that particular reader (Grabe, 1999, p. 19). This explains how two readers who read the same text can interpret the text differently. If we summarize the higher levels of processing we might say that the reading process is driven by the reader's mind at work on the text (Barnett, 1989, p. 13).

To sum up the interactive models of reading we can say that they combine both the bottom-up and top-down-models of reading. We see the influence of the bottom-up model in the text model presented above, where the focus is mostly on the information transferred from the text to the reader. On the other hand we have the situational model, also presented above, in which the focus is shifted to the reader's contribution to understanding a text. It is the combination of features from both the bottom-up and the top-down models that distinguishes the interactive models. These models all describe the reading process and help us understand what it is that happens inside the reader's mind while reading. The interactive model presented here describes one way of reading a text; careful reading for meaning; however it is important to remember that there are several ways in which to read a text and which is better suited depends on the purpose of the reading. I will present other ways of reading in the sections on reading strategies and ways of reading below.

2.6 How to become a good reader

In the sections on reading models above I have presented different models describing how we read, and what happens inside the readers' mind as we read. In order to teach reading it is important to understand what mental processes are going on as we read, however it is equally important to be aware of the practical and more observable aspect of reading, namely the techniques that we can teach our students to help them become better readers. Teaching them reading strategies plays an important part in this and this is why it is important that we look at these strategies more closely. In order to teach reading to our students it is important that we are aware of what it is that constitutes a good reader. What is it that successful readers do in order to be successful? Is this something that can be taught to our students? Can they be trained to become good readers? As teachers we have to reflect on what the successful readers do and how we can utilize that in class in order to help all of our students become better readers. In this section I am going to look into what reading strategies are, and different ways to read a text, in particular skimming, scanning and reading for meaning. At the end I will try to sum up what characterizes a good reader.

2.6.1 A brief overview of the history of reading strategies

During the past 25 years reading and reading strategies have been given an increasing focus in the pedagogical research literature. However, studies from the United States have shown that it has taken time for theory and research to be implemented in the classroom. Until 1960 reading comprehension was viewed as being connected with the intelligence of the reader. If the students could decode the letters and were intelligent, they would understand the text. This view changed during the 1960s and 70s. Students were then taught different reading strategies, like making questions for the text before reading, repeat central ideas, and assess the text. In Norway booklets with assignments aimed at training the students in reading strategies were developed (Roe, 2006, p. 81).

However there was still at least one problem; most of the work on reading strategies was done as a separate course at the beginning of the school year, and not integrated as a natural part of the teaching. Later studies have shown that students learn more when reading strategies are incorporated as a natural part of the teaching, rather than as a separate course. When done as a separate course it is not likely that the students will continue to work on these strategies throughout the school year, and thus include the new strategies in the repertoire of reading strategies that they call upon when they face a challenging text (Roe, 2006, p.81).

2.6.2 What is a reading strategy?

When we talk about reading, and in particular reading comprehension, we talk about strategies and skills, but as Grabe points out; what is the difference between a strategy and a skill? Grabe points to the fact that the terms are very ill defined. He exemplifies by asking how inferencing skills differ from strategies like recognizing mis-comprehension (Grabe as cited in Alderson, 2005, p. 306). As we shall see below the definition of what a strategy is differs in the research literature of the area.

Stern defines strategies as “The conscious efforts learners make” and as “purposeful activities” (Stern in Alderson, 2005, p. 307). Wenden points to the problem of defining the term strategy by saying that in literature strategies have been referred to as “techniques, tactics, potentially conscious plans, consciously employed operations, learning skills, basic skills, functional skills, cognitive abilities, language processing strategies, and problem-solving procedures” (Wenden as cited in Alderson, 2005, p. 308). She goes on to say that the term reading strategy refers to language learning behaviors, to what learners know about the strategies they use, and to what learners know about aspects of L2 reading other than the strategies they use (Wenden as cited in Alderson, 2005, p. 308). Paris, Wasik and Turner describe strategies as “actions selected deliberately to achieve particular goals (Koda, 2004, p. 205). Koda says that reading strategies can be characterized by three core elements: deliberate, goal/problem-oriented and reader-initiated/controlled (Koda, 2004, p. 205).

As we see these are fairly different definitions of the term strategy, however they all seem to have at least one element in common; the element of consciousness. Is it so that what sets strategies apart from skills is the amount of consciousness needed to employ them? Pearson thinks so. He claims that reading strategies are conscious plans for how to work with a text, whereas reading skills are more or less unconscious automatic actions (Pearson as cited in Roe, 2002, p. 104, my translation). This claim is supported by Koda, he says that strategies are deliberate and skills subconscious (Koda, 2004, p. 210). This is the definition I will continue to use throughout this paper. I interpret this as meaning that what is a reading strategy when we start using it can become a skill when it has been used often enough for it to become automatic. In other words; as teachers we can train our learners to become strategic readers, however they only become skilled readers when the employment of the strategies have become automatic.

Now the question is: what is it that strategic readers do, and are they better readers?

According to Roe they are, and it is in fact the conscious reading strategies they employ that set them apart from the poor readers. Strategic readers use critical thinking and reasoning when they construct meaning from a text. They employ strategies that are flexible with regards to the content and form of a text, they monitor their own reading, and they employ

good strategies when they realize that they might not have understood the text correctly (Roe as cited in Bjorkvand & Tønnesen, 2002, p. 104). These strategies could be as simple as asking questions as to what the text is about before reading it and checking whether or not they found the answers, or going back and reading the text over again. Or as we shall see below, it could be the way they choose to read a text.

2.6.3 How do strategic readers work with a text?

When we look at the reading process of strategic readers there seems to be some consensus in the research literature that there are two main stages of strategic reading: planning and execution. Planning refers to what readers do before reading and execution refers to what they do during and after reading. (Stangeland & Forsth, 2001, p. 106-107). A strategic reader starts the reading process by defining the purpose of the reading. What is it that he or she wants to accomplish by reading this particular text? They look quickly through the text to see if the writer has used a specific structure, and to get the general idea of what the text is about. When a general overview of the content and structure of the text has been established the reader can start activating relevant background knowledge, and construct questions for the text. Based on the purpose of the text, a strategic reader may also decide which way of reading the text would be the best suited for them to reach their goal before they start reading (Roe, 2006, p. 75, Stangeland & Forsth, 2001, p. 107).

What strategic readers do during reading depends on what the purpose of the reading is. If the reader is looking for information on a specific topic he or she could skim the text to look for this information. If the reader is after a deeper understanding of the text he or she has to read carefully, interpret the text, and draw conclusions on the background of what is stated in the text. In other words, he or she has to create a connection between the information in the text and own experiences and background knowledge. A reader could do this by associating, comparing, finding analogies and contradictions, and so on. The reader has to move forwards and backwards in the text to repeat or look at previously presented information in a new light. In both cases the reader has to distinguish between less and more

important elements of the text, and adapt speed and way of reading to the purpose of the reading (Roe, 2006, p. 77, Stangeland & Forsth, 2001, p. 107).

After the reading the reader has to look through the text one more time to create an overview and get a confirmation that the text has been understood correctly. He or she has to sum up the contents in their own mind, as key words, short summaries or charts. They have to see whether or not the questions posed before reading have been answered, and if they have not found the answer they have to go back and review earlier expectations or central ideas (Roe, 2006, p. 76).

Grabe emphasizes the importance of flexibility in reading; that a reader is willing and able to change reading strategy or even the goal of reading if he or she finds during the monitoring process after reading a lack of understanding. He says that reading is an evaluation process during which the reader has to evaluate whether or not the information given by the text matches the goals set for the reading and the background knowledge of the reader (Grabe & Stoller, 2002, p. 18). During the entire process a strategic reader monitors and evaluates how the different strategies are working in relation to comprehension and the goal of the reading. If he or she sees that they do not understand, or that they will not reach their goal, the strategies are adjusted. Alderson is another researcher who sees monitoring comprehension as important, he goes as far as to say that monitoring one's understanding of a text is crucial to good reading (Alderson, 2005, p. 122).

2.6.4 Ways of reading

Before I look more specifically at skimming, scanning and careful reading for meaning it is important to look at whether or not these different ways of reading are in fact reading strategies or whether or not they are a category of their own. They are of course part of a conscious plan that we make before we start reading. As already mentioned, to determine which reading strategies are more suitable we need to start by figuring out the purpose of the reading, and based on the purpose of the reading we figure out how to read the text. If a reader makes a conscious decision about how to read a text, ways of reading are reading

strategies. However, as with the other reading strategies, when the decision between different ways of reading becomes automatic, the different ways of reading become skills.

The reason why I have decided to look more closely at the different ways of reading is because this thesis is about how reading is taught in Norwegian upper secondary school and evidence shows that there is too much focus on one way of reading only, careful reading, and that this creates a problem when these students go on to university and try to get the same detailed understanding of the texts they meet there. These texts are longer and probably more complicated than the ones they are used to from upper secondary and the students do not have the same support system as they did in school. In the following I will present different ways of reading.

Skimming:

Skimming is an appropriate way to read a text if the purpose for reading is to get an overview of the content and structure of a text, or to review a text you have already read before. There are different ways to do this. You could read the introduction and conclusion of an article, look at headings, definitions and tables or read the summaries at the end of the chapters to get a general idea of what the text is about. This is a quick way of getting an overview, locate information on one specific topic, or revise texts you have already read. Before you start skimming it is important to know what the purpose of the reading is and you need to figure out how you want to skim the text (Stangeland & Forsth, 2001, p. 67).

Scanning:

The purpose of scanning is to locate specific topics, words or information in a text. You can scan a text in much the same way as you skim it; however the purpose for reading is different. When you skim, the purpose is to get a general overview of the text. When you scan a text the goal is to locate the information you need. Because of this you have to be aware of what information you are looking for before you start scanning (Stangeland & Forsth, 2004, p. 74).

Careful reading:

This is a more time consuming way of reading. The goal is to understand the text and the information in it. Urquhart and Weir claim that this is a reading strategy often fostered by classroom instruction. This strategy is often focused on extracting perfect comprehension (Urquhart and Weir as cited in Hellekjær, 2005, p. 26). If we look at this strategy in terms of L2 readers of English this may well prove to be a counterproductive strategy and it may result in an excessive dictionary use in order to understand every single word. As has been presented above, a reader needs to maintain a certain speed of reading, otherwise the comprehension is at risk. It is therefore important to teach learners that there are other ways of reading a text, and that in some situations it might not be necessary to understand every word in a text in order to understand what the text is about.

To sum up, reading is a complex process in which many skills and strategies are needed in order to become a fluent reader. Before reading a reader has to set goals, based on those goals the reader has to decide on the appropriate way of reading the text and both after and during reading the reader has to evaluate or monitor the understanding of the text. This may sound daunting, but these strategies can be learnt, and even more importantly for this thesis, they can be taught. It is important for teachers to keep in mind that reading is not, as mentioned several times above, only a decoding of words, it is a complex skill that requires proper training throughout the school system. These strategies and skills are equally, if not even more important in second language reading as they can help learners overcome the additional challenges of second language reading. These challenges and the question of whether or not second language reading differs from first language reading will be dealt with in the section on L2 reading below.

2.7 L2 reading

Up until now I have looked at reading in an L1. As this thesis is about reading in the EFL classrooms of Norwegian upper secondary schools, it is important to look at L2 reading too. Are there any differences between reading in a first- and a second-language? Alderson &

Urquhart put it as follows: “we do not, and indeed find it difficult to, draw a clear distinction between first and foreign language reading- in fact, it is not clear to what extent reading in a foreign language is different from reading in a first language” (Alderson & Urquhart as cited in Hellekjær, 2005, p. 61).

It seems obvious that the technical skills required are the same no matter which language we read in. However, the question remains: Can we automatically assume that a student who is a good first language reader is also a good second language reader? In other words: Do reading abilities transfer across languages, and are there additional challenges to reading in a second language? Alderson asks this question in a different way (Alderson, 2005, p. 23). He questions whether second language reading is a reading problem, or a language problem. He answers it by saying that both language knowledge and reading knowledge are important, but that research shows that knowledge of the second language is a more important factor than first language reading abilities (Alderson, 2005, p. 23). Alderson also says that the notion that poor second-language reading is due to inadequate first language reading receives little support from the research literature. Instead, the research results increasingly confirm the existence of a linguistic threshold (Alderson, 2005, p. 24). This linguistic threshold is defined by Grabe in this way: “[...] students must have a sufficient amount of L2 Knowledge (i.e. vocabulary, grammar and discourse) to make effective use of skills and strategies that are part of their L1 reading comprehension abilities” (Grabe & Stoller, 2002, p. 50). Readers cannot expect any L1 reading ability to transfer to the second language if they have not reached this threshold. This linguistic threshold is not absolute, but varies with task: The more demanding the task, the higher the linguistic threshold (Alderson, 2005, p. 38-39). Hellekjær even claims that for reading ability to transfer from the L1 into the L2 the students have to have efficient L1 processing skills and strategies to transfer. According to him this is something we should not take for granted (Hellekjær, 2005, p. 63).

Although there may be little difference between reading in the L1 and the L2, there are additional constraints that face readers of a second-language. But what are these constraints? The fact is that there is a multitude of them; however as the focus of this thesis is Norwegian readers of English I am going to focus on the constraints most relevant to this group. This

means that constraints like cultural differences and different sign systems will not be discussed further.

The most important constraint is vocabulary knowledge. In fact, Grabe claims that the lack of “a massive receptive vocabulary that is rapidly, accurately, and automatically processed [...] may be the greatest single impediment to fluent reading by ESL students” (Grabe as cited in Hellekjær, 2005, p. 62). Grabe states that first language readers have a vocabulary of approximately 40 000 words, and that when they read a text 98-99% of the words are known to them. He estimates that in order to be a fluent L2 reader you would have to know 95 % of the words on the page (Grabe, 1999, p. 31). It seems obvious that it would take an L2 reader years to reach this level. Bossers shows that while both knowledge of the second language and first language reading ability were related to reading ability in the second language, the former, and especially vocabulary knowledge, was more closely related at lower levels of linguistic proficiency (Bossers as cited in Alderson, 2005, p. 38).

A second constraint may be how students have been taught to handle difficult texts and unfamiliar words. As discussed above much of the reading that takes place in the classrooms is careful reading. Has the teaching that takes place in the EFL classroom prepared students for the independent reading of such texts? Hellekjær thinks that this is not automatically the case. He says that not only may the degree of contextual support have been high, with the teacher explaining and/or interpreting the texts in L2 or L1. If the texts are textbook texts there may also be accompanying word lists that explain or translate difficult words. In addition the reader has the opportunity to discuss difficult points with fellow students as well as with the teacher (Hellekjær, 2005, p. 62). Could it be that students do not develop adequate strategies for handling difficult texts on their own because of this massive support system that surrounds them in the classroom? This is why it is important for teachers to teach their students reading strategies. If the students learn good reading strategies they will be much better equipped for dealing with the difficult authentic textbooks they are likely to encounter in higher education.

A third constraint might be the level of language awareness. L2 learners might not have developed the same awareness as L1 learners and this might require them to focus their attention on how the language works while reading instead of relying on intuitive knowledge (Grabe, 1999, p. 32-33). This might slow down the reading process and hinder the comprehension.

Grabe also mentions speed of reading as a separate constraint to L2 reading. I am not sure whether or not this should be mentioned as a separate constraint or rather as a consequence of the three constraints mentioned above. A lack of vocabulary knowledge, poor word recognition skills or strategies and limited language awareness all reduce the speed of reading, and as I interpret Grabe this is the reason why the other constraints mentioned here are constraints to L2 reading (Grabe, 1999, p. 33). Schmitt claims that not only do we have to recognize a word, but we have to recognize it quickly to maintain a speed of reading that facilitates fluent reading (Schmitt, 2005, p. 50). He operates with a threshold reading speed under which comprehension is quite difficult, because a slower speed of reading will lead the reader to focus on each word individually and thus make it difficult to grasp the meaning of the connected discourse. Schmitt estimates that this threshold speed is approximately 200 words per minute. Above this speed the flow and logical progression of ideas can be appreciated (Schmitt, 2005, p. 51).

Going through research on L2 reading I have found that what sets it apart from L1 reading is not the technical skills needed to be able to read nor the reading strategies employed. What sets L2 reading apart is rather a number of constraints that occur due to limited language proficiency. These constraints are numerous, however as mentioned above, I have chosen to present only the constraints most relevant in the Norwegian EFL classroom. These constraints are limited vocabulary knowledge, how students are taught to handle difficult texts, level of language awareness and speed of reading. These constraints may seem overwhelming, but the good news is that with proper language instruction students can be trained to overcome these constraints and that is why it is so important for teachers and teachers in training to be aware of them.

2.8 Chapter summary

How we view reading has changed dramatically throughout history. It has progressed from being a skill reserved for the elite, to a skill that everyone is expected to master. It has progressed from being a tool of control for the few who mastered it to a tool for acquiring knowledge. Being a skilled reader is becoming ever more vital in order to participate in society. As teachers we are obliged to teach our students how to become good readers, and in order to do so we have to know what reading is, what processes go on while we read, what reading strategies are and, in the context of this assignment, how L2 reading differs from that of L1. In the next chapter I am going to look into how reading is viewed in the most recent National Curricula for English, more specifically L97 and K06 Knowledge Promotion lower secondary school and Reform 94 and K06 Knowledge Promotion for higher secondary. I am going to look into the views on reading and reading strategies that come across in these curricula and whether or not there has been a development in the goals set for reading.

3. Reading Curricula and Syllabi

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will examine the two most recent Norwegian syllabi for English at the upper secondary school level, the former Reform 94 syllabus, hereafter referred to as R94, and the present Knowledge Promotion syllabus, hereafter referred to as LK06. I will start by examining the requirements to reading presented in these syllabi and the view of reading that comes across. After that I will compare them to see whether or not the requirements to reading and the view of reading, as presented in the syllabi, have changed as a result of the past LK06 educational reform.

First, I would like to start by defining what a curriculum and syllabus are because this is important to the understanding of this chapter. By curriculum I mean the entire legal document issued by the government containing guidelines for the teaching, for instance in the Norwegian school system. A curriculum may contain several syllabi, which are the subject specific parts of the curriculum. It is the syllabi for English in the former and current curricula that will be focused upon in this chapter. In this section I have chosen to focus on the general part of the syllabus and the learning objectives stated for the 11th grade, because it is the grade taught by my informants.

3.2 What is a curriculum and how does it affect everyday teaching?

Before looking at the two above mentioned syllabi, I will give a brief presentation of how curricula can affect teaching. Sivesind defines a curriculum as: “public instructions and guidelines on school responsibilities and content, with a general framework and curriculum directives needed for the supervision of school activities” (Sivesind as cited in Hellekjær, 2005, p. 25). When we define a curriculum in this way evaluation will be centered around whether or not the teachers teach what is stated in the curriculum, in other words whether or

not they use the curriculum in their teaching (Sivesind and Bachmann, 2002, p. 25). What is not clearly stated in this definition is who makes a curriculum. In Norway they are developed at the initiative of the educational authorities (Hellekjær, 2005, p. 25). In fact, the former curriculum for upper secondary school, Reform 94 as well as the current LK06, are issued as legal directives to make them binding for teachers and school-owners (Hellekjær, 2005, p. 25).

Although the school curricula in Norway are issued by the educational authorities and are legally binding, how do they actually affect the everyday teaching that takes place in the different Norwegian classrooms? According to Sivesind and Bachmann (2002) the influence a curriculum has on teaching can be both direct and indirect. The direct influence is when, or if teachers actually use the curriculum to plan their teaching. However, a curriculum can also influence teaching in an indirect manner. For instance: textbooks are written to cover the instructions given in the syllabus for that specific subject and teachers then use the textbooks in their teaching. In this way the teachers are indirectly influenced by the understanding the textbook writer has of the syllabus. This poses a question: is it the syllabus or the textbook that influences the teaching the most? In other words, the influence of the curriculum on teaching is not only dependent on how the teachers interpret the curriculum, but also on how the teaching material produced in connection with it is received and utilized by the teachers (Sivesind and Bachmann, 2002, p. 31). If we look at the syllabus for English a recent study shows that 98% of lower secondary English teachers in Norway rely heavily on the textbooks (Ibsen & Hellekjær as cited in Hellekjær, 2005, p. 26). In other words the textbook authors' interpretation of the syllabus is often the one put into action, not the teachers' interpretation (Hellekjær, 2005, p. 26). Another strong indirect influence is examinations, that teachers teach what they believe will be in the exams. This phenomenon is often referred to as "teaching to the test" or "the washback effect" (Brown, 1993, p. 261).

What this shows us is that the influence a curriculum has on teaching is not only direct, in that teachers use the different subject syllabi in planning the teaching, but also indirectly through textbooks, exams and other teaching materials developed to cover the guidelines stated in the curriculum.

3.3 English Syllabi of the Upper Secondary School in Norway

In this section I will concentrate on presenting and analyzing the syllabi for English in the 11th grade of the General Studies branch in R94 and LK06. It would have been interesting to look at the 10th grade learning objectives as well to see what level of English the pupils are expected to be at when they enter into upper secondary. However, as this thesis is about the reading requirements in the upper secondary level I have decided to limit my focus to this level. I will start by presenting R94 in general, then I will look into the view of reading presented in this syllabus, and last what amount of reading is required by this syllabus. After that I will do the same with the 11th grade English syllabus in the LK06. Finally, I will compare and contrast the two.

3.3.1 R94; Reform 94

R94 was a curriculum for the upper secondary school level only. It was followed by L97 for elementary and lower secondary school. The R94 curriculum was implemented in 1994, and for the obligatory English foundation course remained in force until 2006 when LK06 took over. In R94 English is listed as one of the compulsory subjects for the General Studies branch. Pupils who attend this branch of upper secondary are expected to attend some form of higher education after graduating; it is in other words college preparatory.

Structure:

Before continuing, it might be useful to present the structure of the English subject during the R94 curriculum, as has been done in table 2.1 below.

Table 1 An overview of the number of lessons in English as a school subject during R94

Level	General studies branch	
Grade 11	English Foundation Course 5 lessons-per-week VG 1200 (Compulsory)	
Grade 12	English 1 AA6070 5-lessons-per-week (Elective)	General English course AA6071 3 lessons-per-week (Elective)
Grade 13	English 2 5 lessons-per-week (Alternatives A or B) AA6080 or AA6081 (Elective)	

In the 11th grade the pupils had to attend the five-lessons-per week English Foundation Course, which was compulsory for all pupils. After that they could choose to continue with the five-lessons-per-week English 1 course or the three-lessons-per-week General English course in grade 12. Pupils who chose to continue with English 1 could then choose between English 2 alternative A or B, both five-lessons-per-week, in grade 13. Pupils who chose to study the natural sciences or took an elective course in another language, such as French or German, had the opportunity to quit English after the compulsory Foundation Course (Hellekjær ,2005, p. 37). In other words, the de-facto minimum requirement for English in upper secondary school was the one year, five-lessons-per-week class in the 11th grade.

An overview of R94 and its view of reading:

In the general part of the English syllabus we find the rationale for English as a school subject. In other words it answers the question “Why do we need to learn English”? The syllabus states that as Norway is a small language community it is important, both on a personal and on a professional level, to be proficient in English. In addition to this it is stated that the study of a foreign language can give a positive contribution to the first language, in that it makes the pupils more aware of their own language learning (R94, p. 1).

Paradoxically reading or learning strategies are not mentioned at all in this section.

In chapter 2 of the syllabus certain overall goals for the English foundation course are stated, however only one of these is directly linked to reading: “Through working with the subject the pupils should be able to understand the meaning and composition of written and spoken language [...] (my own translation R94, p.3). Learning or reading strategies are not mentioned, here either and are clearly not a point of focus in this curriculum.

Further on in chapter 2 the syllabus is divided into six different learning objectives, with an explanation for each. These are:

1. Understanding oral English
2. Understanding written English
3. Use of oral English
4. Use of written English
5. The English speaking world
6. English related to the respective branch of study (R94, p.6)

Of these only one is directly related to reading and so this learning objective is the one I will focus on in this thesis, and that is study objective 2 “Understanding written English”. In the explanation for this goal we find that the pupils should be able to understand written presentations of different overall topics, they are to understand both generally and in detail, texts directly related to their area of study, they are to be able to understand the overall message and genre specific characteristics of the text and they are to be able to extract and use information presented in a text (R94, p.4).

My aim for this section was to be able to give an account of the view of reading presented in the R94 syllabus. However, reading is clearly not a point of focus in this syllabus and I doubt that there is any clear view of reading behind this document. The only way in which reading is even mentioned is as a means to learn about subject specific topics, such as study

objective 5 “The English speaking world”. There is no mention of reading as a skill, or reading strategies, at all and this lack of mention is what leads me to believe that either the pupils are expected to have reached a satisfying level of reading proficiency when they enter into the 11th grade, or that reading is seen as a skill to work on in other subjects, for example Norwegian.

Amount of reading required:

In objective 2 there is absolutely no mention of what the pupils are to read, how much they are to read or what genres they are to cover except for articles, manuals, work descriptions and instruction pamphlets. We have to look further on in the learning objectives, more specifically to objective 5 “The English speaking World”, to find this information. Here, under point 5a, it is stated that the pupils should be able to retell and discuss the content of at least two short stories and one excerpt from a play, the latter either seen or read (my own translation R94, p. 6). This is, as we can see a very small amount and unless the individual teacher sees reading as an important skill and chooses to focus on this skill, this is all the reading they are required to do in class.

In other words, there is no clear focus on reading in the R94 English syllabus. Nor is it clear what view of reading lies behind this syllabus. However, we get an indication of this through the lack of mention of reading as a skill. Furthermore, the minimum amount of reading required by this syllabus it is alarmingly small: two short stories, one excerpt from a play and a literary work. In the next section I will examine the LK06 syllabus to see if there is any change in the view of reading, or rather whether or not there is a view of reading behind this document, and whether or not there is any change to the minimum requirement for reading.

3.3.2 LK06; Knowledge promotion

In 2006 the Norwegian ministry for education issued a new curriculum for the entire Norwegian school system. This curriculum was given the English name LK06. It is the first Norwegian curriculum that covers the elementary school and lower as well as secondary

school levels. In this chapter I will examine the LK06 English syllabus for the 11th grade in addition to the general part of the syllabus. As with R94 my goal is to ascertain whether the amount of reading that is required and the view of reading that is presented has changed from those in the R94 syllabus.

Structure:

As with the R94 curriculum I would like to start by presenting the structure of the English subject as it is presented in the LK06 curriculum.

Table 2 An overview of the structure of English as a school subject in the general studies branch of upper secondary school during LK06.

Level	General Studies Branch	
Vg1	English 140 teaching hours per year	
Vg2	International English 140 teaching hours per year	
Vg3	Social Studies English 140 teaching hours per year	English Literature and Communication 140 teaching hours per year

In the first year of upper secondary, now named Vg1, English is a compulsory subject for all pupils. All pupils have to finish this one year course of 140 teaching hours. After that, in other words in Vg2 and 3, English is elective. If the pupils choose to continue with English they have to attend the 140 hours class called International English in Vg2. After that, in Vg3, they have a choice between two 140 hours courses: Social Studies English and English Literature and Communication. Both of these classes build upon the International English course from Vg2. As with R94 it is only in the first year of upper secondary that English is a compulsory subject for all pupils, this is in other words the minimum requirement for English in upper secondary.

View of reading:

The LK06 curriculum is divided into the following sections:

1. The objectives of the subject

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2. Main subject areas
 3. Basic Skills
 4. Competence aims

If we start by looking at the section called “The objectives of the subject” we find that this almost works as a rationale for English as a school subject. As with R94 it is in this section we find the answer to why the pupils need to learn English. In LK 06, the focus of the rationale is on how knowledge of English is important in a small language community like Norway and also that English is important for higher education. Reading is specifically mentioned in the rationale, not only as a means to learn about other topics, but actually as an end in itself. The curriculum states that “we need to develop our vocabulary and our skills in using the systems of the English language; its phonology, grammar and text structuring. We need these skills to listen, speak, read and write [...]” (LK06, p. 1).

Next, in LK06 there are three main subject areas: “Language learning”, “Communication” and “Culture, society and literature”. These remain the same for grades 1 through 13. The first focuses on knowledge about the language, the use of the language and insight into one’s own language learning. The second focuses on the different forms of communication: reading, writing and prepared and spontaneous oral interaction. The third focuses on becoming familiar with different topics concerning culture and society, mainly in the English speaking world. Once again reading is mentioned as a means to an end, a tool to be used in order to learn about different topics (LK06, p. 2).

At the end of the general part of the syllabus we find a section called “Basic Skills”. This is one of the new features of this curriculum. Here we find four skills that are to be developed as basic skills in all school subjects. These are: reading, writing, mathematics and being able to use digital tools. This shows a much clearer focus on reading as an important skill. In other words, in LK06 reading has been acknowledged as a skill so important that it is to be focused on across the curriculum, in all school subjects.

The competence aims of the English syllabus are, as mentioned above, divided into three: “Language learning”, “Communication” and “Culture, society and literature”. If we look at the aims listed under “Communication” we see that several of the aims, which I have listed below, are directly related to reading. We can read that the pupils are to be able to:

1. Understand extended written presentations
2. Extract essential information from written texts and discuss the author’s attitudes and point of view
3. Read formal and informal texts in various genres and with different purposes
4. Select and use content from different sources independently, critically and responsibly
5. Select appropriate reading strategies adapted to the purpose, situation and genre (LK06 p. 6).

If we look further on in the curricula, under the heading “Culture, society and literature”, we find one more aim that is directly related to reading: “The pupil shall be able to discuss literature about indigenous peoples in the English-speaking world.”

Amount of reading:

Looking at the syllabus for English in the 11th grade we find that there is no specific mention of a set amount that is to be read. This is left to the teacher to decide, but there is good reason to believe that a larger amount of reading is required by this syllabus even if it is not directly mentioned in the competence aims. For example: How much reading is required to teach the pupils to select or develop appropriate reading strategies? How many texts are required in order to have read formal and informal texts in various genres and with different purposes? Never the less, this is left to the teachers to decide. In other words: the teacher is believed to be a professional capable of making these choices on his or her own.

To sum up, in LK06 we see that the focus on reading as a complex skill that has to be developed is much clearer throughout the curriculum. One reason is because it is designated a place in the “Basic skills” section, and also because it is clearly specified in the English syllabus. There is a clear focus on teaching the pupils reading strategies and also of making them aware of different reading strategies. However, there is no specific mention of a set amount of reading that has to be done in order to complete the foundation course. As mentioned above, this is left to the teacher to decide.

3.4 A comparison between the two syllabi

View of reading:

To sum up, R94 presents a view of reading where it is seen as a skill that is necessary for the learning of the different topics presented in the syllabus. However, there is no mention in the syllabus of how teachers are supposed to help their pupils develop this skill. The only thing mentioned specifically about reading is the genres and topics that are to be covered during the course of the year. Based on this it is difficult to present which view of reading that lies behind this syllabus. We can either assume that the pupils are expected to have reached a satisfying level of reading proficiency in lower secondary, or we can assume that reading is a skill left to work on in other classes, such as for instance Norwegian class. Anyway, the lack of clarity makes an interesting point.

If we assume that reading is seen as an important skill in R94 it is definitely a skill left to teachers of other classes to work on. This to me is rather paradoxical; there is quite a lot of reading in English class, and if reading is seen as an important skill, why waste such a golden opportunity to further develop this skill? If, on the other hand, we assume that the pupils are expected to be at a satisfying level of reading proficiency before entering upper secondary school the lack of mention of reading in the syllabus would be quite understandable.

In LK06, on the other hand, I find it easier to see which view of reading it presents. Here reading is presented as an important skill that needs to be worked on in class, and not just in English class. In fact reading is seen as such an important skill that it is to be worked with across the curriculum. As mentioned above reading is recognized as one of four basic skills that are to be worked on in every school subject. In addition to this we find that reading strategies are specifically mentioned in this syllabus. It is stated in the syllabus that the pupils should be able to select appropriate reading strategies adapted to the purpose, situation and genre (LK06, p. 6). In other words reading is seen as a skill more complex than just decoding letters into words and it is clearly stated in the syllabus that this skill is to be worked on in English class, as well as in all other classes.

Amount of reading:

As mentioned briefly above the R94 syllabus specifies an amount of reading necessary to complete the foundation course; however it requires very little. In fact, additional reading is required in order to cover other competence aims mentioned in the syllabus, such as “the pupil shall be able to understand central factual texts in detail” (R94, p. 4).

In LK06, on the other hand, there is no mention of a specific required amount of reading that has to be done in order to complete the foundation course, there is however, as mentioned above, a much clearer overall focus on reading as a skill. Although this lack of a set amount of reading could lead us to believe that there is less focus on reading in the LK06 syllabus, I do not believe that to be the case. This is mainly due to the fact that reading is mentioned as a basic skill for all subjects, which signals that reading is a very important part of all syllabi in LK06, English included. Furthermore, reading is valued in its own right. I believe this should make the pupils following the LK06 syllabus better prepared for higher education, as it is the skills and language knowledge rather than the topics that are important for higher education. However, this depends on the extent that reading instruction is implemented in the EFL classroom.

3.5 Chapter summary

As we have seen in the analysis of the two syllabi above there has been a change in the amount of reading required by the syllabi and the view of reading presented in them. The most prominent difference is that reading is clearly defined in the LK06 syllabus, whereas in the R94 syllabus it is not. This made me curious as to how English teachers work with reading in English class. I wanted to find out whether or not there had been a change in the teaching practice due to the past LK06 educational reform. There were two main questions that I hoped to find an answer to through my survey: Has there been any change in the amount of reading that takes place in class and are the teachers teaching the pupils reading? This was the background for my survey that will be presented below. To find out about this I asked my informants a number of questions:

1. Do the teachers teach reading in class or is it just assumed that the pupils are already proficient readers?
2. What does the term reading strategies mean to them, and do they work on reading strategies in class?
3. What are their feelings towards reading as a basic skill, and do they think it is something that is important to work on in class?
4. What and how much is read in class?
5. What literary resources are available at school?
6. To what extent do they rely on the textbook?
7. Are they aware that there is a difference in how reading is viewed in the two syllabi, and has that affected the way they work with reading in class?

In addition to this I also wanted to find out how they interpret some of the competence aims in the LK06 syllabus that are directly related to reading and how they work on them in class. My findings will be presented in chapter 5 below.

4. Methods

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will explain the procedures and choices I have made in the present survey. First I am going to go through a general overview of the research process and use this as a point of departure for presenting my own survey. I will then go through the research process chronologically starting with the preparations, looking at my research questions, method and research design. Next, I move on to look at the process of collecting data, and the process of analyzing the data I have collected. After that I am going to look at how the data is presented. The last thing that will be discussed is the validity of the results from my survey.

4.2 The research process

As mentioned in the introduction, I am going to start by giving a general overview of the research process. This process is the same regardless of whether it is a quantitative or a qualitative survey, and is divided into these four steps:

1. Preparation
2. Collecting data
3. Data analysis
4. Report (Johannessen, Tufte & Kristoffersen, 2006, p. 37)

If we start by looking at step one, preparation, the obvious starting point is to have a clear idea of what one wants to research before starting the survey. This idea then has to be translated into one or more research questions. At this stage it is important to focus on what is it that we want to accomplish. This then has to be translated into one or more goals for the study.

The next step is collecting the data. At this stage the first thing the researcher needs to do is decide who will participate in the survey, in other words what qualifications the informants or respondents need to have. He or she also has to decide on how many respondents or informants are needed, and how to recruit them. This step also requires that the researcher chooses how to proceed in order to collect the wanted data. This could for instance be observation, interviews or questionnaires.

When the data has been collected it needs to be analysed and interpreted. This step is different from quantitative to qualitative methods. However, they both have one thing in common: the amount of data collected has to be reduced in order for the researcher to be able to handle it. Regardless of whether or not the data has been collected using a qualitative or quantitative method they have to be interpreted.

The final step is the presentation of the results. This is normally done through a written report, such as this thesis. Normally the researcher would then back own findings with literature on the area (Johannessen et. al, 2006 p. 37-38).

Next, I am going to apply these four steps to my own survey, and show how I worked at each stage of the research process.

4.3 Preparation

If we start by looking at the first stage of the research process we see that there are a lot of decisions that have to be made at this point. First of all, I had to decide whether to use a quantitative or a qualitative method when conducting the research. The difference between these two methods will be discussed further below. After that I had to decide on which research design to use. Both of these decisions are based on the purpose of the study, in other words: what is it that I want to accomplish with the survey I am conducting.

4.3.1 A quantitative or qualitative approach?

When giving a general overview of the research process I referred to quantitative and qualitative methods. These terms are not something that is entirely agreed upon. According to Grønmo (2007) we should talk about quantitative and qualitative data rather than methods, as, according to him, it is the data that set these two apart. He says that data presented as numbers are quantitative and data presented with words are qualitative data (Grønmo, 2007, p. 74). Ragin (1994) differentiates a little differently. He says that data collected from few cases where many aspects of each case is presented are qualitative whereas data collected from many cases where only a few aspects of each case are presented are quantitative (Ragin, 1994, p. 49). In other words, qualitative research looks more thoroughly at each case and has as its goal to highlight many aspects of the phenomenon that is being researched whereas quantitative research is focused on a limited number of aspects of one phenomenon and how many respondents that answered this way or that way.

Despite of this disagreement with regards to the terms I will continue using the term quantitative and qualitative methods, as in my opinion there is more than the data that set these two approaches apart. They are also, as Ragin points out, separated by the purpose of the research. Do we want a large number of respondents so that we can generalize the findings or do we want to describe a phenomenon in the way that it is perceived by individuals? Do we want to develop new theories and hypotheses or do we want to test already developed theories and hypotheses? If our goal is to develop new theories a qualitative method is better suited, however, if we want to test already existing theories a quantitative approach would be a better choice (Grønmo, 2007, p. 92).

In this way the purpose behind the research then determines how we collect the data. If we look to Ragin's definition we find that when choosing to take a quantitative approach we need many respondents whereas when choosing a qualitative approach we need only a few informants. For the latter method we, for example, can use in-depth interviews or

observation as methods for collecting data. In a quantitative approach this would not only be impractical, due to the sheer number of respondents, the chances are it would not suit the purpose of the survey in the best way possible either. A better and more suitable approach for a quantitative study would perhaps be to distribute a questionnaire.

As we can see the most prominent difference between these two methods is the purpose of the survey. As for my own survey I was interested in finding out more about reading in upper secondary school, with regards to what is read, how it is taught and what the teachers' attitudes towards the teaching of reading is. In my opinion, both a qualitative and a quantitative method would be well suited for this. However, I chose to use a qualitative method of research. This choice was mainly based on an interest in giving an in depth description of how reading is worked upon and what the teachers' thoughts on the subject are. I was also sceptical to whether or not it would be possible to represent all the alternative answers to this into one questionnaire and I wanted to present as many aspects of the phenomenon of reading in upper secondary school as possible. In addition to this I had also been warned by fellow master students and my thesis supervisor that the response rate on other quantitative studies had been low. In other words it was a choice based both on the intended purpose of the survey and on practical considerations.

4.3.2 Choice of qualitative research design

Having decided on a qualitative approach to my survey, the next step was to decide on which qualitative research design to use. The first thing that needs to be addressed here is the definition of the term research design. Ragin defines the term this way: "Research design is a plan for collecting and analyzing evidence that will make it possible for the investigator to answer whatever questions he or she has posed." (Ragin, 1994, p. 191). His definition focuses on collecting and analyzing data in order to answer the research questions.

Johannessen has a somewhat wider definition of the term. He defines it as: "How a survey is organised and conducted in order to answer the research question: from idea, arriving at a research question, collecting data, data analysis and interpretation to final result" (My translation Johannessen et.al, 2006, p. 347). This definition also brings in the stages of the

research that occur before and after the collection and analysis of the data, and is therefore the definition I have chosen to use in this thesis.

That being said, there are a number of different research designs within the field of qualitative research. When choosing which qualitative research design to use it is important to keep the purpose of the research in mind. Do we want to explain, predict, evaluate or understand the phenomenon we are researching? My goal was to understand and describe the situation in upper secondary with regards to reading. This left me with four possible qualitative research designs: Grounded theory, Case design, Ethnographic design and Phenomenology (Johannessen et. al, 2006, p. 88).

As the goal for Ethnographic design is to describe a group of people or a culture and through analysis discover patterns, typologies and categories, this was never an option (Johannessen et. al, 2006, p. 83). I did not want to describe English teachers as a group, I wanted to find out what their practice and opinions with regards to reading were. The goal for research with a Grounded Theory design is to develop new theories, and because of this it was not a suitable design for this survey either (Johannessen et. al, 2006, p. 82). Although I speculate in how the situation with regards to reading can be improved my goal is not to develop new theories, it is rather to describe the situation today as presented by my informants. This left me with only two research designs to choose between: Phenomenology and Case design. These two will be further described below.

Phenomenology:

“As a qualitative research design a phenomenological approach has as its’ goal to research and describe people and their experience with and understanding of a phenomenon” (My translation Johannessen et. al, 2006, p. 80). In my case the phenomenon I wanted to study was reading in upper secondary school. I wanted to describe the informants’ experiences with teaching reading and how they understand reading. In order to accomplish this I had go into the field to collect data. According to Johannessen a suitable method for collecting data

when using a phenomenological research design is to conduct interviews (Johannessen 2006, p. 88).

Case study:

The other option I was left with was a Case Study Design. Case Studies are best suited to answer how and why questions (Johannessen et. al, 2006, p. 84). If we look at my research question, “Reading in upper secondary; what is read, how is it taught and what are the teachers’ attitudes towards it?”, one part is a how question. This would suit a Case Design well, however, I interviewed a total of 13 informants and presenting each one as a separate case would, in my opinion, not the best way to describe the phenomenon of reading. With 13 informants there would be too much data to present and too many cases to compare individually. In my opinion the sheer amount of data would make it difficult for a reader to see general patterns and similarities across the entire selection of informants. Based on this I decided to use a phenomenological research design, as this would make it easier for the reader of the thesis to see similarities and differences across the entire group of informants. However, I have also decided to present two case studies. I will get back to how and why this was done when going through the presentation of the data below.

4.4 Collecting data

Having established that I was going to use a qualitative method of research and a phenomenological research design I now needed to decide on a method of collecting data within the limitations of these previous decisions. When looking through the theory of the area I found that interviews with between 5 and 25 informants is the most common approach within these boundaries (Johannessen et. al, 2006, p. 81). This suited my research question well and so I decided to use this method of collecting data. I will go through all the stages of collecting data below. What will be presented is:

1. The qualitative research interview, focusing on semi-structured interviews

2. Constructing an interview guide
3. How the informants were chosen
4. How I conducted the interviews
5. A presentation of each informant and their schools

4.4.1 The qualitative research interview; focusing on semi-structured interviews

The area of qualitative research interviews can be divided into three different approaches to the interview process: unstructured, semi-structured and structured interviews. These are differentiated both by the interview process itself, but also by the preparations for the interviews. When conducting an unstructured interview the topic is set in advance, but the questions are adapted to each interview situation individually. With a semi-structured interview the researcher has prepared an interview guide in advance, however, the questions, topics and the order of the questions can easily be varied from interview to interview, moving back and forth within the interview guide. With a structured interview both the topic and the questions are written down in advance and the order of the questions is set (Johannessen, 2006, p. 137).

I decided on using a semi-structured approach when conducting the interviews for my survey, and therefore, this is the approach I will concentrate on in this chapter. Semi-structured interviews are also called interviews based on an interview guide. This interview guide is not a questionnaire; it is rather a list of topics and general questions that are to be discussed during the interview. These topics are, naturally, based on the research questions we want to answer. In the interview guide the topics are presented in logical order, however, as mentioned above, the order can easily be changed if another topic is brought forward by the informant. Johannessen claims that this creates a good balance between standardisation and flexibility (Johannessen et. al, 2006, p. 139).

This mix of standardisation and flexibility is, in fact, the main reason why I chose this approach for my own survey. The fact that I would have to analyse my findings was always in the back of my mind, and in order to make this process a little easier on myself I did not want to use unstructured interviews. I feared that this technique would make the interviews difficult to compare, and that I might possibly be left unsuccessful in my attempt at answering the research questions. On the other hand, I did want the opportunity to follow up and use information volunteered by the informants. In fact, some quite interesting points came up in this manner. In other words a structured approach would not be suitable either. However, I did want something that would keep me focused and make sure that all the informants reported on the same topics, and so, in my opinion, the semi-structured interview with an interview guide suited the purpose perfectly.

4.4.2 Constructing an interview guide

My next step was to construct an interview guide. The purpose of an interview guide is, as mentioned above, to ensure that the information given by the informants will help answer the research questions, and to ensure that all the topics connected to the research question is covered. I looked to the theory of the area and found that the first thing I had to do was to divide the research question into separate topics (Johannessen et.al, 2006, p. 139). As mentioned above my research question is: “Reading in upper secondary; what do they read, how is it taught, and what are the teachers’ attitudes towards the teaching of reading?” I decided to divide this into these five topics:

1. Reading; what and how much is read?
2. Reading strategies
3. The teachers’ attitudes
4. Literary and computer resources
5. Reading in the LK06 (For the entire interview guide, see Appendix 1).

Under each of these five topics I wrote down a number of related questions. These questions worked as a safety net for me. They helped me keep the interviews focused and also ensured that there were no long pauses in the interviews. For the exact layout of my interview guide see Appendix 1.

4.4.3 Choosing the informants

The next step in preparing for the interviews was to decide how to choose the informants and how many informants to choose. Due to the research question, there were certain base criteria that the informants had to meet. The main, and only absolute criteria, was that they had to be formally qualified English teachers employed in upper secondary school. Apart from this I tried to get both male and female informants of various ages with a varying amount of experience. These were the criteria I decided to base my choice on, however, as will be discussed further below, it was only by chance that I actually managed to gather a group of informants that met all of the above mentioned criteria. Next, I had to decide how many informants to interview. In cooperation with my thesis supervisor, I decided on a total of 15 informants. This proved difficult, and, as we shall see below, I only managed to get 13 informants in all.

These informants were located in the following ways. I e-mailed several schools to see whether or not there were any English teachers that would volunteer for my project. Using this method I located only two informants. The next strategy I tried was to ask fellow students employed in upper secondary school whether or not they could ask some of their colleagues if they would be interested in volunteering for this project. This method gave me four more informants, however six informants was far from enough. The last seven informants were located based on tips from my thesis supervisor, who, luckily, had a number of contacts he was willing to let me use in order to round up a sufficient number of informants. All this taken into consideration, this selection of informants qualifies as a convenience sample. Even though I used all the informants I could get, they all qualified

with regards to the only absolute criteria I had set in advance; being formally qualified English teachers employed in upper secondary school.

As mentioned above I had a total of 13 informants. However, due to research ethical considerations I had to drop one informant. This was due to the fact that he did not provide any information on the subject of reading or reading strategies and that he, because of this was not qualified as an informant. In addition to this it would have been cruel, and might have been considered harassment, had I published other information that came up during this particular interview. In other words, even though I conducted 13 interviews, this thesis is only based on 12 of them. Of these 12 informants five are male and seven female. They have between one and 25 years of experience and their ages vary from the late twenties to the early sixties. In other words there is a large variation within this relatively small group of informants. Below I will give a brief presentation of each informant and their schools. These 12 informants are employed at 11 different upper secondary schools located in various parts of the country.

4.4.4 Conducting the interviews

Now that I had a group of informants and an interview guide, the next step was to conduct the interviews. In this section I will present the practical aspect of the research process with regards to the location for the interviews, how they were documented and the languages in which they were conducted. As mentioned above I interviewed 13 informants, but in the end I only used 12 as a basis for this thesis. It is these 12 interviews that will be discussed further below.

Location:

As 11 out of 12 interviews were done face to face, the first thing I had to do was to find a location. I decided to leave this up to the informants, as, according to Johannessen, the most important aspects of choosing a location is to find a location where the informants feel comfortable and that is convenient for them to get to (Johannessen et.al, 2006, p. 142). In addition to this I hoped that my effort to make it as convenient as possible for them would make more informants willing to take part in my project. A total of eight informants chose to be interviewed at their place of employment, two chose different educational institutions as locations and one informant was interviewed over the telephone.

Language:

The next thing to decide on was whether to do the interviews in English or Norwegian. Again I chose to leave this up to the informants to decide. 11 of 12 informants chose to do the interview in Norwegian, one chose English. The informant that chose to do the interview in English is also a native speaker of English and so felt more comfortable speaking English than Norwegian.

Documentation:

During the interview I used a digital recorder in order to document the interviews. I asked each informant whether or not they felt comfortable with this and all 12 agreed. The interviews lasted between 25 and 60 minutes. In addition to that I brought along a copy of the interview guide that I could make notes on as we went along. After each interview I went home and immediately wrote down notes on my impression of the interview and the informant. I also transcribed each interview in full text to serve as a basis for the presentation and analysis of the data. All transcripts were written in the language used during the interview.

4.4.5 A presentation of the informants and their schools

Having presented the practical aspects of the interview process with regards to choice of location, language and how to document the interviews I will now proceed to give a brief presentation of each informant, with regards to their education, experience, whether or not they have had any long stays in an English speaking country, how comfortable they feel speaking English in class, and the schools they work at. In this presentation the informants have been named according to gender, however, to ensure their anonymity, they have all been given pseudonyms.

Kjell:

Kjell has a Master's degree in English with History and Media as his subsidiary subjects. In addition to that he has one year of Pedagogy. His teaching subjects are English, History and Media. He has four and a half years of teaching experience, four of which have been at his current place of employment. When it comes to long stays abroad he has had none, however, he still feels quite comfortable speaking English in the classroom, except when he has to deliver important messages. In these situations he repeats the message three times, twice in English and then once in Norwegian to make sure that everyone understands. Kjell works at a school which only offers classes in the general studies branch. With regards to his pupils he says that they are not as motivated as they were a few years ago, something he believes is connected to the fact that the criteria for being accepted to the school has decreased over the past few years.

Mary:

This informant is the only native speaker of English, and so naturally, she feels more comfortable speaking English than Norwegian in class. Her pupils speak only English too. Mary is a highly educated woman with a masters' degree in French and English from a university in the UK. She has also got one year of pedagogy from a different UK university. After moving to Norway she had to take some complementary classes in English in order to qualify as an English teacher in the Norwegian school system. Mary has a total of 18 years of teaching experience, three of which were in the UK and 15 in Norway. She is very happy

with both the school and her pupils, and feels that they are motivated to learn. This school offers both general studies and Athletics.

Hege:

Hege has a bachelor degree in English, history and religion and her teaching subjects are English as well as Religion and Ethics. She has two years teaching experience. She has had no long stays abroad, but never the less feels comfortable speaking English in class herself, however, she feels that the pupils are insecure in speaking English, and that they sometimes have difficulties understanding her. When she feels that her students are having difficulties understanding her she switches to Norwegian. At her school there is a large percentage of pupils with a different cultural background than Norwegian. For some of these pupils English is not their second language, but third or fourth, and they have not received as much English instruction earlier as the pupils who have followed the Norwegian school system from grade 1. The huge variation in language proficiency is a challenge for her, as she has to adapt her teaching to every level of proficiency from almost no knowledge of English, to pupils with very good English skills.

Morten:

My next informant is the most broadly educated of the group. He is a Cand Philol with English, Greek, Latin, Sanskrit and philosophy as his subjects. He is currently teaching Latin in addition to English, and has three years of teaching experience. In addition to his degree in English he has spent a year in the United States. He says that although he speaks mostly English in class, his pupils speak quite a bit Norwegian. Morten is currently employed at an upper secondary school that offers both vocational and general studies branches. In his opinion, his pupils have a good level of English skills and are motivated to learn. He has recently discovered that his pupils enjoy reading more than he thought they did, and because of this has decided to have them read more in class from now on.

Tone:

Tone is educated at a teachers college, where she did two years of Information Technology and one year of Mathematics. In addition to that she is currently writing her Master's thesis, in English. Her subjects are English and Media. When asked she says that some years ago she spent a year in the UK, however, despite of this, she later informs me that she does not feel comfortable speaking English in class and that her pupils speak mostly Norwegian. Tone feels that her pupils are not motivated enough. She says that they spend too much time working, and too little time on their homework. In her opinion, this is not just the case for English, but for all school subjects. The school she is employed at offers both vocational and general studies branches.

Catherine:

This informant has a very different opinion from Tone with regards to her pupils. She says that the school she is employed at is the best in the area and that the pupils are very motivated. She also feels that they have a good level of English proficiency with regards to their communicational skills, but that they do not read enough outside of school, and that because of this their reading proficiency is not as good as she would have wanted. When asked about her education, she informs me that she has a Bachelor degree in English and Social Sciences. She has one year of teaching experience. Catherine has had no long stays in English speaking countries, however, she is not a native speaker of Norwegian, and informs me that she is more comfortable speaking English than Norwegian in class. The only exception is grammar. This is always taught in Norwegian, because, according to her, the pupils do not understand the English terms.

Susanne:

Susanne is employed at the same school as Catherine, and shears her colleague's opinion with regards to the school and the pupils. She has a Cand Mag degree in History and Religion from a Norwegian university, and a Master's degree in European Culture, Politics and Administration from a UK university. Her long stay in the UK for her master's degree

has led to her being very comfortable speaking English in class, but, as her colleague, she teaches grammar in Norwegian. Susanne has one year of teaching experience.

Helene:

My next informant holds a Master's degree with English as her major and History as her subsidiary subject. She teaches both History and English, and has five years of teaching experience. During her education she spent one term at a university in the UK, and says that she is comfortable speaking English in class herself, but that her pupils speak mostly Norwegian. She estimates that 60% of her teaching is done in English. Helene is employed at a school that offers both general studies and vocational branches, and she feels that her pupils are not entirely motivated to learn. She says that they often rush through texts and claim to have finished even though they have not understood.

Petter:

Petter has a Cand Philol degree with English as his major and Geography and History as subsidiary subjects. This year he teaches English and Geography. He is a very experienced teacher with 25 years experience. Some years ago, before starting as a teacher, Petter spent a year in the US. In addition to this he has spent three to six weeks every summer for the past 15 years in the UK teaching Norwegian teenagers English. He feels very comfortable speaking English, as a matter of fact, he is the only one of my informants who says that he actually enjoys it. His pupils speak mostly English too. Petter teaches English in both general studies and vocational classes, and feels that his pupils are motivated to learn. However, he does say that the pupils in the general studies classes are more motivated than the pupils in the vocational classes at the beginning of the year. The way he approaches this problem is to choose texts for his vocational classes that are closely linked to their chosen profession.

Siri:

My next informant has a Cand Mag degree with English, Norwegian and history as her subjects. These are also the subjects she is teaching at her current place of employment. She has 15 years experience as a teacher. Siri has had no long stays in English speaking countries, however she did spend some time in the UK in combination with her English degree. She claims that she speaks mostly English in class, however she modifies this a little later when she says that she switches to Norwegian when they are discussing difficult topics or working on grammar in class. This is to make sure the pupils understand, not because she feels uncomfortable herself. She says that she is not too happy with the pupils' levels of English proficiency from lower secondary school, and that this creates a problem for her when teaching in upper secondary school. She feels that the pupils have often been given too good grades in lower secondary school, and that their motivation quite often falters when they see that their grades deteriorate.

Fredrik:

This informant is a highly educated man with a Cand Philol degree with German as his major and English and History as subsidiary subjects. These are also his teaching subjects. He has nine years of teaching experience. Fredrik has spent one year in the UK and he feels very comfortable speaking English in class. In fact he is the only native Norwegian teacher who reports that both he and his pupils speak only English in class. According to him there is only one exception to this rule and that is if one of the pupils needs medical attention and finds it difficult to express this in English. Fredrik is employed at a school that only offers the general studies branch. He says that he has highly motivated pupils with a very good level of English proficiency. His pupils are very ambitious and work hard to get good grades, in order to be able to qualify for higher education.

Thomas:

Thomas has a Cand Mag degree with English, German and history as his subjects. He is currently writing a master's thesis in English at a university here in Norway. His teaching subjects are Social Sciences, History, English and German. Thomas has 15 years of teaching

experience. He has had no stays of any duration in English speaking countries, however despite this he feels comfortable speaking English and says that he speaks mostly English in class. Again the exception is grammar, this is sometimes taught in Norwegian. He does not give me much information with regards to his pupils or the school, but says that the pupils are motivated and that the school offers both vocational and general studies branches.

To sum up, I have now given an overview of how I collected the data that I have based my results on. I have looked at how I prepared for the interviews: how the interview guide was constructed and how the informants were chosen. I have given a brief outline of some of the most important aspects of conducting the interviews, and I have presented both the informants' schools and the informants themselves. This process rendered me with a large amount of data. Next, I am going to look into the process of analysing these data.

4.5 Data analysis

When conducting qualitative research we are often left with huge amounts of data. In order to be able to analyse these data the first thing we have to do is to categorise them. This process is called coding in the literature of the area, and means that based on the research question we decide on central topics that we see as important in order to shine a light on the overall research question, and categorise the data according to this. These topics are then used as codes to mark where in the material we find information regarding this specific category (Leiulfstrud & Hvinden, 2007 p. 230-231). This process, with regards to my own survey, is what will be presented below.

4.5.1 Coding qualitative data

As mentioned above I used semi structured interviews to gather the data I needed in order to write this thesis. The term semi structured can lead readers to believe that the transcribed data will also be semi structured and thus easily comparable, however, this is not the case. As mentioned previously in this chapter one main aspect of semi structured interviewing is flexibility; the order in which the topics are introduced varies from interview to interview depending on the information given by the respective informant (Leiulfsrud & Hvinden, 2007, p. 230). This makes the process of coding the information vital.

I started this process by deciding which and what kind of codes to use. With regards to the kind of codes, I decided on descriptive codes. These are codes that describe the content of the paragraph that is being coded, rather than connecting the content to theories of the area. The reason why I decided on this technique is that it is better suited when the purpose of the coding is to get a general overview of the data, rather than to interpret the data in connection to theories written by others (Leiulfsrud & Hvinden, 2007, p. 232). As will be shown when I present my survey I started by giving a general overview of the results from my survey in chapter 5 and 6 before moving on to discuss the results in view of results from other surveys and theories of reading in chapter 7.

When I had decided on which kind of codes to use I had to decide on the actual codes themselves. In order to keep an overview of all the information gathered it is important not to use too many codes. The other thing I had to focus on was what kind of information that was the most relevant to the research question (Leiulfsrud & Hvinden, 2007, p. 231). I decided on these codes:

1. Background information
2. Amount of reading
3. Reading strategies

4. Attitudes
5. Resources
6. Reading in LK06

The first code relates to information with regards to the informants' education, teaching experience, stays abroad and how comfortable they feel speaking English. This code is not directly based on the research question, however the background information helps shine a light on other information given by the informants. The second code marks out where the informants give information on what is read in class. The third code was used for marking how reading was taught, and the fourth to mark out where statements from the informants showed what their attitudes towards this teaching are. Looking at code five, it might seem that this has little or nothing to do with the research question, however I asked about the resources in order to see whether the amount of reading was at all connected to the resources available at the individual schools. The last code was used to mark out where the informants gave information on whether or not their teaching practise with regards to reading had changed at all after the LK06 syllabus was put into action, and also how they worked on specific learning objectives connected to this syllabus.

I went through all the transcribed interviews using these codes and then gathered all the information with regards to each code on a separate sheet, marking every paragraph with which informant the information came from. In this way I was able to get a good overview of the situation with regards to each of these separate codes, which in turn made me able to give an overall picture of the situation in upper secondary school with regards to reading as it was presented to me by my informants.

To sum up, we see that it is the sheer amount of data gathered that is the main challenge when analysing qualitative data. When using semi structured interviews the different topics and questions will occur at different stages of the interview, and it is therefore impossible to lay out the interviews next to each other and compare them paragraph by paragraph. The

analysis is most commonly done by coding the interviews and comparing the information given under each code by each individual informant with each other. This is the technique I used when analysing the data for my survey. Having done this the next step is to present the data in an orderly fashion that will be understandable to the reader. How I chose to do this will be presented below.

4.6 Presenting the data

All the data gathered during the interviews had now been sorted according to code. The next thing that needed to be done was to decide how to present these data so that readers of the survey would be able to understand them. I decided on using two different methods of presentation. First I gave a comparative analysis of all the information from all the interviews, before moving on to presenting two cases. One of these case studies is a composite case put together by me on the basis of 11 of the informants. The other is a regular case study of one informant and how he works on reading. I will go through both the comparative analysis and the two case studies below.

4.6.1 A comparative analysis

The first thing that needs to be addressed here is what a comparative analysis is. Looking to the theory of the area I find that the goal for a comparative analysis is to compare cases in order to find similarities and differences between these cases with regards to different topics (Ragin as cited in Sivesind, 2007, p. 250). What this means is that I have to look at what all the informants said about, for example reading strategies, and compare their answers looking for similarities and differences. This is what I have done in chapter 5 where I present the results of my survey.

In order to present the information in a way that is understandable and easy to read I divided chapter 5 into these five sections:

1. Background information
2. What and how much is read?
3. Reading strategies
4. What are the teachers' attitudes towards the teaching of reading?
5. What literary and computer resources are available?
6. How are specific aims from the LK06 syllabus worked on?

As we can see these six topics are directly related to the codes I chose to use when sorting the data from my interviews. Next, I went through all these topics giving an analysis of what the informants answered with regards to each topic separately and then I compared their answers looking for similarities and/or differences between them. These were then presented to the reader. My intention with this analysis was to give an overview of how reading is worked on by my informants.

Having done this I found that a total of nine informants hardly worked on reading at all, and that the main reason given for this was that there was not enough time. I also found that one informant worked extensively on reading and reading strategies within the time frame of the subject. This was something I discovered during this analysis and therefore wrote a case study of the informant who worked on reading to compare him to the rest of the informants. I will go through the case studies in section 4.6.2 below.

4.6.2 Two case studies

As mentioned above I decided to write two case studies in order to see what the informant who found the time to work on reading and reading strategies in class did differently from the other informants. I started by looking at this informant, here named Fredrik, using the original transcript of the interview. I no longer used the coded material, as the goal here was

to give a detailed description of only one informant, showing what he did in order to find the time to work on reading. Having written the case study I decided that I needed to compare this case study to another in order to be able to point out the differences between him and the others clearly.

At first I decided to write a case study of just one other informant, however, after having done that I reconsidered. Most of the informants I interviewed answered the questions on how they worked on reading quite similarly, and I started to think that it would be wrong to use just one of the informants to portray all of the nine informants that do not work to any extent on reading. I discussed it with my thesis supervisor and he recommended that I write a composite case based on the answers from all these informants in order to show how their work on reading differs from the work done by Fredrik. I decided to name the fictitious informant of this composite case Joakim. In order to write this case study I had to go back and use the coded transcriptions again, as there were too many interviews that were to be included in this case study for me to be able to use the original transcript.

Having written both case studies I proceeded to compare and contrast them. This was done to show how Fredrik's teaching differed from the composite case, and more importantly how he found the time to work extensively on reading within the time frame of the subject when the others did not.

To sum up, I used both a comparative analysis and case study description in order to present the data from my survey. The goal for the comparative analysis was to give a general overview of what the situation, with regards to reading, is like in upper secondary school today, based on information given by my informants. The goal for the case studies on the other hand was to give a practical example of how reading can be worked extensively on within the limitations of the subject. In order to show this I wrote one composite case study and one case study of a single informant and compared them in order to show clearly how the teaching practise differed.

4.7 Can we trust the results?

Having gone through the entire research process from the very beginning and all the way through to the presentation of the results there is still one final issue that needs to be discussed and that is whether or not the results can be trusted.. When evaluating whether or not the results of a qualitative research are trustworthy there are four issues that need to be discussed. These are:

1. Reliability
2. Construct validity
3. Transferability
4. Confirmability

These four issues, with regards to my own survey, will be discussed further below.

4.7.1 Reliability

According to Johannessen reliability in a research process is more connected to quantitative research than qualitative, however, he does say that there are ways in which we can increase the reliability of qualitative research as well. The term reliability refers to whether or not we can trust the data we have gathered. In quantitative research reliability can be tested by having a second researcher analyse the data and see if he or she reaches the same conclusion as you did, or by conducting a second survey. This is not possible with qualitative data. It is not likely that a second researcher would reach the exact same conclusion as you when going through the data you gathered and it is not likely either that you would get the exact same results if you did a second survey (Johannessen et. al, 2006, p. 198).

As mentioned above, however, there are some things that can be done in order to increase the reliability of the research. The researcher can describe the context of the research to the reader, and he or she can give the reader a detailed description of the research process

(Johannessen et al, 2006 p. 198). In my opinion, I have done both in this chapter. I have given a description of the context, where the interviews were conducted in addition to a short description of the schools and the informants' backgrounds. I have also given a detailed description of the research process from start to finish where I have explained the reasons for my choices and based these on theories of social research. In other words it is my opinion that I have done what I could to ensure the reliability of the results from my survey, keeping in mind that it is a qualitative and not a quantitative survey.

4.7.2 Construct validity

Construct validity is also a term most commonly connected with quantitative research, where it is concerned with whether or not we measure what we think we measure. In qualitative research, however, the goal is not to measure how many respondents answered this way or that way, and so the definition of the term has to be changed somewhat in order to apply to qualitative research. Within the field of qualitative research the definition of construct validity has been redefined as: “[...] to what degree our observations depict the phenomena or variables that are of interest to us” (My translation Pearson as cited in Johannessen et al, 2006, p. 199).

The phenomenon I wanted to research was reading in upper secondary school. In order to do that I conducted 13 interviews, of which 12 were used as a basis for this thesis. In my opinion, the information gathered in these interviews represents the reality of the phenomenon as seen by my informants. I could have increased the construct validity by using a method called triangulation, in other words using more than one method to research the phenomenon (Johannessen et al, 2006, p. 199). In my case I could have used both interviews and observation. This would have given me an opportunity to see whether or not the information given by my informants represents the reality, with regards to how they teach. However, within the limitations of this thesis that would have been too time consuming, with 13 informants to interview and observe. I would have had to observe their teaching practise over time, and not just for one or two lessons in order to increase the construct validity of the survey.

4.7.3 Transferability

The term transferability relates to whether or not the results from this survey can be transferred to other related phenomena (Johannessen et al, 2006, p. 200). First of all we need to keep the phenomenon I researched in mind: reading in English class in upper secondary school in Norway. The results are based on answers by only 12 informants, in other words a rather small group compared to the total amount of English teachers employed in upper secondary school in Norway. However, as I analysed the data I found that a total of nine informants answered the questions on reading and reading strategies very similarly. These informants did not work consciously on reading or reading strategies. It is not possible, based on so few informants, to say that this gives a correct picture of the situation with regards to reading in upper secondary school in all of Norway. However, as so many informants answered similarly it seems that I might have uncovered a problem that is interesting enough to merit a follow up research with more respondents to see whether or not the trend I seem to have uncovered is the same throughout the country.

In other words, I do not believe that the results from my survey can be transferred to other groups and phenomena without further research. However, based on the interviews I have conducted and the similar way in which nine informants answered the questions, I do believe that we can say that there is a tendency in English class in Norwegian upper secondary school to not work consciously and extensively on reading, and that this should definitely be followed up in a large scale study.

4.7.4 Confirmability

This term relates to whether the results of the survey is a result of the research itself or a result of the researcher's subjective attitude towards the phenomenon (Johannessen et al, 2006, p. 201). When starting this research I did not know what to expect. I had, of course, studied theories and research of the area before constructing the interview guide, however,

none of these had the angle that my research did. I was interested in how reading was taught, not the result of this teaching. In other words I investigated the teaching and not how it affected the pupils. Going through the data I had collected I was surprised to see how negative the results were, this is an indication to me that I did not project my subjective opinions on the data, but interpreted it as it was told by the teachers. Had I projected my opinions onto the data, the results would not have been surprising.

To sum up, in my opinion I have done what I could to ensure the reliability, construct validity and confirmability of my research, however I do not think that the results are transferable to other phenomena than reading in English in upper secondary school. In addition to this it is my opinion that I have too few informants to generalise the findings to the country as a whole, however I do believe that I have uncovered a tendency with regards to how reading is taught in upper secondary school that is interesting enough to merit further investigation.

4.8 Chapter summary

In this chapter I have given an overview of all the four stages of my research process, starting with the preparation, moving on to how the data was collected and analysed and ending up in the presentation of the data. Throughout this presentation I have gone through the choices I have made and given reasons for these choices. All of this has been done in order to increase the reliability of the survey. Lastly, I have discussed whether or not the results of the survey can be trusted.

5. Introduction

In this chapter I present the findings from my interviews. As my informants' backgrounds have been presented in detail in chapter 4 above I will for convenience just give a short summary. Next, I will present the information with regards to the different aspects of reading and teaching reading that was provided by my informants. When doing this I have chosen to present my findings thematically, grouping the data into five different topics. These are: reading, reading strategies, the teachers' attitudes towards the teaching of reading, resources and learning objectives from LK06. Last, I will give a short summary of the results presented in detail earlier in this chapter.

5.1 The informants and their backgrounds

In this section I will give a short summary of my informants' backgrounds. Their backgrounds with regards to language proficiency and education are important because it can bring some clarification as to why the informants gave the answers they gave, and what background these answers are based on. To find out about their backgrounds I had asked the following four questions:

1. What kind of education do you have?
2. How many years of teaching experience do you have?
3. Have you stayed for any length of time in an English speaking country? Length of time is here defined as three months or more.
4. How comfortable are you speaking English in the classroom?

Question 4 is not really a question of the informants' backgrounds as it has little to do with their formal competence, but rather call for them to speculate on their own language abilities. However, I think that their answer to this question in particular shines a light on some of their later answers, and therefore, that it is important for readers of this survey to have an insight into this when they read the rest of my findings. In table 5.1 below I present an overview of the informants' backgrounds.

Table 3 An overview of the teachers' education, experience, stays abroad and how comfortable they are speaking English.

Education		Experience		Stays abroad		Comfortable	
Master/Cand Philol	7	1-5 years	6	None	5	Native speaker	1
Bachelor/Cand Mag	5	6-10 years	1	6 months	1	Very comfortable	4
		11-15 years	2	1 year	4	Comfortable	6
		16-20 years	1	1.5 years	0	Not comfortable	1
		20-25 years	1	2 years	1		

As can be seen in table 5.1, these 12 teachers are a highly educated group of informants. Of my 12 informants five hold a Bachelor's degree, or the old Norwegian equivalent a Cand Mag degree, and out of these five two are currently writing their Master's theses, both in English. The last seven informants all have a Master's degree, or the old Norwegian equivalent a Cand Philol degree. When we look at the informants' teaching experience there is more variation. My informants have from one year to 25 years of experience.

Another background factor that varies greatly is how much time they have spent in English speaking countries. Five of my informants have had no long stays in English speaking countries at all, one spent six months at university in the UK, four have either lived or studied one year in an English speaking country, one wrote her master's thesis in the UK and one of my informants is a native speaker who grew up in England.

The next question is how comfortable they are speaking English in class, and whether or not this relates to how much time they have spent in English speaking countries. Based on their

answers, I have decided to divide them into four groups. The first group is the Exclusively English group. These teachers speak only English in class. In this group we find four of my informants, one of whom has never had a long stay in an English speaking country. Another is a native speaker of English. The next group is the all English with specific exceptions group. These are the informants who say that they speak only English, but that for instance grammar is taught in Norwegian. There are four informants in this group too. Interestingly there is only one informant in this group who has had a long stay in an English speaking country. However, one of the other three informants in this group is not a native speaker of Norwegian and therefore feels more comfortable speaking English than Norwegian. The next group is called mostly English, and here we find the last four informants. This is the group that claims that most of their teaching is done in English, but list more exceptions than one. Three of these informants have had long stays in an English speaking country, and out of these three one even says that she feels uncomfortable speaking English in class, but that she speaks mostly English anyways.

To sum up briefly, we see that all the informants are formally qualified teachers of English employed in upper secondary school, in other words, if we look back to chapter 4 of this thesis, they all meet the absolute criteria for qualifying as informants for this survey. Their teaching experience varies from one to 25 years. Six of them have spent between six months and two years in an English speaking country, and all but one report that they feel comfortable speaking English in class.

5.2 A presentation of my findings organised thematically

Having looked at the informants' backgrounds, I am now going to present their answers to my questions regarding reading and reading strategies. As mentioned above, I have decided to organise my findings thematically and have grouped my interview questions into five different areas:

1. Reading; what and how much is read?
2. Reading strategies.
3. What are the teachers' attitudes towards the teaching of reading?
4. What literary and computer resources are available?
5. How are specific competence aims from the LK06 syllabus worked on?

In the following I will go through each of these topics in the sequence they were mentioned here, and my findings connected to them, below.

5.3 Reading: what and how much is read?

When I started this survey the first thing I wanted to find out was what, and how much reading was taught in my informants' classes. I was interested in to what degree they depend on the textbook, whether or not they supplement it with texts of their own choice and if they do what kind of texts they use. Last but not least I wanted to find out whether or not they read any longer texts in addition to the textbook. To investigate this I asked the following questions:

1. Do you use the textbook? How and to what extent?
2. How much is read beside the textbook? What titles and genres?
3. Do you and your class find texts to read on the internet?

My findings on these questions will be dealt with below. My goal was, as mentioned, to find out what is actually happening in my informants classrooms and why they use the texts they do.

5.3.1 Do you use the textbook? How and to what extent?

Based on question one: “Do you use the textbook? How and to what extent?”, I have chosen to divide the informants into three groups. Group 1 relies heavily on the textbook: The textbook dictates their teaching, they cover the topics given in the textbook, in some cases chronologically, and do not supplement it to any degree with texts of their own choice, apart from one novel during the year. In this group we find five of my informants. I was surprised to find that so many of my informants rely on the textbook to this degree so I wanted to find out what the reason was. Most of them answered that the reason is that the textbooks are written to cover the syllabus, and by sticking to it they made sure that they covered it too. They also feel that this prepares the pupils for the exams they might have to take at the end of the year. Only one of my informants has another reason for relying on the textbook to this degree. She says that she is not satisfied with the textbook, but that she uses it to this extent because her pupils like it.

The second group uses the textbook a lot, but supplement it with more texts of their own choice. In this group we can find five of my informants. As with the first group it is their opinion that the book was written to cover the syllabus, which is why they should follow it. The main difference between these two groups is that where the first group follows the topics given in the textbook and use the texts in the textbook to cover these, the second group uses more texts of their own choice to cover the topics given in their textbooks. If they find the texts in the book unsatisfactory they supplement them with texts of their own choice. These teachers rely on their experience and education to find good texts and they think this is beneficial for their classes. The genres they report using are mostly newspaper articles, scientific articles and short stories in addition to the texts in the textbook.

In the third and last group we find the two last informants. These informants also use the textbook, but they do not let it dictate their teaching. They use some topics from the textbook and some of their own choice. In addition they supplement the textbook with a number of texts of their own choice. Nor do they follow the textbook chronologically like many of the informants in the two first groups do. These informants report that they supplement the textbook with short stories, scientific articles, poems, statistics, newspaper articles and plays.

5.3.2 How much is read beside the textbook? What titles and genres?

If we look at the second question “What and how much is read outside the textbook” this relates heavily to the question on to what extent they rely on the textbook. As we have seen above, most of my informants, seven to be correct, supplement the textbook to some degree. However, I also wanted to find out whether or not the informants use longer texts in their teaching or if it is mostly shorter texts they choose.

All but one informant report that their classes read one novel in addition to the textbook. None of my informants’ classes read more than one novel, but one informant had the class read an entire play in addition to the novel. As the novel is the only long text read in most of my informants’ classes I thought it would be interesting to look into how the informants work with this text. Most of my informants choose one class reader for the entire class when working on the novel, but the reasons behind this choice vary a lot. The most common reason given is that reading the same novel makes it easier to work with the novel in class, and that it can be of help to the weaker pupils when the stronger pupils talk about the book and analyse it in class. Another reason is that it is easier for the teacher to help the pupils understand the novel when they know it well themselves. A third reason given, by only one informant, however, is that when she lets the pupils read a novel of their own choice they often choose novels they have already read so that they do not have to read another one. A fourth reason, also given by just one informant, is that he wants to challenge his pupils to read something they would not otherwise have read.

If we look at how the informants work on the novel in class, this is for the most part very limited. The majority of them only have the pupils hand in a book report after reading, few set aside time for the pupils to read in class and in total most of them spend only between two and four lessons working on it. This, however, does not apply to two of my informants. They have found that the level of reading proficiency in their classes is so low that the pupils have to be guided through the entire novel to be able to finish it. In addition to that quite a few of the pupils had to switch to the easy reader version of the novel to be able to finish it at all. When these informants told their classes that they were going to read a novel the pupils were shocked. They thought reading one entire novel was too much reading for English class. In fact, this attitude towards reading among the pupils is reported by many of my informants. They also say that most of the pupils do not read to any extent outside of school.

Only two of my informants let the pupils read a novel of their own choice. One of these informants is very happy with the way this works, he says that this way the pupils get to read something that they find interesting and he believes that this can instil a joy of reading in them that a class reader can not. The other informant who lets the pupils choose their own novel is not so happy with it. She says that next year she is going to try a class reader instead. She feels that the pupils might be choosing novels they have read before. She also thinks that it will be easier for her to work on the novel in class if they all read the same one. This year the pupils gave an oral presentation after finishing the novel, however this is very time consuming and the informant does not feel that this reflects the pupils' English skills or whether or not they have understood the novel in a satisfactory way.

5.3.3 Do you and your class find texts to read on the internet?

As seen above a majority of the informants supplement the textbook with texts of their own choice to some degree. Next, I wanted to find out whether or not the informants utilize the internet to find these texts.

None of my informants use the internet to find texts for their classes, although all of them report that the pupils use the internet extensively when they are working on specific projects. They find the internet is a great resource when it comes to finding texts in English, especially if you are looking for scientific or newspaper articles, as it is continuously updated. The fact that all the informants see the internet as a great resource, but still do not use it made me wonder. This was something I could not get a clear answer to from my informants. Some of them thought that when the pupils were on the internet there were too many distractions and they believed that the pupils were not concentrating on the teaching. Some listed technical problems, such as a scarcity of power outlets or a limited internet access, as the reason for not utilizing the internet more in their teaching.

To sum up, most of my informants use the textbook extensively and do not supplement it much with texts of their own choice. There are, however, exceptions. Two of my informants use the textbook in a more critical manner. They look at the texts given in the textbook and decide whether or not to use them. If they do not find the texts satisfactory they supplement them with texts of their own choice. When I asked whether or not the informants had their classes read any longer texts outside the textbook the majority reported that they read one novel. Only one of my informants did not have the class read any long texts and, similarly, only one of the informants reported that in addition to the novel he had his class read a play as well. When I asked them about texts on the internet they reported that this was not something they used to any large degree to find texts or work on reading in class, however all of them saw the internet as a useful tool for information gathering in connection with specific projects. What became clear to me at this point is that there is actually not a lot of reading going on in the classes taught by my informants.

5.4 Reading strategies

Now that I have established what and how much (or how little) is read in class I wanted to proceed to finding out how the informants work with reading in class. Do they teach their pupils how to read or do they expect their pupils to already be proficient readers? The first thing I wanted to find out was whether or not the informants are aware of what reading strategies are. Next, I wanted to find out if this is something they teach their pupils. I was also interested in finding out how they did this or why they decided not to do this. To find out I asked the informants the following questions:

1. What does the term reading strategy mean to you?
2. Do you teach reading strategies to your class? How/Why not?

5.4.1 What does the term reading strategy mean to you?

This question was asked to establish whether or not the informants are aware of what reading strategies are. This was important to establish as it is impossible to teach something you do not know yourself.

All the informants have some understanding of what reading strategies are. They could all come up with some kind of definition of the term and give examples of reading strategies they use themselves. However, I found that most of them were very uncertain as to whether or not they had understood the term correctly. They were also very much in doubt when they were asked to give a definition of the term and found the question difficult to answer. There were a few exceptions to this. One of my informants had a very clear definition of what reading strategies are and besides mentioning the ones he uses when reading himself, he gave several examples of strategies he teaches his pupils. In addition to this informant two other informants had just been part of a reading project focused on reading strategies at their school. These informants had received courses on reading strategies only a few weeks before

the interview and were also very clear on what reading strategies are and they were also able to give some examples besides the strategies they use themselves.

The answers I got to this question were quite alarming to me. If the teachers are uncertain of what reading strategies are how can they teach them to their pupils? First of all this showed me that there is a need for more in service education among the teachers. They need to be aware of what reading strategies are and good ways to teach these strategies in order to be able to help their pupils become proficient readers. Secondly this made me wonder how and to what extent these teachers teach reading strategies to their pupils, which brings me to my next question.

5.4.2 Do you teach reading strategies to your class? How? Why not?

When I asked my informant this question I found that seven of them actually teach their pupils reading strategies to some extent. However, four of them report that this is not something they spend a lot of time on and they have no conscious plan behind this teaching. They work on reading strategies sometimes when they read in class and sometimes not. None of them know whether or not their pupils actually use these strategies when they are not specifically told to, or whether or not the pupils find these strategies helpful. These informants usually focus on different ways of reading a text adapted to the purpose for reading.

Another two of these informants teach reading strategies as a separate course and not as an integrated part of the everyday teaching. There is a conscious plan behind this teaching, but it is not followed up in the reading that takes place in the classroom every day. They also find it difficult to answer whether or not their pupils use the strategies they have been taught after they finish the course, but believe that they do use it to some extent. When asked whether or not the pupils find these strategies helpful, they are unable to answer.

The last of these informants teaches reading strategies to a large extent and as an integrated part of his everyday teaching. He has a clear goal for this work, to enhance text comprehension, and he has a clear and conscious plan for how to reach this goal. He also encourages the pupils to find out which strategies work best for them and to continue using these strategies when they are reading on their own. This informant has the pupils try a number of different strategies to better enable them to decide which ones to continue using. Most importantly, the teaching of reading strategies is an integrated part of this informant's teaching and not just a separate course.

As we saw above, seven of the informants work to some extent with reading and reading strategies. Now the question is what about the last five informants? These informants report that reading strategies is not something they work on in class. When I ask why the answers differ. One informant believes that this is something the pupils should know before starting upper secondary school. In other words, she does not see it as something she has to spend time on in class. Another one of the informants believes that this is something the pupils learn in Norwegian class and then transfer to reading in English. As this is something he already expects is being taught to his pupils, he does not see the need to spend time on it in English class. A third informant reports that she does not spend time on this in class as this is not something her school has decided to focus on. This informant is aware that her pupils are struggling to understand the texts, but still she does not work on reading strategies. She even says that the only strategy her pupils use is to rush through the text and say that they have finished regardless of whether or not they have understood the text. She reports that she feels guilty for not working on it, and that now that she has been made more aware of reading strategies she will probably change this next year. The last two informants in this group report that they cannot find the time to work on it. They claim that there is so much that has to be covered during the first year of upper secondary school that they feel pressed for time.

To sum up, I found that all the informants had some knowledge of what reading strategies are. They could all mention strategies they use themselves when reading and give some kind of definition of the term reading strategy. However, I found that the majority of the informants, all except for three, were very uncertain as to whether or not they had understood the term correctly. In addition, I found that out of the group of seven informants who work on reading strategies, all but three had no clear goal for the teaching of reading strategies and a very unclear idea of how best to do this. None of the informants, except for one, knew whether or not the pupils used the strategies taught in class when reading on their own or whether or not the pupils found them helpful. Having established what the situation is like with regards to the amount that is read and how reading is worked on, I wanted to find out more about the teachers' attitudes towards the teaching of reading. Could the attitudes towards reading be the reason why most of the informants work so little on it?

5.5 What are the informants' attitudes towards the teaching of reading and reading strategies?

In order to find the answer to this I asked my informants two questions:

1. Do you consider the teaching of reading strategies to be important?
2. Do you think that reading is suitable as a basic skill for English?

5.5.1 Do you consider the teaching of reading strategies to be important?

All of the informants reported that the teaching of reading strategies is something they consider important. I proceeded to ask the informants to embellish a little on why they think that. However, I found that many of the informants had trouble answering this question. It was clearly not something they had given a lot of thought to prior to the interview. In fact I

found that five of the 12 informants could not give an answer to why they feel that working on reading strategies is important. The answers they gave were ranged from that working on reading strategies is important because it helps enhancing the pupils vocabularies, that it gives the pupils a better feel for the language, and that it awakens the pupils as readers. In my opinion this is not something that is promoted directly through working on reading strategies, but rather through all kinds of reading, in English as well as other languages, that takes place in and outside of the classroom.

In addition to these five I found that three other informants answered that yes, they saw it as important to work on reading strategies, but they did not know to what extent they promoted it. Clearly this does not answer why they see reading strategies as important, however, it was all I could get them to say on the subject. In other words, I have a total of eight out of 12 informants who think that reading strategies are important, but who nevertheless do not know why they think so.

Next I have a group of three informants. In their opinion working on reading strategies is important because it promotes text comprehension. These three are all informants that work on reading strategies in class. One of these informants added that he feels that text comprehension is very important because it will be of great help for the pupils when they enter into higher education. The last of the 12 informants only reported that reading strategies are important for higher education, but did not elaborate on how it could be of help to the pupils.

5.5.2 Do you think that reading is suitable as a basic skill for English?

In order to further investigate the teachers' attitudes towards reading, I proceeded to ask them whether or not they think that reading is a suitable basic skill for English. If we look back to chapter 3 on syllabi, we see that reading is mentioned in the LK06 curriculum as one of four basic skills that are to be worked on in every school subject. When I asked my

informants this they all reported that they do see reading as a suitable basic skill for English, however, again, not all could give a reason why.

One of my informants only answered that yes she feels that reading is a suitable skill, but when I asked why she proceeded to talk about why mathematics is not a suitable basic skill for English. A second informant said that she believes reading is suitable as a basic skill for English, however she does not think that the teaching of reading is something she should have to focus on when she is teaching in upper secondary school. This is something she expects her pupils to know already.

The last ten informants were all able to give one or more reasons why reading is suitable as a basic skill. One said that being able to read is crucial in order to be a part of society as a whole, and that therefore reading is not only a suitable basic skill for English, but for all school subjects. One said that reading is important in order to enhance the pupils' vocabularies. Another listed vocabulary and a better feel for the language as a whole as reasons why reading is important. Three informants listed only a better feel for the language as reasons why reading is important in English. Another three said that reading proficiency is important for higher education and therefore reading is something that should be worked on in all school subjects. The last informant said that it is important to him to give the pupils an opportunity to find the same joy in reading as he himself does.

As we can see it is not easy, based on the answers they gave to my questions, to deduce what the teachers' attitudes towards the teaching of reading are. One thing I can say for certain, however, is that all of them think that reading is suitable as a basic skill for English, and that all 12 think that it is important to work on reading strategies in school. In other words the teachers do believe that reading is an important skill for their pupils, but far from all of them feel that it is their job as English teachers or teachers in upper secondary school to help the pupils develop this skill. Another thing that becomes quite clear during this part of the interview is that most of the informants do not know why they see reading and reading strategies as important. Most of them gave vague or unclear answers when I asked about this

and one just started talking about another basic skill instead. At this point it was becoming increasingly clear to me that these teachers might benefit from more in service training, both, as mentioned above, on how best to teach reading, but also on why reading is important.

5.6 What literary and computer resources are available at the school?

Next, I was interested in finding out what literary and computer resources are available to the informants and their pupils at these schools and whether or not there is any connection between how much they work on reading and the resources that are available to them. I asked the informants what they thought of the library, how many class readers were there available to them and what kind of computer access they have at their schools.

5.6.1 Libraries

If we start by looking at the libraries I have parted my informants into four groups based on their answers. The first, and by far the largest group, consists of eight of my informants. These eight all report that they have fantastic libraries available at their schools. They all praise the librarians for their helpfulness in assisting them and their pupils with finding relevant literature, and they all say that if they need something that is not in stock at the library the librarians do their best to acquire the material from other libraries . In the next group we find only one informant who reports that they have a well stocked library at school, however, the selection of literature in English is not as large as he would have liked. The next group also consists of one single informant who reports that they have a very poor library at school, and that he is not happy with the selection of books it carries. The last group, formed by two of my informants, report that their schools do not have libraries.

If we look at the number of class readers that are available to the teachers the informants spread themselves out a little bit differently. Six of my informants say that they have many

class readers to choose from, however, one of these six informants says that their selection of class readers is old and outdated. Three other informants say that they have too few class readers to choose between. Here too one of the informants reported that the selection is too old and outdated. My last three informants have no class readers available at school at all, they have to ask their pupils to either buy the novel or borrow it from a library while working on it.

5.6.2 Computers

Having found out what literary resources were available to the informants, I moved on to ask what kind of computer coverage they have at the different schools. The reason for this is that I believe that the internet is a great tool for finding supplementary texts to the textbook, and for the pupils to search for information on specific topics. One of my informants reports that they have very poor computer coverage at his school. He thinks that there are too few computer labs and that the school has too few laptops available for the pupils to borrow. It should be mentioned here that this is also one of the schools that has no library or class readers either and that there is a reason for this: the school is being closed down and so they do not think it necessary to invest a lot of money into literature and computer equipment. Five of my informants report that their pupils do not have individual laptops, but that they have enough computer labs available at the schools, and that it is no problem to reserve time in one of these if they want to. The last six informants all say that their students have personal laptops; however, two of them add that even so they do not get to use the computers in class as much as they would have liked to. In both cases this is due to a shortage of power outlets in the classrooms which makes it difficult for the pupils to charge the computers.

To sum up, most of my informants feel that there are good literary resources available for them at school. In fact one of the informants who report to having no class readers and no library at school is the informant that is the most focused on working with reading and reading strategies in class. On the other end of the scale we find that the informant who reported that they have a fantastic library at school, many class readers to choose from and

individual computers for all pupils, is one of the informants who does no work with reading strategies at all.

5.7 Reading in the LK06 syllabus

Next, I asked the informants how they had covered or were planning to cover four specific learning objectives directly related to reading. This was done both to cross check the answers the informants had given to other questions in the interview, and to see how the teachers understand the syllabus with regards to reading. The LK06 objectives I used were:

The pupils shall be able to

1. extract essential information from spoken and written texts and discuss the author's attitudes and point of view
2. select appropriate listening, speaking, reading and writing strategies adapted to the purpose, situation and genre
3. read formal and informal texts in various genres and with different purposes
4. select and use content from different sources independently, critically and responsibly (LK06, p.6)

Below I will start by giving a general description of how the informants reacted to this part of the interview, before going through their answers as to how they had covered or were planning to cover each objective.

5.7.1 General overview

The first thing that struck me when I showed these learning objectives to my informants was that most of them did not seem to have given them a lot of thought. They found it hard to

answer what they had done to cover these objectives and how they planned to continue covering these objectives during the remainder of the school year. I find the problems the informants were experiencing when asked to tell how they have worked to cover these objectives alarming, especially considering that my interviews were conducted between February and May, in other words when there were not many months left of the school year in which to work on the objectives that had not yet been covered. Only one of the informants had almost no problems telling me how he had worked on each of the objectives, the only issue was that he did not care for the wording of objective 3 and he got caught up in explaining this instead of how he had worked on the objective itself.

5.7.2 The pupils shall be able to extract essential information from spoken and written texts and discuss the author's attitudes and point of view

I will start by going through objective 1, the pupils shall be able to extract essential information from spoken and written texts and discuss the author's attitudes and point of view. I found that two of the informants say that the textbook covers it. They read the texts in the textbook and then answer the questions accompanying it. In doing so it is their opinion that they have covered this objective. Another four informants say that they work a lot on extracting information from a text in order to use it as a point of departure for discussions, however, they also say that they have not discussed the authors' attitudes or points of view. One of the informants says that extracting information from a text is something his pupils struggle with, however, it is not something they have worked a lot on. Interestingly, this is also one of the informants who reports that he does not work on reading strategies in class. Only one informant reports to having both worked on extracting information and discussing the author's point of view. The last three informants were unable to answer how they covered this objective in class.

5.7.3 The pupils shall be able to select appropriate listening, speaking, reading and writing strategies adapted to the purpose, situation and genre

Objective 2 is something I have discussed to some length above and thus it does not come as a surprise to me to find that this is a difficult question to answer for many of my informants. I did however come across something interesting. As we saw above six of my informants reported that reading strategies is not something they work on in class, the other seven reported that they do work on reading strategies, however, to a very varying degree.

When I went over this objective with the informants I naturally expected to find that the same five informants reported that they still did not work on reading strategies. What I found was something else indeed. Now a total of eight informants report that reading strategies is not something they work on in class. This makes me wonder what has changed during the course of the interview. Three of the informants have changed their answer to this question. What is interesting is that none of the five informants who reported that they did not work on reading strategies above have changed their answers. In other words three of the informants that reported above that reading strategies is something they worked on to some degree in class now say that they do not work on it. I can only speculate as to what the reason for this might be. It might be that these three informants were trying to appear more professional earlier in the interview, or that they had trouble interpreting the learning objective itself. It might be that they have done some work on reading strategies, but that they have not worked consciously with teaching the pupils to adapt these strategies to the purpose and genre of the texts they have worked on. However, as mentioned above, I am merely speculating with regards to the reasons why they changed their answers, as this is not something I asked the informants themselves.

The last four informants have not changed their answers either. Three of them still say that they work on reading strategies, however, only as a separate course or just occasionally. The last informant still maintains that this is something he works a lot on and that this is integrated as a natural part of his teaching.

5.7.4 The pupils shall be able to read formal and informal texts in various genres and with different purposes

Next I want to look at objective three. This is the only objective all 12 informants experience difficulties answering. What is confusing to them is the term “formal and informal texts”. None of them have a clear understanding of what this means and so they naturally find it difficult to explain how they cover this objective. All the 12 informants answer this by giving examples of which genres they cover in class. In addition to this none of them say anything about whether or not they teach their pupils to adapt the way of reading to the purpose of the text. In my opinion the reason for this has to be that they get too caught up in the difficult term and not because this is something none of them work on. As we have seen above several informants report that they do, in fact, work on different ways of reading a text adapted to the purpose for reading.

5.7.5 The pupils shall be able to select and use content from different sources independently, critically and responsibly

This is the objective my informants have the least trouble answering. Only two informants report that this is not something they work on in English class. The remaining ten informants all see this as a highly important objective to cover because the pupils might have to take a written exam at the end of the school year, in which case they will have 24 hours to prepare themselves at home and find sources to bring to the exam. All of these ten informants report that they do not only teach the pupils how to list their sources and quote correctly from them, but also which sources they can rely on and different ways of checking whether or not a source is reliable.

To sum up, we see that most of the informants were quite unsure with regards to how they were going to cover the four learning objectives presented above. Many of them did not seem to have given these objectives much thought prior to the interview, and all but one

informant experienced trouble with the first two objectives. When going through objective 3 I found that all 12 informants experienced problems. For many of them this was due to the phrase “formal and informal texts” which they did not understand. On the fourth the situation was quite different. This was something a majority of my informants had worked a lot on and considered important. This is probably due to their being aware of the risk the pupils run of failing a written exam if they do not list and quote from their sources correctly. The fact that most of the informants did not seem to have given the learning objectives in the current syllabus much thought was not the only interesting thing I discovered when going through the interviews. As mentioned above the intention behind going through these objectives was not only to check the teachers’ understanding of the syllabus with regards to reading, which in most cases proved not to be good, it was also to cross check some of the answers the informants had given earlier in the interview. When doing this I found that the group of informants who reported that they do not work on reading strategies had grown from five informants to eight.

5.8 Chapter summary

In this chapter I have presented the answers given by my informants with regards to what and how much is read, how they work on reading strategies and what their attitudes towards the teaching of reading are. What I have found is not as positive as I had hoped. First of all there is a very limited amount of reading going on in most of my informants’ classes. This in itself is worrying, as it limits the opportunities these teachers have to work actively on reading and reading strategies. Next, I found that most of the informants do not work consciously on reading strategies. Only three informants report that this is something they focus on in their teaching. In connection with this I also found that most of the informants had worryingly little knowledge of what reading strategies are. While they all could mention one or more strategies, however, most of them were very unsure as to whether or not they had understood the term correctly. Lastly, I wanted to find out whether or not this lack of focus on reading and reading strategies might be due to the teachers’ attitudes towards it. I found that this is most likely not to be the case. All the informants reported that they do think working on reading strategies is important and that they believe reading is a suitable

basic skill for English. However, when I asked why they think so I found that most of the informants experienced problems answering this. To me this signals that the reason for working too little on reading is not due to the teachers' attitudes towards it, but rather to a lack of knowledge with regards to what reading strategies are, how to teach them and why they are important. In other words: I strongly suspect that there might be a need for more in service education among the teachers. This I will return to in chapter 7.

6. Case studies

6.1 Introduction

As shown in chapter 5 above, there is not a lot of reading going on in most of my informants' classes. In addition to the amount of reading itself, I also found that most of them do not do much work on reading strategies either. This might in part be due to most of the informants seeming to be very uncertain as to what reading strategies actually are and why it is important to work on them in class. Another reason for this might be that reading was not a point of focus in the previous R94 syllabus. Therefore, this increased focus on reading is new to them and that because of this they are unaware of how to handle these new demands to their teaching. When I discovered that most informants worked only a small amount on reading and reading strategies, I wanted to find out why. As presented in the previous chapter the most common reason given for this was that the informants felt pressed for time. Whether this was a good explanation, however, is doubtful.

Going through all the informants' answers I found that there was one informant that stood out in a positive way with regards to every topic covered in the interviews. He finds time to read extensively, he is very aware of what reading strategies are, how to teach them and why they are important, and he also showed a good understanding of the syllabus. The fact that where many other informants say that they do not have the time to work on reading he finds the time not only to work on reading, but work extensively on it, is the main reason why I have chosen to present him in a case study. This informant is called Fredrik.

The first case that will be presented, however, is a composite case. The main reason for writing this is to show how the average informant works on reading and reading strategies and specific learning objectives from the LK06 syllabus. Even though this is a composite case description and not a regular case study of just one informant I have decided to give the case a name: Joakim. After having presented Joakim, I will proceed to present Fredrik, the

informant that does find time to work extensively on reading, with regards to the same three categories as mentioned above for Joakim. After that I will compare the two cases with each other, to see what it is that Fredrik does differently in order to find the time to work on reading.

6.2 The average informant; Joakim

Joakim is a little bit nervous when I arrive for the interview. Because I had given not given him any detailed information of what was expected of him prior to the interview he was a little bit unsure of how this would develop. When I informed him that it was his teaching practise I was interested in he relaxed, and he became very interested in how he could be of help.

Looking at Joakim's formal background we see that he is a highly educated teacher holding a master's degree from a university in Norway. In addition to his formal education he has nine years of teaching experience. With regards to his language skills, they should be rather good as he has stayed one year in an English speaking country. When asked how much English he speaks in class he says that he speaks mostly English himself, however that some topics, such as for instance grammar, is taught in Norwegian. He also admits to allowing his pupils to speak some Norwegian in class.

6.2.1 What and how much is read?

When asked what and how much is read in his class, Joakim informs me that he mostly uses the texts in the textbook. The reason for this is that the purpose of the textbook is to cover the syllabus, and so, in his opinion, by sticking to the textbook he ensures that he does so too. This reliance on the textbook is to a degree where he follows the topics in it chronologically and rarely supplements it with texts of his own choice.

When asked if they read any longer texts, he informs me that they read one novel during the year. This year he has chosen one class reader for the entire class, instead of letting them read a novel of their own choice. There are two reasons for this. One is that it is easier for him to help the pupils get through the novel if it is a novel he is familiar with himself, and the other is that a class reader makes it easier to work on the novel in class. What is somewhat paradoxical to me is that this informant later tells me that the novel is not something they spend a lot of time on in class, the pupils mostly read at home and hand in an essay after they have finished it.

6.2.2 Reading strategies

Joakim informs me that he sees reading as an important skill. However, when I ask him whether or not he works on reading strategies in class, he says that this is not something they spend any time on. He expects that some work on reading strategies might be integrated into his teaching, however, he has no conscious plan behind or goal for this teaching.

Having found out that Joakim does not work consciously on reading strategies in class I begin to wonder whether or not he is aware of what reading strategies are. When I ask him what the term reading strategy means to him he is able to give some kind of definition of the term and mention some strategies that he himself uses when he reads. One thing I notice about Joakim when he is faced with these direct questions on reading strategies and what they are, is that although he is able to come up with a definition and mention some strategies he is very unsure of whether or not he has understood the term correctly. He keeps looking to me for confirmation on whether or not the answer is correct.

As we can see Joakim does not work a lot on reading in class. His pupils mostly read the texts in the textbook. As mentioned above, they also read one novel during the year, however, this is not something they spend a lot of time on in class. In addition to this he does

not teach his pupils reading strategies. Based on this I think it is safe to say that reading is not a point of focus in this informant's teaching. This is something I find strange as there is such a clear focus on reading in the LK06 syllabus. To check whether or not Joakim is aware of the increased focus on reading in this syllabus compared to the R94 syllabus I proceed to ask him how he has covered specific learning objectives for reading listed in the LK06 syllabus.

6.2.3 Reading in the LK06 syllabus

To find out whether or not my informants use the syllabus actively in planning their teaching I asked them whether or not they see reading as a suitable basic skill for English and chose four competence aims directly related to reading and asked them how they covered these in class. These aims are as mentioned above:

The pupils shall be able to

1. extract essential information from spoken and written texts and discuss the author's attitudes and point of view
2. select appropriate listening, speaking, reading and writing strategies adapted to the purpose, situation and genre
3. read formal and informal texts in various genres and with different purposes
4. select and use content from different sources independently, critically and responsibly (LK06 p.6)

As this informant works so little on reading in class I start by asking him whether or not he sees reading as a suitable basic skill for English. He answered that he felt that a clearer focus on reading in the syllabus is positive and that he definitely sees reading as a suitable basic skill for English. However, when asked to elaborate on this he finds it difficult to answer

why he thinks so. He mentions something about reading being important in all aspects of life and that reading can help increase the pupils' vocabularies.

When asked about the specific objectives from the LK06 syllabus Joakim finds himself in trouble again. He finds it hard to answer how he has covered or is planning to cover them in class. He says that they do read texts and extract information from them in class. However, these are textbook texts and the way they extract information from them is by answering the questions given in the textbook for that particular text. On objective two he still maintains that reading strategies is not something he works on. Objective three is the objective he has the most trouble answering, due to problems understanding the wording of the objective. He is uncertain of what formal and informal texts are and simply answers by listing genres they have covered in class. On objective four he is much more informative. Correct use of sources is something he works a lot on with his pupils. This is important to him because he is aware that his pupils might fail the exams at the end of the year if they do not quote from and list their sources correctly.

When I ask why he works so little with reading in class he informs me that this is mostly due to a lack of time. He has 140 teaching hours and too many topics to cover so there is little time left over for reading. This puzzles me. Could it be that there really is too little time to work extensively on reading in English class? As we can see from my findings listed in the previous chapter many of my informants feel the same way. However, there is one informant that does find the time to work extensively on reading within the 140 hour time limit of the subject. I will present him in the case study below in an attempt not only to show that it is possible to find the time, but more importantly how he manages it.

6.3 Fredrik

From the moment I start talking to Fredrik I notice his confidence. This is a man who expects respect and gets it. As we can see from the presentation of my informants in chapter

4 above, Fredrik is a highly educated man. He has spent a year in the UK and feels very comfortable speaking English in class. This does not set him apart from the majority of my informants, as all but one say that they do in fact feel comfortable speaking the language and all of them report that they speak mostly English in class, however, Fredrik is one out of only two of my informants who does not accept that his pupils speak Norwegian in class. The only exception to this is if one of the pupils is having a medical emergency. He is the only native speaker of Norwegian, who accepts no amount of Norwegian in class at all.

Another fact that clearly sets him apart from the other informants is the fact that he has a clear view of what reading is and how he is going to work on it in class. He also has a very clear focus on reading in his teaching; in fact reading is one of the focus points listed for the entire school on the school's webpage. Another thing that strikes me when I talk to Fredrik is that he has really reflected on what reading is and how to best work on it within the limitations of the subject. In his opinion this is not something that should be left to the Norwegian teachers. He sees it as his job to prepare the pupils for higher education and he believes that teaching them reading strategies is a major part of this. What makes it clear to me that this is something he has reflected on before I came to interview him is the ease with which he answers all my questions. I did not send my interview guide to any of the informants before I met them and all my informants except for Fredrik experienced difficulties when answering my questions on either what reading strategies are or how they work on them in class. In my opinion this clear conscious focus on reading is what really sets him apart from the majority of my informants. So how does he find time to work extensively on reading within the 140 teaching hours allotted to the subject?

6.3.1 What and how much is read?

As we saw above Fredrik is very aware of what reading is and has a conscious plan for how he is going to work with it in class. This is interesting in itself and, I believe, the reason why he works so much with reading. However, it does not tell us how he finds the time to work extensively with reading within the limitations of the subject, when most of the other teachers list time as the main reason for not working enough with it.

First of all, Fredrik's class read a lot. He does not depend on the textbook, he uses it a little when he finds it satisfactory, but not much. He decides on a topic that the class is going to work on, decides which texts in the textbook can be used and then supplements it with texts of his own choice. His class reads newspaper articles, short stories, scientific articles and plays outside of the textbook. In addition to this they also read one novel. The amount of reading that takes place in his class is one important explanation of how he finds the time to work on reading.

6.3.2 Reading strategies

Another important factor is that he is not only aware of what reading strategies are, he has also got a clear plan behind and goal for this teaching. To him reading strategies are everything we do while we read that better enables us to understand and remember the information given in the text. He introduces his pupils to different ways of reading a text, such as skimming scanning and reading for meaning, and makes them aware that which way of reading is best depends on the purpose for reading that specific text. This is something all his pupils have to work on. To Fredrik the most important thing when teaching reading is text comprehension. In other words do the pupils understand the text? He has seen that this is often a problem with Norwegian pupils. They are able to read through a text quite easily, but they do not understand what they are reading. This is something he works actively to correct. The reason why he feels this is very important is because text comprehension is a part of the exams now, and he has seen pupils scoring badly on the written exam due to the fact that they spent too much time reading the text and answering the questions and thus were left with too little time to write a good essay.

To remedy this he teaches his students different techniques they can use to ensure that they have understood the text. These are techniques they all have to use when working with a text in class. When I ask what techniques these are he gives a few examples. Sometimes the pupils have to stop after every paragraph and answer the question "What have I just read?",

sometimes he has them writing notes and key words down while reading and then going through these notes after they have finished the text to see whether or not they have understood, and sometimes they have to write summaries of the text or the paragraph after they have finished reading it. Some of his weaker pupils have to copy entire paragraphs containing information that is crucial to the understanding of the text. His goal with this is to make text comprehension easier and quicker for them and also to teach them to not give up on a text until they have understood it. This is a skill he sees as crucial to higher education. He also makes sure that they are aware that all these techniques might not work equally well for all of them, but that they have to try different strategies to be able to decide which ones they want to continue using.

Another strategy he works on in class is what the pupils should do when they encounter difficult words. In his opinion it is very important to teach the pupils that some words can be ignored as long as they understand the overall meaning of the text. This is important in order to enable the pupils to maintain a certain reading speed. When the pupils encounter difficult words they ask him or fellow pupils what they mean. They do not use dictionaries a lot in the classroom. However, when they are reading or otherwise working in the computer lab they use online dictionaries. If he hands out a difficult article for them to read he accompanies it with a word list containing the words he believes to be difficult for them and that he sees as crucial to their text comprehension.

The third factor that plays a major part in how this informant finds the time to work extensively on reading is that he does not teach reading and reading strategies as a separate course at the beginning of the year. This is very time consuming, and to me it is completely understandable that dedicating more than a few whole lessons to the teaching of reading strategies is not possible within the 140 teaching hours allotted to the subject. Fredrik has a different approach to this. His teaching of reading strategies is an integrated and natural part of his teaching. It is something he and his pupils work on every time they read in class. Spending a lot of time reading in class is easily defensible according to him. He uses texts to enlarge their vocabularies, start thought processes and reflections over different topics in addition to covering the topics given in the syllabus.

After having heard how he works with reading in class I wanted to know whether or not this had changed after the LK06 syllabus was put into action. His answer to this was that he has always considered reading an important skill and thus has always worked a lot with reading. However, he also thinks the increased and clearer focus on reading in the syllabus is positive. In his opinion reading is something that has always been worked on in primary and lower secondary school, but not so much in upper secondary. This is a paradox for him, considering the level of difficulty in the texts the pupils are expected to read at this level of their education.

6.3.3 Reading in the LK06 syllabus

If we start by looking at objective 1 this is something this informant spends a lot of time on. He is very aware that it is crucial for his students to be able to extract information from a text in order for them to succeed both on the exams and in higher education.

With regards to learning objective 2 he says that he works a lot on making them aware of different ways to read a text in order to meet the different purposes for reading. If they read factual texts the pupils have to be aware of whether or not they read to grasp the overall meaning of the text or to look for specific information given on specific topics within the text. When they read fictional texts he works with them on the different ways to read different genres. For instance, if they are reading poems it is important for them to be able to read between the lines and interpret the author's views and the hidden meaning of the poem.

If we look at objective 3 he feels that formal and informal texts is an unclear term and simply says that they read every genre from letters to statistics and anything in between.

On objective 4 he is more informative. This is something that is important to him and they spend a lot of time on this in class, when they are working with texts. He is aware that it is important for the pupils to be able to list their sources correctly and to cite from them correctly in order to pass the exam. He says that they have 24 hours prior to the written exam to prepare themselves and find material they can use on the exam. As they are allowed to bring material they have found to the exam it is important that the pupils know which sources they can trust and know how to cite correctly from them. If they are not aware of this they risk failing the exam.

At the end of the interview I asked if there was anything he would like to add. He said that to him it is important to read a lot in class, but it is also important not to kill the joy of reading. He also feels that because the LK06 syllabus offers a great deal of freedom when it comes to what should be read in class, it is important that the teachers put some thought into the selection of texts they use. In his opinion, too many teachers let their pupils read texts they would be reading whether or not they are told to do so at school. One example of this that he has seen himself is that the Harry Potter books are used a lot in English class. This is something he believes that the pupils would have read anyway. To him it is important to challenge them a bit and have the pupils read literature and texts they would not necessarily have read at home. This is why he has chosen to give them class readers when they read a novel at school. He says it is important to him to find a modern novel that he believes will be interesting to them, but not necessarily something they would have chosen themselves. He is also opposed to letting them interpret rap music and read hip hop lyrics all the time just because it is the language of the youth. He wants to challenge them with other texts that show them that school is not all about running around and having fun all the time.

6.4 Comparing the two case studies with each other

As we can see these two informants have very different ways of working with reading in class. I would even go so far as to say that one of them works with reading and the other does not. If we start by looking at the background information on the two informants we see that their formal qualifications are quite similar. Both of them are highly educated teachers who hold either a Masters' degree or a Cand Philol degree and they have both had one long

stay in the UK. They both say that they feel comfortable speaking English in class. However, only Fredrik reports that he speaks only English, Joakim says that he speaks mostly English in class, but that certain topics such as for instance grammar is taught in Norwegian. Fredrik also expects his pupils to speak only English in class, whereas Joakim reports that his pupils speak mostly Norwegian. This is the first major difference between these two informants.

Next, I will look into what and how much is read in class. In Joakim's class there is not a lot of reading going on. He is very dependant on the textbook and rarely supplements it with texts of his own choice. Although he does not supplement the textbook to any large degree himself, he does say that his pupils use the internet to find information when they are working on specific projects. In Fredrik's class on the other hand, they read a lot of texts besides the textbook. He does not depend on the textbook, but rather uses the texts in it when he finds them satisfactory when he does not find them to his liking on the other hand he uses texts of his own choice instead. Reading is very important to Fredrik and as a consequence his class reads a lot. He supplements the textbook with newspaper articles, scientific articles, short stories and plays in addition to one novel. Clearly there is a lot more reading going on in Fredrik's class than in Joakim's.

If we look further on in the case studies, under the heading "Reading strategies", we find that Fredrik has a very clear view of what reading strategies are and a very clear idea of what his goal for working on reading strategies is, namely to enhance text comprehension. In addition to this he has a plan for how he is going to help his pupils accomplish this goal. He makes them try out a variation of different strategies to better enable them to choose which ones are better suited for them individually. These strategies are not only aimed at text comprehension he also teaches them strategies for how to handle difficult words when reading a text. This is important as it enables the pupils to maintain a certain speed of reading which again is important to enable text comprehension. Joakim, on the other hand, reports that this is not something they spend time on in his class. According to him, this is mostly due to a lack of time. This is what made me wonder how it can be that one teacher finds the time and another does not, when they are teaching the same subject and have the same amount of teaching hours available to them.

When we look at the four competence aims I went through with the informants we once again see that this is something Fredrik has given a lot of thought to prior to the interview. He experiences no problems at all in answering how he is planning to cover each of the aims in class. Joakim, on the other hand is vaguer. On the first three objectives he has no clear answer to how they cover these in class. On objective four, however, it becomes clear that this is something that is important to him and that he has worked a lot on this objective in class.

6.5 Chapter summary

Above, I have presented two case studies, one is a composite case based on the answers from nine of my informants, and one is a case study of one single informant, called Fredrik. In my opinion there are three major differences between the ways in which these two informants work with reading. These are:

1. Fredrik is confident that he knows what reading strategies are, whereas Joakim is very uncertain.
2. Fredrik has a clear goal for his work on reading strategies; to enhance text comprehension. Joakim does not work on reading strategies consciously; however, he believes that reading strategies might be integrated in his teaching to some extent.
3. Working with reading is an integrated part of Fredrik's teaching, and thus takes up little extra time.

In my opinion these differences not only show how the teaching of reading strategies is possible within the time frame given, but also what is needed in order for it to be possible for all teachers to be able to teach reading strategies. During the process of writing this master's thesis it has become increasingly obvious to me that there is a need for in service education

among the EFL teachers. How can teachers be expected to teach reading strategies if they are not confident that they know what these are? Also, as we have seen both in this chapter and in the previous chapter, the informants do not know why the teaching of reading strategies is important. In service education could remedy both these aspects and make the teachers want to teach reading strategies.

As for the reason given by most teachers when asked why they do not work on reading and reading strategies in class, namely a lack of time, I believe that the case study of Fredrik shows that this is not the case. There is time; it is just a matter of how it is done. No matter how you teach English in school there is a lot of reading going on, it is just a matter of using that reading not only to teach factual topics, but also to teach reading. Teaching reading as a separate course is time consuming. Whole lessons have to be reserved for this work only and it is understandable that this is difficult in a subject like English where there are a lot of other learning objectives that have to be covered during the year. However if one makes use of the reading that is already taking place in the teaching, it can be done. It might be a little more time consuming in the beginning, when different strategies have to be learned, however, Fredrik's example shows that it will save time later when these strategies have become automated skills, or at least has helped the pupils improve their text comprehension.

7. Discussion

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter I am going to discuss the findings presented above. I will start by giving a short summary of the most important findings and validity of these. Next, I will proceed to discuss the findings. The issues that will be discussed are:

1. Whether or not the reading instructions provided by my informants prepare the pupils for the reading that will be required of them in higher education.
2. Why reading and reading strategies should be taught, and how to teach them.
3. What influences the informants' teaching of reading.
4. Reasons given by the informants for not working on reading, and what I see as the main reasons for the limited work on this.

7.2 A summary of the most important findings from my survey

The first thing that strikes me when I read the findings from my survey is that, in most of the informants classes, there is a surprisingly little reading going on. Most of these teachers rely heavily on the textbook and rarely supplement it with texts of their own choice. For most informants, the only text of any length that is read during the year, is one novel. Even though this is the only long text they read, none of the informants report that they spend much time on it in class. The pupils mostly read at home and hand in a book report after they have finished the novel.

After having looked at the amount of reading and what is read, I moved on to look at reading strategies specifically. I asked the informants whether or not they are aware of what reading strategies are. As mentioned above, I found that they could all give some definition of the term reading strategy, however, most of them were very uncertain as to whether or not they had understood the term correctly and were looking to me for confirmation.

Next, I wanted to find out whether and to what extent the informants work on reading strategies in class. I found that seven of the 12 informants actually work to some extent on reading strategies in class, but that four of them have no conscious plan for this work and only do it sporadically. Of the remaining three in this group, two teach reading strategies as a separate course. The last informant teaches reading strategies as an integrated part of his teaching. He is the only informant with a conscious goal for this teaching. The last five of the 12 informants all report that reading strategies is not something they work on. Most of them claim that this is due to a lack of time. Other excuses given by the informants are that they do not see any reason for working on it in English class when the Norwegian teachers are already teaching it, and that they do not see why they should spend any time on it when the pupils should already know this before entering into upper secondary school.

My next aim was to find out what the teachers' attitudes towards the teaching of reading are, in particular whether the informants consider reading strategies and being a skilled reader as important or not. Interestingly enough, all the informants, when asked, feel that working on reading strategies is important. However, when I ask them why a majority of the informants, six to be correct, find themselves unable to answer why. In addition to these six, three informants answered that reading strategies are important, but that they were unsure of to what extent they promoted it in class. In other words, I now have a total of nine informants that think reading strategies are important, but are unable to answer why they think so. My last three informants all report that they see working with reading strategies as important because it promotes text comprehension. Not surprisingly, these are the same three informants who work on reading strategies, either as a separate course or as an integrated part of the teaching.

Having gotten so few answers to why the informants see the teaching of reading strategies as important I moved on to ask whether or not they see reading as a suitable basic skill for English. All twelve informants reported that they do think it is, however, again some experienced problems answering why. When asked why reading is suitable as a basic skill for English, one of the informants started talking about why mathematics is not a suitable skill for English. Another said that it is suitable, however, that this is not something she should have to focus on when teaching in upper secondary school. She expects the pupils to be proficient readers before reaching this level of their education. The remaining ten informants were all able to give one or more reasons why reading is suitable as a basic skill for English. These reasons were that reading is crucial in our society as a whole, that it is important for the pupils to read in order for them to acquire new vocabulary, others said that reading is important because it gives the pupils a better feel for the language and again others said that reading is a suitable basic skill for all school subjects as the skill of reading is crucial to higher education. One informant hoped to instil a joy of reading in his pupils.

Clearly, there is not a lot of focus on either reading or reading strategies in most of these informants' teaching. This was surprising to me because, as shown in chapter 3, there is a much clearer focus on both reading and reading strategies in the LK06 syllabus. In order both to crosscheck their answers to the previous questions in the interview and to find out what kind of understanding the informants had of the syllabus I went through some of the learning objectives that involves reading and reading strategies to see how they have covered, or are planning to cover, these. I am not going to go into details on what the informants answered to each of these objectives here as this has been done in chapter 5 above, however I will provide a brief overview.

What immediately strikes me as I go through these learning objectives with my informants is that most of them do not seem to have given them a lot of thought. They are finding it hard to answer how they have covered or are planning to cover these objectives. The only exception is objective four. This is an objective all the informants have worked on and see as

important. In my opinion the reason for this is that they are aware of the risk their pupils run of failing a written exam if they do not quote their sources correctly.

Going through objective two another interesting thing came up. When previously asked whether or not they work on reading strategies in class a total of five reported that this is not something they spend time on. When faced with objective two, on the other hand, a total of nine informants reported that reading strategies and ways of reading adapted to the purpose of reading is not something they work on in class. Looking through the interviews again I find that none of the five informants who reported that reading strategies is not something they work on have changed their answers. However, four of the informants that previously reported that they work a little with reading strategies have changed theirs.

To sum up, we see that there is only a small amount of reading going on in the classes taught by my informants and that most of the informants do not work with reading strategies at all. The reasons given for they give for this is mostly a lack of time, that they expect the pupils to be proficient readers before starting upper secondary school, and that this is not important to spend time on in English class as this is something the pupils learn in Norwegian class. The informants who do work on reading strategies in class mostly report that they do so because they see reading as an important skill for higher education. When faced with specific learning objectives from LK06 most of the informants have trouble answering how they have covered or plan to cover these objectives.

These findings made me wonder about a number of things: The most common reason given for why reading is a suitable basic skill for English is that being a proficient reader is important for higher education. However, I still wonder whether or not the reading instruction the pupils receive in upper secondary school prepare them for the reading that will be demanded of them at universities and colleges? Second, most of the informants who work on reading and reading strategies have no conscious goal for, or plan behind this work and this results in it being difficult for them to monitor and evaluate the pupils' progress. Third, the informants who do work with reading strategies do this in different ways. Some

only do it sporadically, two teach reading strategies as a separate course and one teaches reading strategies as an integrated part of his teaching. This made me want to investigate which method of teaching is the best and least time consuming. Fourth, I also found that even though reading and reading strategies are clearly focused on in the LK06 syllabus, my informants do not spend a lot of time on it. This made me wonder how the syllabus influences their teaching. When asked why they do not work more on reading strategies my informants gave me two answers to this: that there is not enough time and that as reading strategies are already being taught in Norwegian class they do not see the need for spending time on it. Below I will look into whether these excuses are valid or not. All of these questions will be dealt with below.

7.3 A short summary of the validity of the survey

I have summed up my findings above, along with the issues that will be discussed further below. However, there is one additional issue that needs to be addressed before starting the discussion, and that is the validity of the results. If the results are not valid, they cannot form a trustworthy basis for this discussion.

As has been discussed in detail in chapter 4 of this thesis, it is my opinion that I have done what I can in order to ensure the reliability of my findings. I have given a detailed description of the context in which the survey was done, with regards to location, informants and schools, in addition to giving a detailed description of the research process. With regards to the transferability of the results I have earlier concluded, and still do, that my results are not transferable due to the limited number of informants involved in the survey. I cannot draw conclusions as to how reading is taught by all English teachers based on the answers from only 12 of them. These 12 are not a representative sample for the whole group. However, as shown in chapter 5, I did find that nine of the 12 informants answered my questions with regards to reading and reading strategies quite similarly, and these answers, in my opinion, are interesting enough to merit both further research and discussion.

The last issue that needs addressing, in connection to the validity of the results, is my findings with regards to learning objective 2 from the LK06 syllabus. Earlier in the interview, when asked whether or not they work on reading strategies in class, a total of five informants reported that this is not something they spend time on. When faced with objective 2, on the other hand, that number had increased to a total of nine informants. This indicates that four of the informants might either have answered untruthfully earlier in the interview, or been confused by the wording in the learning objective when faced with it at the end of the interview. If we assume the first alternative to be true, it might be that the informants were trying to seem more professional than they actually were, or that they were embarrassed to admit that they had spent no time on this even though the syllabus clearly states that they should have. The fact that the informants might have “adjusted” the truth a bit is therefore something that should be kept in mind when reading the results from my survey.

7.4 Do the reading instructions prepare the pupils for higher education?

As we saw above all of the informants think that reading is suitable as a basic skill for English and the most common reason why is that being a skilled reader is important in order to succeed at higher education. This makes me wonder: Does the reading instruction in upper secondary school that I have found actually prepare the pupils for higher education? The reason why this is such an important question for Norwegian pupils is that quite a lot of the literature that they will be required to read in higher education is written in English. In order to further investigate whether or not the reading instructions do in fact prepare the pupils for higher education I am going to present the results from a different survey, “The Acid Test; Does Upper Secondary EFL Instruction Effectively Prepare Norwegian Students for the Reading of English Textbooks at colleges and Universities?” After that I will compare the results of this survey to the results from my own survey.

7.4.1 A short presentation of “The Acid Test”

In order to find out whether or not the reading instructions in upper secondary school prepare the pupils for higher education Hellekjær (2005) conducted five surveys. For reasons of space I will only present the results from one of these surveys; the “English Reading Proficiency in Upper-Secondary School: a seven School Sample”. My reason for choosing this particular survey is that it is the main survey done in upper secondary school, and the one I find to be the most comparable to my own survey. When conducting this survey Hellekjær used both a self assessment questionnaire and the IELTS Academic Reading Module to check the pupils reading abilities. The IELTS test is a placement test that foreign students have to take in order to be accepted into colleges and universities in the UK, and is therefore also a suitable test to see whether or not the pupils have developed reading skills that are good enough to be able to handle the reading required of them at Norwegian colleges and universities. The results from the IELTS test are the ones that will be presented here.

There were a total of 217 respondents for this survey. Of these 178 had received ordinary EFL instruction only, whereas the remaining 39 had received sheltered single subject CLIL instruction in addition to the ordinary EFL instruction. Here, I will concentrate on the 178 EFL respondents. When going through the pupils’ answers Hellekjær found that two thirds of these respondents scored too low to pass the IELTS Academic Reading Module (Hellekjær, 2005, p. 214). Upon closer examination Hellekjær found that the main reason for this was that many of the respondents ran out of time. This indicates that the respondents had not developed effective enough processing skills to be able to complete this task. In other words, the respondents were not skilled enough at adapting the way of reading to the reading purpose (Hellekjær, 2005, p. 214). Instead they might have opted for the slow and laborious careful way of reading, presented in chapter 2.

The most interesting result, with regards to my own survey, was that the main reason for the poor results among the EFL respondents was due to inefficient processing skills. It seems like the pupils were not proficient in adapting the way of reading to the purpose for reading,

and that they, because of this, ran out of time. My next step will be to look at whether the data about reading instruction provided by my informants can help explain these results, or, even better, give an indication that the situation might be improving.

7.4.2 A comparison between my survey and “The Acid Test”

Because the results from “The Acid Test” show that the EFL student scored poorly because they ran out of time, I will now proceed to investigate to what extent my informants work on different ways of reading a text depending on the purpose for their reading.

Looking at the results from my interviews I find that five of the informants report that they do work on this. However, four of these informants do so only occasionally. In addition to the sporadic manner of the teaching, these informants are not aware of whether the pupils find this work helpful or whether or not they continue using these different ways of reading when they are not specifically told to. The last informant who reports to working on this does so frequently and with a conscious plan behind the work. His focus is to prepare his pupils for higher education and he sees helping them develop efficient processing skills as crucial to this. When asked why he simply answers “How are they going to make it at university if they can’t read?” He is also the only informant that has evaluated the pupils’ progress and found that they do in fact continue using these techniques when reading on their own as well.

Looking back to chapter 5, we find that one of the learning objectives I specifically asked my informants how they worked with in class was “The pupils shall be able to read formal and informal texts in various genres and with different purposes”. This is clearly linked to adapting the way of reading to the purpose of reading different texts. This is also the learning objective the informants had the most trouble answering. They all got caught up in the term “formal and informal texts” and none of them mention that they teach different ways of reading a text in connection with this learning objective even though as mentioned above five of them actually do work on this to some degree.

My findings, with regards to how the informants work on reading in class, clearly do not indicate that there has been an improvement since 2005. Instead, I would say that they offer an explanation as to why the results from “The Acid Test” were as bad as they were. It is my opinion that the teaching of reading and reading strategies done by most of my informants will not produce proficient readers. I would even go so far as to say that in most of these classes it is up to the pupils themselves to train to become good readers. However, many of my informants report that their pupils read very little outside of school, as was repeated by Hellekjær (2008), so how the pupils are going to manage is a question I will have to leave unanswered. One thing is for certain, many of my informants’ pupils are going to struggle more than would have been necessary when starting higher education.

7.5 Why reading strategies should be taught

In my discussion of whether or not the reading instructions provided by my informants prepare the pupils for higher education I looked specifically at whether or not they teach different ways of reading and found that this is not something the informants spend a lot of time on. However, this is only one aspect of the reading instruction that should take place in upper secondary. As has been presented in chapter 5, most of my informants do not work at all with any aspect of reading strategies and the majority of the informants who actually do teach reading strategies have no conscious plan for how they are going to teach these strategies effectively and no clear goal for the teaching. As mentioned earlier, in my opinion this is because the informants lack the knowledge of what reading strategies are, how to work on them and most importantly why they should work on them. Below, I will look into what constitutes a good reader and try to translate this into possible goals that the teachers could work towards, how to work on reading strategies effectively and also why reading strategies are important.

7.5.1 What is a good reader?

As we saw under the heading “What is a reading strategy?” in chapter 2, strategic readers are better readers than non strategic readers, and it is in fact the strategies they employ that set them apart from poorer readers. Now the question is, what is meant by a good reader?

A good reader

1. decides what the goal for reading is before starting to read.
2. adapt the way of reading to the purpose for reading.
3. monitor whether or not they have understood the text as they read.
4. is flexible. In other words he or she is able to employ different reading strategies if they see that they do not understand the text.
5. monitors the overall understanding of the text after reading.
6. goes back and rereads the text if they see that they have not understood.

(Roe, 2006, p. 75-77, Stangeland & Forsth, 2001, p. 107, Grabe & Stoller, 2002, p. 18 & Alderson, 2005, p. 122).

From this we can see that text comprehension plays a large part in being a proficient reader. A good reader has a goal for reading and then monitors his or her comprehension of the text both during and after reading. If the reader discovers that he or she has not understood the text they employ different reading strategies in order to make sure they understand. One example could be if a reader is interested in gathering specific information from a factual text. Gathering this information would then serve as the goal for reading. He or she might then start scanning the text, looking for specific words connected with this information. After having done so they might find that they did not uncover the wanted information. A good reader would then go back and try a different way of reading to see whether or not they

could uncover the wanted information this way. After having finished reading they monitor their reading again to see whether or not they have reached their goal this time around. Being flexible and willing to change reading strategies during reading is important to text comprehension, Alderson (2005) even goes so far as to say that monitoring one's understanding of a text is crucial to good reading (Alderson, 2005, p. 122).

7.5.2 Possible goals for reading instruction

Now that we have a definition of what a good reader is, my next step will be to see whether or not I can translate this into possible goals for reading instruction. My suggestions for goals will be to improve text comprehension, help the pupils become more effective readers, and to help the pupils increase their reading speed. All of these goals will be discussed in more detail below.

Improving text comprehension:

My first suggestion as a goal for reading instruction is to work to improve text comprehension. The purpose for reading is, after all, to understand the information given in the text. Keeping in mind that my informants teach English in the General Studies branch of upper secondary school this is a very suitable goal to work towards. It is more than likely that a high percentage of these informants' pupils will proceed to higher education where a lot of reading will be required of them. These texts will be more demanding than the texts they have been reading in upper secondary school and so in order for them to be able to succeed, it is important that they do not give up until they have understood. It is also important that they know how to monitor their own comprehension when they read, and that they have a selection of different strategies to use if they find that they have not understood.

Effective readers:

Keeping in mind that many of my informants' pupils will start higher education after having finished upper secondary school, helping the pupils become effective readers is clearly a suitable goal for the reading instruction. This goal is closely linked to the discussion above of whether or not the reading instructions provided by my informants prepare the pupils for the reading that will be demanded of them in higher education. As shown, when going through Hellekjær's survey above, the main reason why the EFL students scored so poorly was that they ran out of time. This indicates that the pupils did not have the skills needed to read the texts in the most effective way in order to complete the tasks. If this is the case the pupils will not only struggle with tests such as the IELTS test, but with reading in higher education in general.

At colleges and universities the students have long reading lists that often contain long challenging texts in a foreign language, usually English. In order for the students not to have to read at all hours of the day it is important that they are effective readers. By this I mean that they are trained to choose the most effective way of reading a text according to the purpose for reading that specific text. In other words, they have to be aware of different and less time consuming ways of reading in addition to the careful reading for meaning so favoured by many teachers. This is a very laborious way of reading and often quite unnecessary. If we look back to the example mentioned above, where the reader is looking for specific information from a text it could save time to try and scan the text first looking for specific key words that indicate the location of that specific information. Even though most of the informants see reading as important for higher education and this teaching would help the pupils succeed at just that it does not seem like this is a point of focus for most of my informants.

Maintaining a speed of reading:

Both these goals, enhancing text comprehension and helping the pupils become effective readers apply both to reading instruction in the native language and in an L2. However, I believe that there is another important factor to helping the pupils become better readers that

mostly applies to reading in an L2 language. This is a point that has not been directly addressed by any of my informants, even though I did ask them, and that is how they teach their pupils to deal with unknown vocabulary. I got so few answers about this that it is not something I presented in the result chapter. However, when asked, the teachers simply answered that they use a dictionary either online or in paper, or that they tell the pupils the meaning of the words. If we keep in mind that the ultimate goal for the reading instruction that takes place in my informants' classes should be to prepare the pupils for higher education I do not believe that telling them the meaning of unfamiliar words is necessarily a step towards this goal.

Looking back to chapter 2, under the heading "L2 reading", we see that unfamiliar vocabulary and strategies for how to deal with this is one of the additional constraint listed in connection with reading in an L2 language. In addition we find that maintaining a certain speed of reading is important for text comprehension. In my opinion inadequate strategies for how to handle unfamiliar words might be one of the most important constraints to maintaining the speed of reading needed in order to enable text comprehension. Therefore it is important when teaching reading strategies in an L2 to also teach strategies for handling unfamiliar vocabulary. These have to be strategies the pupils can use on their own when entering into higher education where there will be no teacher to tell them the meaning of the words and no word lists accompanying challenging texts. These strategies could be to guess the meaning of the word based on the information given in the text, but also that it is not necessary to understand every single word in order to understand the text itself. In other words, it is important to teach the pupils to only stop and look up a word if they feel that it is crucial to the text comprehension as a whole, or necessary to reach the goal for reading set for this particular text. This way the reader will be able to maintain a higher speed of reading than if they stop to look up every unfamiliar word, which in turn will help the text comprehension.

7.5.3 How to teach reading strategies effectively

Having presented possible goals for the reading instruction I will proceed to look at how to reach these goals in the most effective and least time consuming way possible. As we have

seen in the results presented from my survey in chapter 5 above, the informants that do actually work on reading strategies do this in different ways. Some only work with reading strategies every now and again, two informants teach reading strategies as a separate course and one informant teaches reading strategies as an integrated part of his teaching. Which way is more effective?

First of all I would like to rule out the first method of teaching, the sporadic one. This teaching cannot be effective in any way as it is not consistent and there is no conscious goal for it or plan behind it. In addition to this these informants have never monitored or evaluated their pupils' progress with regards to reading strategies.

This leaves me with two methods: The separate course and the integrated teaching course. If we look to the theory chapter of this thesis under the heading "Reading strategies" we find that the focus on reading strategies started in the 1960s and 70s when booklets aimed at training students in reading strategies were developed (Roe, 2006, p. 81). This beginning focus on reading strategies seems positive. However, Roe goes on to claim that there is still one problem remaining: most of the work on reading strategies was still done as a separate course at the beginning of the school year and not integrated as a natural part of the teaching. Furthermore, she says that later studies have shown that students learn more when reading strategies are incorporated as a natural part of the teaching, and that studies show that it is not likely that the pupils will continue using the strategies they have learned when reading strategies are taught as a separate course (Roe, 2006, p. 81).

In my opinion this answers the question of which method is the best for teaching reading strategies. Keeping in mind that the ultimate goal for teaching reading has to be to prepare the pupils for higher education, it seems quite clear that the best way to teach reading is the integrated method. This is because the pupils are more likely to continue using the strategies taught in this way.

Next, I would have liked to look to my survey to see whether or not I could have found any indication of this in the information gathered from my informants as well. This, however, has proved difficult as I only have three informants that work consciously on reading strategies and only one of them has monitored and assessed the pupils' progress in any way. The informant who has done this is Fredrik who was presented in detail in the chapter entitled "Two Case Studies" above. He teaches reading strategies as an integrated and natural part of his teaching and has found that this is very beneficial to his pupils, however the two informants teaching reading strategies as a separate course have not assessed the pupils progress and it is thus impossible for me to compare these two methods with one another based on the results from my survey.

To sum up, I have now looked at what constitutes a good reader and tried to translate that into suitable goals for reading instruction that will better enable the pupils to succeed in higher education. These goals are to improve the pupils' text comprehension, to teach them strategies that help them become more effective readers, and to teach them strategies for handling unfamiliar vocabulary in order for them to be able to maintain a higher speed of reading and thus better enable text comprehension. I have also looked at what the best and most effective way of reaching these goals would be, and found that, based on theory of reading strategies, this is clearly the integrated teaching method.

7.6 What influences the teaching done by my informants?

In chapter 3 of this thesis I gave a detailed description both of how reading was viewed and of what demands to reading that was stated both in the previous R94 syllabus and the current LK06 syllabus. From this it became clear that there is an increased focus on reading and reading strategies in the new syllabus. However, during my interviews I still found that many of my informants do not work on reading strategies at all. This indicates that the syllabus might not be the main influence on how these informants choose to teach reading. If the syllabus is not the main influence, then what is? To find out I will start by looking at the requirements for reading stated in the LK06 syllabus, and how the informants work on these.

In connection with this I will also look at the influence of the textbook versus that of the syllabus to try and see which influence the teaching done by my informants the most.

7.6.1 Reading and reading strategies in the LK06 syllabus, and how the informants work with it.

As we have seen in chapter 3 on curricula and syllabi there is a much clearer focus on reading as a skill in the new LK06 syllabus than there was in the old R94 one. However, most of my more experienced informants, the informants who have worked during both syllabi, have continued teaching reading the way they did while the R94 syllabus was still in force. Even Fredrik, the informant that works the most on reading and reading strategies says that he is still doing the same amount of reading in class as he did during the R94 syllabus, the difference being that he has always considered reading to be an important skill and thus worked extensively on it during the R94 syllabus too, whereas the other informants have not and still do not work much on reading.

If we look at the amount of reading my informants report to doing in class we see that for most of them this limits itself to mostly textbook and one novel in addition to this. This is the amount of reading required by the old syllabus. The LK06 curriculum, however, does not require any novel to be read during Vg1, in fact there is absolutely no mention of any set amount of reading at all. Instead the focus has shifted to the skill of reading. The LK06 syllabus requires that the pupils read enough in class to be able to develop their reading skills. What amount that is is left for the teacher as a professional to decide.

As also mentioned in chapter 3, there is a much clearer focus on reading as a skill. Reading strategies are in fact mentioned specifically in the learning objectives for English and reading itself is mentioned as a basic skill that is to be worked on in every school subject. With this in mind I find it surprising, to say the least, to find that there is such a small amount of reading going on in the classes taught by my informants. This is even more shocking considering the fact that the LK06 curriculum was actually issued as a legal

directive in order to make it binding for teachers and school-owners (Hellekjær, 2005, p. 25). The fact that the syllabus clearly does not influence many of my informants teaching to any large degree, at least with regards to reading left me wondering what does. The only possible answer I can come up with is the textbook. I will look into this further below.

7.6.2 What influences the teaching of reading?

As mentioned above, the syllabus cannot influence my informants' teaching to any large degree, at least with regards to reading, as there is a very clear focus on reading strategies in the syllabus and only three of my informants report that reading strategies is something they have worked consciously on in their teaching. However, I also asked them to what extent they rely on the textbook and found that a total of ten informants relied heavily on the textbook. Five of these informants report that they hardly supplement the textbook at all, whereas five report that they supplement it somewhat more with texts of their own choice.

If we look back to the chapter 3 we find that a syllabus can in fact influence the teaching in both a direct and an indirect manner. The direct influence is when the teacher uses the syllabus actively in planning his or her teaching whereas the indirect influence is for instance the influence of the syllabus through the textbook. The textbooks are written to cover the instructions given in the syllabus, however, it is the author's interpretation of the syllabus that comes across in the textbook and not necessarily the syllabus itself.

This reliance on the textbook might be one of the reasons why so few of my informants work to any extent on reading. Some even say that because the textbooks are written to cover the syllabus they make sure that they cover it too by sticking to the book. This view is worrying to say the least. Teachers are highly educated professionals totally capable of interpreting the syllabus on their own and deciding which parts of the textbook they want to use in order to cover the objectives stated in the syllabus, they should not be relying solely on other peoples', in this case the textbook authors', interpretations. As mentioned above the LK06

syllabus is issued as a legal directive in order to make it binding, not only for schools, but also for the teachers.

To sum up, I have now looked into how the syllabus influences the teaching of reading for many of my informants. It is clear that this is mostly an indirect influence through the textbook and not the direct influence of the syllabus itself. It is also clear that as so many of my informants do not work to any extent on reading and reading strategies they are not covering the objectives stated in the syllabus. As we have seen in chapter 3 there are a number of learning objectives in the LK06 syllabus directly connected to reading and reading strategies not to mention that reading is mentioned as a basic skill for all subjects. It seems quite clear that the argument of the teachers who rely heavily on the textbook, that they do so in order to cover the syllabus, is not valid.

7.7 Reasons for not working on reading

In this section I am going to look into various reasons given by my informants for why they do not work more on reading and see whether or not these excuses seem valid. I am going to start by looking at the reason given by most of my informants, that there is simply not enough time to work on reading in English as there is so much to cover during Vg1. Next I will look into the second most common reason given, that reading strategies is something that is taught in Norwegian class and as the pupils are already being taught this in a different class there is no need for them to learn it in English class as well. After this I am going to look into some additional reasons that I believe might play a part in this. These reasons are the teachers' attitudes towards the teaching of reading and that the teachers lack the knowledge of reading as a skill that is needed in order to teach reading effectively.

7.7.1 Time

As mentioned above the first reason for not working to any extent on reading strategies that will be discussed here is a lack of time. My informants say that there is so much that has to be covered in English class during Vg1 that there is no time to spare for reading strategies. As we have seen above when I presented the informant called Fredrik, this is not necessarily the case, it is more a question of how to teach reading strategies in order to find the time.

All the informants report that they do read in class, whether it is in the textbook, a novel or additional texts chosen by the informants. Whether or not there is enough reading going on in class is another matter, but there is some reading going on in every single one of these informants' classes, and because of this there is opportunity to work on reading strategies too. According to the informants this reading has to be done in order to cover the learning objectives stated in the syllabus. Interestingly enough they seem to forget that reading strategies are also mentioned in these objectives.

Now the question is how to find the time to work on reading strategies in class. Fredrik does this by integrating reading strategies as a natural part of his teaching. He utilizes the reading that is already taking place in his class and uses it as a golden opportunity to work on reading strategies. This not only saves him time, but as we have seen above under the heading "How to teach reading strategies effectively", it is also the best way to ensure that the pupils continue to use the strategies they have been taught not only when told so specifically, but also when reading on their own. Teaching reading strategies as a separate course is not only time consuming, as whole lessons would have to be set apart for this particular course, it is also less effective.

Based on the theory on reading strategies presented in chapter 2 and the example set by Fredrik I would say that a lack of time is not a valid excuse for not working on reading strategies. In the beginning it might take more time because the teacher has to show the pupils different reading strategies and when to use these different strategies, but after a while

the strategies will become more automatic and in the end save time. This is because the pupils will become more effective readers and when they do there might even be time to read more and longer texts in class due to the fact that the pupils read faster and more efficiently.

7.7.2 Reading strategies are already being taught in Norwegian class

Another reason given by some informants for not working on reading strategies in English class is that this is not something they have to spend time on as it is already being taught in Norwegian class. When asked how she worked on reading in class, one of my informants even started talking about how she did it in Norwegian class, however when I reminded her that I was only interested in reading in English class for this thesis she admitted that reading strategies is something she only works on in Norwegian class. Below I will look into why reading strategies should be worked on in English class too and whether or not we can expect reading strategies to transfer from one language to another.

The first argument for teaching reading strategies in English class too is quite simply that it is stated in the syllabus that we shall do it. As we have seen above reading strategies are mentioned in the learning objectives of the syllabus in addition to reading being mentioned as a basic skill for all school subjects. Secondly, there is, as mentioned above, at least some reading going on in class and thus we as English teachers have a golden opportunity to work on reading in class. We just have to utilize the opportunities that are already there. There is no reason why reading as a skill cannot be worked on in several subjects, this would only mean that the pupils become even more proficient readers, and more prepared for higher education. As we have seen above when I presented the findings from both my own survey and “The Acid Test” (Hellekjær, 2005) the reading proficiency of pupils of the upper secondary school in Norway does seem to leave something to be desired.

Thirdly, we can not be sure that the pupils possess the English skills necessary to transfer reading skills from Norwegian into English. As we have seen in chapter 2 there seems to be a consensus among researchers about the existence of a linguistic threshold. If the pupils' L2 language skills are below this threshold they cannot expect any language skills to transfer from the L1 to the L2 (Alderson, 2005, p. 24 & Grabe & Stoller, 2002, p. 50). This linguistic threshold is not absolute, but varies with task; the more demanding the task, the higher the linguistic threshold (Alderson, 2005, p. 39-39). In other words we cannot automatically expect language skills to transfer from one language to another. There are additional constraints and difficulties connected with reading in an L2, such as vocabulary, how to handle unfamiliar words and inferior language awareness. This might cause the pupils to focus on these obstacles when reading and thus not be ready to transfer reading skills from Norwegian into English. These additional constraints to reading are not something the pupils will have been taught to handle in Norwegian class as these problems will not be present there. The pupils have to be taught how to handle these constraints that are particular to reading in an L2 in English class.

In addition to this, pupils need to have efficient processing skills to transfer in order for reading skills to be able to transfer from reading in the L1 to reading in the L2. According to Hellekjær this is not something we should take for granted (Hellekjær, 2005, p. 63). In other words how can we as English teachers know that the pupils are being taught efficient processing skills in Norwegian class? Is it acceptable for us as professionals to expect others to do our job for us? It is after all clearly stated in the syllabus that teaching reading strategies is in fact our job. In addition to this as has been mentioned a number of times throughout this thesis the syllabus was issued as a binding legal directive, binding not only for school-owners, but also for us as teachers. Should we rely on other teachers work to fulfil the objectives set for us in this legally binding document?

7.7.3 The teachers' attitudes towards the teaching of reading

Above I have looked at the two most common reasons given by the informants for not working on reading. However, as I suspect that this is not the whole truth of the matter, I

have decided to include two reasons of my own in this discussion. One of the possible reasons I suspected might lie behind the minimal work on reading and reading strategies done by most of my informants was an indifferent attitude towards this teaching. I suspected that they did not see this teaching as important and therefore did not work on it. What I found, however, was the exact opposite. All my twelve informants report that they see reading as not only an important skill, but also as a suitable skill for English.

This is of course what the informants report when I ask them, and we have to keep in mind that they might have answered this way because they knew that the interview was about reading and because this was obviously the correct answer to give. However, I did find that most of the informants, ten to be exact, were able to give one or more reasons why reading is an important skill. This signals that they have actually thought about this in advance, because when asked why reading strategies are important eight could not answer. This tells us that the informants have a good attitude towards reading in this respect; they do see it as important. However, even so they still do not work on it.

This brings me to the next topic: in service education. If we assume that the teachers do in fact see reading as important, the reason why they do not work on it has to be connected to a lack of knowledge of the subject. This will be discussed further below.

7.7.4 A need for more in service education

As seen above the informants list a lack of time and that reading strategies are already being taught in Norwegian class as the main reasons why they do not work on reading in English class. In my opinion these are clearly not the main reasons why these informants work so little on reading. The main reason, in my opinion, is a lack of knowledge of the subject.

If we start by looking at the first argument, namely time, it is clear from both the case study of Fredrik and the discussion above that there is time, it is just a matter of knowing how to use the time available. Teaching reading strategies as a separate course at the beginning of the year is more time consuming and less efficient, however, this is the traditional way of teaching reading strategies, this is after all the way it has been done since the 1960s and 70s and thus might be the only way the informants know how to teach it. In other words there might be a lack of knowledge of reading pedagogy among the informants.

The next argument was that there is no need to spend time on reading strategies in English class as this is already taught in Norwegian class. This signal a lack of knowledge of how processing skills transfer from on language to another. The informants might be unaware of the linguistic threshold the pupils have to be above in order to transfer the skills from Norwegian into English. They might also be unaware of the additional challenges of reading in an L2 language and how they affect the speed of reading and thus reading comprehension as has been discussed above.

In addition I found while conducting my survey that eleven of the twelve informants found it difficult to answer what the term reading strategy means. They were all able to mention some reading strategies, but they were very uncertain as to whether or not they had understood the term correctly. All of this put together is what signalled to me that a lack of knowledge might be the main reason why most of these informants work so little on reading strategies.

To sum up, I have now dealt with the two most common reasons for not working on reading strategies given by my informants, namely a lack of time and that reading strategies are being taught in Norwegian class, and concluded that neither of these is valid. Through the theory of the area and the example of Fredrik I have shown that there is time, it is just a matter of how reading strategies are taught. With regards to the second excuse I found, based on the theory of the area, that the pupils have to have reached a certain linguistic threshold in English to be able to transfer processing skill such as reading strategies from Norwegian into

English. In addition to this constraint there is a question of whether or not the pupils actually have processing skills to transfer. These were the excuses given by my informants, however I suspected that there was more to it than that, and chose to include two reasons of my own. These were the teachers' attitudes and a lack of knowledge. I found that all the informants consider reading to be important, and based on this concluded that there is nothing wrong with their attitudes towards reading. This left me with only one possible valid explanation, and that was a lack of knowledge. During my interviews I found that the teachers were very uncertain of what reading strategies are and how to work on it. I believe this is the reason behind their excuses. They believe that there is too little time because they are not aware of how to teach reading strategies effectively, and they believe that the pupils can transfer processing skills from one the L1 into the L2 automatically because they are unaware of the linguistic threshold. If this is the case, the situation can only be remedied by more in-service training.

8. Conclusion

I will start this chapter by looking at whether or not I have been able to answer the research questions I presented in chapter 1. Next, I will look at possible directions for further research on the area of reading instruction at all levels of the Norwegian school system, before finishing by looking at possible implications for the reading instructions in upper secondary school based on what I have discovered during my survey.

8.1 My research questions revisited

Looking back to chapter 1, my research statement was “Reading in upper secondary; what do they read, how is it taught and what are the teachers’ attitudes towards the teaching of reading?” I then proceeded to part this research statement into three smaller and more manageable research questions, which were:

- 1 Reading; what and how much is read?
- 2 Are reading strategies taught? How/why not?
- 3 What are their attitudes towards the teaching of reading and reading strategies?

Now the time has come to evaluate whether or not I have been able to answer these questions. To start with the first question I found that there is little reading being done in these informants’ classes, and that what is being read is, for the most part, textbook texts.

Next, I investigated whether or not the informants work on reading strategies in class and found that, in most cases, they do not. The most common reasons given for this is that there is not enough time in English class to focus on reading instruction, and that it is not

necessary to spend time on this in English class since it is already being taught in Norwegian class. I discussed both reasons in chapter 7, and concluded that neither of them was valid. I did, however, also find that three of the informants do work on reading strategies in class. Two of them teach this as a separate course, whereas the last informant teaches it as an integrated part of his teaching.

With regards to the third, and last, research question, I found that all the informants have a good attitude towards the teaching of reading. They all report that they do see reading as a suitable skill for English, and that they consider reading strategies as important.

To sum up, it is my opinion that I, through my survey, have been able to answer the research questions posed in chapter 1. It is, however, important to remember that these answers are based on information given from 12 individual informants, and that there is variation within the group. In addition to that, it is important to keep in mind that these answers only show how my informants teach reading.

8.2 Further research

8.2.1 Possible quantitative follow-up studies of the EFL instruction

As mentioned in chapter 4, the results of my survey are not immediately generalizable to Norwegian upper secondary school, since I have described the situation with regards to reading and reading instruction as perceived by my 12 informants. This sample is too small to allow me to say anything about the reading instructions in English in upper secondary school in general. However, I do believe, based on the fact that nine of the 12 informants in my survey answered the questions with regard to reading quite similarly, that I have uncovered a trend with regards to reading instruction and that it would be interesting to follow up, and see whether it is the same in the whole country.

As mentioned, this should be done in a large quantitative follow-up study. In my opinion the best way to do this would be to develop a questionnaire and distribute this to a representative sample of formally qualified English teachers in upper secondary schools located in various parts of the country. This questionnaire could potentially follow the same setup as my interview guide with regards to topics that should be covered. However, as my survey was based on semi structured interviews, a future researcher would have to develop their own questions and answer alternatives. A follow-up study done this way, provided that the reply rate is high enough to form a representative sample of English teachers, would be able to tell us what the situation is like in the whole country.

Another possible large-scale follow-up research would be conducting the same survey as I have described above at the elementary and/or lower-secondary school levels. This could tell us at which level of the school system the problem, with regards to reading instruction, starts. This is of interest as it would show us at which levels of the school system we need to start reevaluating and improving the reading instruction. If the results of this survey indicated unsatisfactory reading instructions at lower levels of the school system as well, it would be necessary to implement changes at these levels too.

8.2.2 An equivalent study in Norwegian

My thesis has been concentrated on the reading instruction that takes place in English in upper secondary school, however it would be interesting to conduct the same survey as I have done for this thesis to see whether or not this apparent lack of reading instruction is something that applies only to English, or if it is the same for other subjects as well. One subject that it would be particularly interesting to look at is Norwegian, that is to say at the reading instructions in Norwegian class compared to in English. Are the Norwegian teachers more aware of the importance of reading strategies? The reason why, in my opinion, Norwegian would be the most interesting subject to do this follow-up research on, is that some of my informants are of the opinion that since their pupils receive adequate reading instruction in Norwegian class there is no need for the English teachers to spend time on it in their language instruction.

If, through conducting a small scale survey of the reading instruction in Norwegian class, one discovers a similar trend to the one I discovered for English during my survey, it would be interesting and above all, useful to conduct a large-scale follow-up study, similar to the one I described for English in section 8.1.1 above. This would tell us if inadequate reading instruction is a problem in Norwegian as well as English, and whether or not changes would have to be implemented in other school subjects as well.

8.3 Implications for the EFL instruction of upper secondary school

In chapters 5, 6 and 7 I have highlighted the problems with the reading instruction provided by my informants and discussed these. Now it is time to look at what can be done in order to improve the situation. The first thing that would have to be done is, in fact, to make teachers start teaching reading strategies. If we look back to my survey we see that only a small number of informants report that this is something they spend any time on in class. They say that this is mostly because there is not enough time, however, in my opinion this is not the case. As shown in the case study of Fredrik, in chapter 6 above, there is time, it is just a matter of how you go about it. In my opinion the main reason why these teachers work so little on reading strategies in class is in fact a lack of knowledge. If, as my study indicates, the teachers are in fact uncertain of what the term reading strategy means then naturally they are unaware of the best way to teach these strategies too. There is, in other words, a great need for more in service training among the English teachers. Improving the teachers' knowledge of reading and reading strategies is the obvious starting point when trying to improve the reading instruction itself. If the teachers are confident in what reading strategies are and can be convinced that there is enough time to work on it in class there is a much better chance that they would actually do it.

The next thing that needs to be done is to introduce more reading in English classes. It is only by reading that the pupils can be expected to improve their reading skills. In connection with this the teachers also need to introduce the pupils to longer and more complicated texts than the ones found in most textbooks. By this I do not mean that the teachers should have the pupils read university level texts immediately upon entering upper secondary school. These texts are likely to be too difficult for most of the pupils and so might break their motivation for reading. However, I believe that the level of difficulty should be raised as the course proceeds. This will challenge the pupils without breaking their motivation. This could be done by, for instance, accompanying difficult texts by longer wordlists when starting the process and then shorten them as the course proceeds. In the end the pupils might not even feel the need for wordlists anymore. This work would also need to be accompanied with work aimed at helping the pupils develop skills for how to handle unknown vocabulary.

To sum up, the main problems with the reading instruction, with regards to English as a study preparatory subject, is that there is too little reading going on, that the texts they are reading are too easy and accompanied by word lists and that the teachers lack the needed knowledge of what reading strategies are, how to teach them and why they are important. In order to improve the reading instructions a good place to start would be to offer the teachers more in service education. This would make them more confident that they know what reading strategies are, how to teach them and most importantly why they should spend time on it. The next step would be to increase the amount that is read in class in order to create more opportunity to work on reading. In addition to this the level of difficulty of the texts that are used should also be raised as the course proceeds.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

This is the interview guide I used for my interviews.

Semi structured interview guide:

“Reading in upper secondary; what do they read, how is it taught, and what are the teachers’ attitudes towards the teaching of reading?”

Background:

- What kind of education do you have?
- How many years of teaching experience do you have?
- Have you stayed for any length of time in an English speaking country? Length of time is here defined as three months or more.
- How comfortable are you speaking English in the classroom?

Reading; what and how much is read?

- Do you use the textbook? How and to what extent?
- How much is read beside the textbook? What titles and genres?
- Do you and your class find texts to read on the internet?

Reading strategies:

- What does the term reading strategy mean to you?
- Do you teach reading strategies to your class? How/Why not?

Attitude towards the teaching of reading and reading strategies:

- Do you consider the teaching of reading strategies to be important?

- Do you think that reading is suitable as a basic skill for English?

Literary and computer resources:

- Library
- Computers

Reading in the LK06 syllabus:

The pupils shall be able to

1. extract essential information from spoken and written texts and discuss the author's attitudes and point of view
2. select appropriate listening, speaking, reading and writing strategies adapted to the purpose, situation and genre
3. read formal and informal texts in various genres and with different purposes
4. select and use content from different sources independently, critically and responsibly (LK06 p.6)