



**U i T**

THE ARCTIC  
UNIVERSITY  
OF NORWAY

Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education

# **Media habits vs. English proficiency: A study of L1 Norwegian primary school children**

**Audun Bakkevoll**

*Master thesis in ENG 3993 English and Education ... May 2018*





## **Foreword**

I would like to thank my supervisor, Marit Westergaard for her guidance and patience. Thank you for not giving up on me.

Thank you to my colleagues who allowed me to use some of their precious time to perform the survey in their classes, and thank you to the pupils who kindly answered the survey to the best of their abilities.

Thank you to Titti Legland for invaluable support and guidance. Your commitment and enthusiasm is invaluable.

Lastly, I wish to thank my girlfriend Danielle, whom without this thesis would not be possible. Thank you for your support and for pushing me

## **Abstract**

This thesis compares the media habits of 148 Norwegian children with their English proficiency. The goal is to investigate how much of an effect, if any, their media habits, such as listening to music, watching TV/video, reading books and playing video games have towards improving their English. The 148 participants were between 10 and 13 years old, and answered a survey where they specified the number of hours they spent on an average day on each type of media followed by an English proficiency test.

The results from the test were then compared with the number of hours they spent on media in order to find positive or negative tendencies towards increased levels of English proficiency. The results show that there is a positive correlation between the English proficiency test score and watching video, either on TV or on streaming websites such as YouTube and Netflix.

Comparing the participant's age to their test scores, however, saw the clearest tendency towards increased levels of English proficiency. A majority of the participants rarely or never used several of the types of media presented to them in the survey. Because of this, some of the possible tendencies have to be disregarded because of the limited number of participants they apply to. This led me to conclude that in order for a survey and thesis such as this to have the desired effect, the participants should be older, and ideally in lower secondary school.

## Table of Contents

1	Introduction.....	5
2	Theoretical background.....	7
2.1	Input.....	8
2.2	Intake.....	10
2.3	Feedback.....	12
2.4	Negotiation.....	12
2.5	Recast.....	13
2.6	Assessment.....	15
2.7	Output.....	16
3	Previous research.....	18
4	Research questions.....	22
5	Methodology.....	23
5.1	The survey.....	23
5.2	Participants.....	27
6	Results.....	28
7	Discussion.....	39
7.1	Study questions.....	39
7.2	Further discussion.....	41
7.3	Tendencies vs. correlation and causation.....	42
8	Conclusions.....	44
9	Works cited.....	46
10	Appendix.....	49



# 1. Introduction

The reason why I have chosen to write this thesis is a complex one. I initially wanted to explore the function of English as a lingua franca among refugees coming to Norway, but after discussing this with my supervisor, we concluded that this was more of a social science study than a linguistic one, so we moved on to the acquisition of English as a third language. I began working on this, but couldn't really find any inspiration in it, and decided to move on from it. My supervisor then showed me a thesis written last year by a fellow student at the University of Tromsø – Daniel Flakowski Andersen. In his thesis, he explored the effects the media habits of Norwegian youth had on their level of English proficiency. I found this to be very interesting, and seeing as he concluded by suggesting researching a younger population, and I work as an English teacher at a primary school, I looked at this as a perfect body of work to base my thesis on.

In my role as an English teacher, I witness first hand the different factors that play a part in learning the English language. One of these factors, especially at a young age is exposure to the language, and this exposure is coming from more and more different angles and sources. Youtube, Netflix, TV, games, and countless other medias are a constant source of input for youth growing up today – whether they themselves acknowledge it or not. But what kind of effect do these medias have on the English proficiency of children in the second half of primary/lower secondary school, and how can we use potential findings in teaching English in schools? That is what I aim to explore in this thesis.

When discussing the means and methods of English acquisition in the world in general, and Scandinavia and Norway more specifically, it is my firm belief that one would be amiss not to consider the effect that media has. We often speak of “kids today” and “young people nowadays” and how they have so many arenas where they are subjected to a vast variety of impressions, including ones concerning language. However, the same could be said about previous generations as well. We can look back several generations and still find that children were subjected to many of the same impressions as they are now, albeit in different forms. So children and adolescents today aren't the first generation being exposed to the different kinds of media that they are. That being the case, it was my humble impression during the course of my time at university, that neither the pedagogics nor the English didactics classes did enough to acknowledge the important factor that media is, or at the very least *can* be. I believe that

given that we have had a generation to watch this development, it is surprising that the role of media in learning English, and the possibilities of using it *teaching* English, aren't discussed and showcased to a greater extent in Norwegian teacher education programmes today.

There are, of course, differences between present day and ten to fifteen years ago. One of those differences are that the various types of media are much more accessible now than they were before. What this in turn means is that it is no longer possible to limit these media platforms to the confinement of our homes. They have, through the enormous increase in available technological platforms, "invaded" both our workplaces and our schools. Children have smartphones. Whether they are allowed to use them during school or not varies, but along with more and more schools across the country utilizing various forms of digital learning tools, their access to the internet while at school, and all that said internet can offer, is unavoidable. It stands to reason then, that one would be wise to explore the possible pedagogical advantages that can be gained from this access.

The purpose and goal of this assignment is twofold. First of all, I found Flakowski Andersens (2017) thesis interesting. Mainly because of the factors stated above, but also as a potential springboard for my own thesis. This is, as I touched upon earlier, a relatively unploughed field as far as pedagogical research goes – at least nationally in Norway. This means that even though we have the aforementioned year-old master thesis available, I still feel that a variation on the theme focused on younger learners is relevant, especially since Flakowski Andersen indicates that his participants were too old.

The second reason I have for choosing my subject is my own day-to-day job as an English teacher. I mentioned this role briefly at the very beginning, and it is my main motivation for both writing this thesis and for the choice I have made concerning its subject. I currently teach 5<sup>th</sup> grade at an elementary school in the southeast of Norway and I am responsible for both planning and executing the English lessons for all of the four classes in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. This is a role I will, barring unforeseen events, have for the same children the next two years as well, and both vocational pride and my genuine affection for the children equips me with a desire to do this job to the best of my abilities. Part of that job is to motivate, and by catching the pupils attention by utilizing the various mediums they use on a regular basis voluntarily, one can hopefully spark some enthusiasm towards the subject in question – in this case English.



Of course, in a school setting motivation is not worth much in itself without relevant ties to the curriculum and a sound didactical and pedagogical platform.

The National Curriculum for Knowledge Promotion in Primary and Secondary Education and Training (LK06) have highlighted five basic skills that ideally should permeate all subjects taught in Norwegian schools; Calculating, reading, writing, oral skills and digital skills. How these five basic skills are implemented in the various subjects are up to the individual schools and teachers to decide, and this means that a clear idea of how to implement some kin of media input in English lesson not only has the potential to increase the students motivation by being a “break from the norm” and a “fun lesson”, but it can also serve as a contributor towards implementing one of the five basic skills into the English lessons.

If there are connections or tendencies to be found in this study, it is my hope and wish that those could turn out to be useful in classrooms even if it is only in the one I am teaching in at any given time. But if one teacher can find the use in a specific study, chances are so could others as well. So even if this thesis will be forgotten a year or even a week from now, some of the points will inevitably find their way to classrooms through me, and hopefully through my colleagues as well.

There is a reason I am using the somewhat vague terms “connections” and “tendencies”, and that is because I hesitate to label anything found in this thesis correlations or causations. The survey is not big enough, and the participant group is to homogenous for the study to have the diversity I ideally would have wanted. But as a tool for further examinations and for inspiration in classrooms, it will hopefully serve its purpose. So in addition to finding out *if and which types* of children’s media habits contribute to an increased level of English proficiency, I ask the following question; *How* can the media habits of children contribute to a higher learning outcome in English?

## **2 Theoretical background**

The goal of the theory section is to provide theoretical background information to strengthen my thesis and survey. Since media input forms the basis of this thesis, I will use this section to present the different types of input and try to highlight what current research tell us about them. We need to have a clear picture of which kinds of input that can be seen as pedagogical

and which can't. Andersen (2017) also categorized the different types of media that give the same type of input into groups, and as my research is based on his, but with a younger target group, I have chosen to follow his example and categorize them in the same way. The different kinds of input also need to be analysed if we want to measure the effect any given of them, in this case media input, have on the acquisition of English as a second language (L2).

## 2.1 Input

The input we are exposed to changes all the time. As adults, for example, we adjust the level of language to the age of the recipient. This is not only the case when children eventually are to learn a second, or even third language, but with their first language (L1) as well.

“Child-Directed Speech”, “infant-directed speech”, “motherese”, or more broadly “caregiver” or “caretaker speech” (Wiley, 2008) are all different names for the simplified language we use to our children. Wiley uses the example “*Dadda gone è Yes, daddy’s gone*” to show what such adjusted language might look like. This is, however, not something L2 learners are frequently exposed to. The vast majority of Norwegian English learners start learning English in school, and by then the Child-Directed Speech is replaced by “Teacher-Talk”, “Interlanguage-Talk” and “Foreigner-Talk” (Krashen, 1981).

“Teacher-talk” is when the teacher is speaking to the children in the target language, and as with Child-Directed-Speech, this is adjusted to the level of proficiency of the pupils (Krashen, 1981). In my own experience, talking to the children exclusively in English is rarely effective before the 6<sup>th</sup>, or perhaps even 7<sup>th</sup> grade. This is due to the fact that earlier than 6<sup>th</sup> grade you are all but guaranteed to have pupils in your classroom that won't understand, or at the very least misinterpret substantial portions of what you as a teacher is saying. This will, in my opinion, lead to a reduced sense of achievement and consequently the loss of motivation for those “weaker” pupils. As language teachers, we obviously have both an expectation and an obligation to provide input in the target language, but this input needs, as mentioned, to be measured out in accordance to the level of proficiency of the class.

When the pupils have reached a level of proficiency that is at such a level that adjusted teacher-talk no longer is necessary, the level of input needs to further increase. Spontaneous verbal production is an important part in learning a language, and Bjørke, Dypedahl and Myklevold (2014) provide several suggestions to how one can encourage this in the

classroom, such as roleplay, throwing a dice to decide what to talk about, etc. In such a setting, where the level of proficiency is fairly similar, the pupils get the opportunity to use the target language in a controlled environment where errors are both permitted and expected. This interaction between L2 learners is what Krashen (1981) refers to as “Interlanguage-talk”.

In a study on 18 adult learners, all native Spanish speakers with different levels of proficiency, Porter (1986) concluded that “*although learners cannot provide each other with the accurate grammatical and sociolinguistic input that native speakers can, learners can offer each other genuine communicative practice, including the negotiation for meaning that is believed to aid second language acquisition.*” (1986: 200-222)

Foreigner-talk is when a native speaker will adjust their own language in order to make the foreigner understand more of what they are saying. The native speaker checks and confirms along the way to ensure that the receiver can understand them easily. (Ayuanita, 2013). These adjustments can vary from very simplified speech similar to child directed speech, to only adjusting certain types of terminology (Flakowski Andersen, 2017).

While it could be argued that the education of an L2 follows the steps of child directed speech → interlanguage talk → foreigner talk, the same cannot be said of the kind of input media provides. Flakowski Andersen (2017) states that most variants of media are presented almost exclusively with native speech. I don’t necessarily agree with that, many YouTubers are for example L2 speakers, but he also makes one valid point – The input is not adapted. The channels not featuring native speakers strive to speak as fluently as possible, but it should also be remembered that user-based media such as YouTube and Reddit also feature a certain amount of English that is deliberately incorrect or ungrammatical (slang, abbreviations etc.), and that these can be a confusing factor as well. In any case are the only kinds of media where speech is adjusted to the level of the receiver, those where direct communication between the participants is possible – for example playing video games.

In discussing video games as a learning tool, I also would like to draw attention to a study of brain chemistry from 1998, which found that

*“...playing video games stimulates substantial dopamine release. This finding is significant, inasmuch as dopamine is a chemical precursor to the memory storage event. Thus, it may be*

*that video games are able to chemically “prime” the brain for learning. In this study, the brains of video game players showed a steady increase in dopamine levels during play, reaching about twice the amount of nonplayers.”* (Koepp et.al, 1998:266-268).

So in addition to being a source of input, playing video games actually triggers the reward-centre in the brain, which in turn increases the possibilities of learning.

Playing video games, at least where the participants communicate verbally, can, in my opinion, be compared to those classroom activities mentioned earlier promoting spontaneous verbal production. The difference is that there isn't a teacher present to adjust and correct incorrect language. But even so, it can be argued that this form of interlanguage talk between L2, or even L3, speakers is more useful towards learning and developing an L2 than the unadjusted input provided by TV, movies and Netflix. The only aid potentially provided on these platforms would be subtitles, and while they can be of good use, we also have to assume that the less proficient the receiver is, the more attention it will direct at the subtitles at the expense of the actual verbal dialogue. As a result, these types of media will presumably be more beneficial to the more advanced learner, as that learner will have the most “intake” in addition to “input”.

## **2.2 Intake**

This tailoring of input addressed in the last section is obviously important. The reason for this can be explained by the difference between “input” and “intake”. While “input” can be described as any exposure to the target language at all, regardless of the level, “intake” is what the learner is actually able to comprehend, process and internalize (Gass & Selinker, 2013). If I were to show my 10-11 year old pupils a documentary of, say, the solar system in English without any subtitles, few, if any, of them would be able to learn much from this. It is certainly a form of input, but when the difference between the level of proficiency the children have and the level of English material presented to them is too big, you would, in my opinion, waste a lesson. This brings me back to what kind of effect media input realistically can have for children attending primary school.

The process of acquiring new words and phrases is a complex one, where to achieve full comprehension one needs to do more than just understand. The word or phrase needs to be

both remembered and to be put into context, and if the input received from for example a media outlet is too large and too complex, it may well be comprehended, but not acquired. “*Comprehension, in the usual sense of the word, refers to a single event, whereas acquisition refers to a permanent state.*” (Gass & Selinker, 2013, p. 755) I will present some more research on this in section 3.

In a classroom setting, the teacher can increase the amount of intake the pupils can have from, for example, watching a movie. This can be achieved by doing good preparation work and activities before watching the movie, giving the pupils assignments during the movie, and arrange activities designed to help the pupils processing what they have seen afterwards. Before watching, the teacher can prepare the pupils for what they are going to see, and focus on content and language. This enables them to acquire the necessary prerequisites, and they can imagine both content and plot. At certain points during the movie/TV-show/documentary, the teacher can stop the film and give the pupils assignments connected to what they have seen, or on their expectations of what will come next. Afterwards it is obviously important to discuss what they have seen, but it can also be a good idea to give them a chance to reflect on it as well – can they for example make an alternate ending? Can they formulate a segment from a new perspective (Bjørke, Dypedahl and Myklevold 2014)? Activities such as these are some of the many ways of increasing the odds of the pupils getting more intake rather than just unprocessed input. Input that undershoots may cause boredom, and if it overshoots, it will cause frustration (Krashen, 1981).

Media today is more tailor-made towards the individual user than ever before. Countless devices, and even more providers of entertainment and information, means that the users can be selective of what they choose to spend their time on. As Flakowski Andersen (2017) points out, the users can elect to ignore or move on from input that has too difficult language. Because there are so many alternatives, one can simply choose a different video, movie, book or game. On the other hand, this vast amount of choice also means that users are all but guaranteed to find something to suit their taste, and could perhaps be incentivized to challenge themselves language wise, if the content is deemed interesting or exciting enough.

Another result of the aforementioned “media revolution” is that making content that previously would have been difficult or incomprehensible understandable is much easier now. Both Google and YouTube provide translations or subtitling of most of its content, and music

videos are in many cases replaced by, or supplemented with lyrics videos. This *can* mean that a larger portion of the content consumed can be categorized as “intake”, but if we consider the fast pace of consumption previously discussed, these two factors could in reality cancel each other out.

## **2.3 Feedback**

Feedback is an important factor in language learning. It is the teacher’s opportunity to comment and adjust on the pupils’ use of the language in such a way that the pupils can adjust in real time. Feedback can be given in different ways: “*explicit (stating that there is a problem) and implicit (feedback during the course of interaction)*” Gass & Selinker (2013). Teachers have to use feedback regularly in classroom situations, and as with input, feedback is also adjustable to the level of proficiency with the receiver. Feedback for a 5<sup>th</sup> grade pupil may largely consist of the correction of spelling and pronunciation, but as pupils grow older and more proficient, the level of feedback also develops and finally reaches a point where it can be more focused and detail oriented with the aim of developing the language further. How feedback is given is individual, and feedback is not restricted to the classroom either. We correct and adjust each other regularly, especially when speaking a foreign language (“Excuse me?” “Could you repeat that?”), so that even without a teacher present there can be some degree of feedback given. Interactions through social media or video games are in my opinion good examples of feedback being given without teacher aid.

## **2.4 Negotiation**

Unlike feedback, negotiation only is needed when the level of communication is so inadequate that meaning is lost. This goes beyond simply correcting grammatical errors, but rather aims to keep the conversation going. As such, this is a form of communication that, in my view, is less effective in a classroom situation. If a teacher-pupil conversation reaches a point where the teacher needs to use negotiation in order to understand the pupil, it is my pedagogical opinion that the teacher would serve the pupil better by reverting back to their native language, and then have a conversation about what both the pupil in question, and the rest of the class, should say in that given situation. This is because the use of negotiation may demotivate and deter the pupil from using the target language verbally in class the next time, because it might create a false expectation of having to use correct grammatical English in order to be understood (Bjørke, Dypedahl & Myklevold, 2014).

Hatch (1978) pp. 420-421 provides an example where most of the conversation between one native, and one non-native speakers (NS and NNS) revolves around figuring out what the other is saying through use of negotiation:

*”NS: Who is the best player in Colombia?”*

*NNS: Colombia?*

*NS: Does uh . . . who is the Colombian player?*

*NNS: Me?*

*NS: No, in Colombia, who is the player?*

*NNS: In Colombia plays. Yah.*

*NS: No, on your team. On the Millionarios.*

*NNS: Ah yah, Millionarios.*

*NS: No, on the Millionarios team.*

*NNS: Millionarios play in Colombia. In Sud America. In Europa.*

*NS: Do, do they have someone like Pele in Colombia?*

*NNS: Pele? In Colombia? Pele?*

*NS: In Colombia? Who is, who is “Pele” in Colombia? Do you have someone?*

*NNS: In Bogota?*

*NS: Yeah, who is the best player?*

*NNS: In Santo de Brazil?*

*NS: OK [gives up] and are you center forward?”*

In this example, the conversation shuts down because the NNS never fully understands what the NS is asking him. In a classroom situation, a conversation like this would almost certainly lead to a reduced sense of achievement with the pupil, which is something to avoid.

## **2.5 Recast**

A more subtle, and, in my opinion more pedagogical form of feedback is recast. “A recast is a reformulation of an incorrect utterance that maintains the original meaning of the utterance, as in the example below, where the NS reformulates the NNS’s incorrect question (Philp, 1999)

*”NNS: Why he want this house?”*

NS: *Why does he want this house?*” (Gass & Selinker, 2013:pp 364).

This was an example from outside of the classroom, but Lyster (2004) via Gass & Selinker (2013) also provide different examples of how recast can be used in a classroom, in this case when teaching French:

### **”Clarification requests**

STUDENT : *Et le coccinelle. . . “And the (M) ladybug.”*

TEACHER : *Pardon? “Sorry?”*

STUDENT : *La coccinelle . . . “The (F) ladybug.”*

### **Repetitions**

STUDENT : *La chocolat. “(F) Chocolate.”*

TEACHER : *La chocolat? “(F) Chocolate.”*

STUDENT : *Le chocolat. “(M) Chocolate.”*

### **Metalinguistic clues**

STUDENT : *Parce qu’elle cherche, euh, son, son carte “Because she’s looking for, um, her, her (M) card.”*

TEACHER : *Pas son carte. “Not her (M) card.”*

STUDENT : *Euh, sa carte? “Um, her (F) card?” (12-31)*

### **Elicitation**

TEACHER: *Il vit où un animal domestique? Où es-ce que ça vit? “Where does a pet live? Where does it live?”*

STUDENT: *Dans un maison. “In a (M) house.”*

TEACHER: *Dans . . .? Attention. “In . . .? Careful.”*

STUDENT: *Dans une maison. “In a (F) house.””*

(Gass & Selinker, 2013:pp 365-366)

The errors made by the students in this example are minor, and easy to correct, unlike comprehension difficulties that require negotiation. The students are made aware of the fact



that they have made an error, and are immediately given the opportunity to correct it and the lesson continues. There are studies who argue that recast might not be as effective towards acquisition as, say, feedback, but that it is practical to use in a classroom (Gass & Selinker, 2013). Be that as it may, I would from a pedagogical standpoint argue that recast is better than negotiation seeing as the pupils are given the chance to immediately correct and adjust themselves, and as such get a sense of achievement in the process.

## 2.6 Assessment

It can also be argued that both feedback and recast are parts of what The Norwegian Directorate of Education (Udir) calls continuous assessment. Udir lists four principles for good continuous assessment:

*“There are four principles in particular that are central to achieve learning-based continuous assessment. These four principles are research-based and a part of regulation to the Education Act. All pupils and apprentices are entitled to continuous assessment. Pupils and apprentices are to understand what they are to learn, and what is expected of them.*

- *Pupils and apprentices are to understand what they are to learn, and what is expected of them.*
- *Pupils and apprentices are to receive feedback telling them about the quality of their work or their performance.*
- *Pupils and apprentices are to be advised on how they can improve*
- *The pupils and apprentices are to be involved in their own educational work by, for example, assessing their own work and development.”*

(Translated into English from <https://www.udir.no/laring-og-trivsel/vurdering/om-vurdering/underveisvurdering/>)

As we can see, several of these principles are perfectly matched to using both feedback and recast and as such, these are well suited for classroom use, validated by The Norwegian Directorate of Education (Udir).

## 2.7 Output

In addition to the various forms of input, there are some possibilities for output when using media and it's beneficial to look at the difference between input and output in the context of language acquisition. There is a significant difference between being able to comprehend an utterance, whether it is grammatical or not and being able to produce a grammatically satisfactory sentence on one's own. I want to use a rather trivial example, and that is Yoda from the Star Wars movies. His English is consistently ungrammatical, this quote being a good example of how he speaks; *"When nine hundred years old you reach, look as good you will not"* (Yoda, Star Wars: Return of the Jedi: 00:38:30-00:38:35). One would assume that most semi-proficient English learners would understand what Yoda is saying here, but the same learners may not be able to correctly rephrase it to make it grammatically sound. Swain (1985) states that production through output "may force the learner to move from semantic processing to syntactic processing" (1985:249) Swain, inspired by the lack of L2 development in immersion children in even after years of academic studying, studied children learning French in an immersion context, and found that "what was lacking in their development as native-like speakers of French was the opportunity to use language productively, as opposed to using language merely for comprehension." (1985:249)

Swain, in this paper, introduced the notion of comprehensible output, or pushed output. What this concept means is that the production of learners is pushed in order to make themselves understood. This might mean modifying a previous utterance, or try new grammatical forms that they haven't tried before (Gass & Selinker, 2013). Media is dominated by English speakers (Simonsen, 2005), and as I have previously discussed, there are many different ways of getting English input from media. What about output then? Not all types of media can provide opportunities for output, and not all who do have the same expectation of grammatically correct English as you might expect in face-to-face conversations. The comment section on YouTube for example, has a lot of grammatically poor English that passes unremarked by users. However, on other, often forum-type websites, the expectations are different. Flakowski Andersen (2017) describes Reddit as a website where

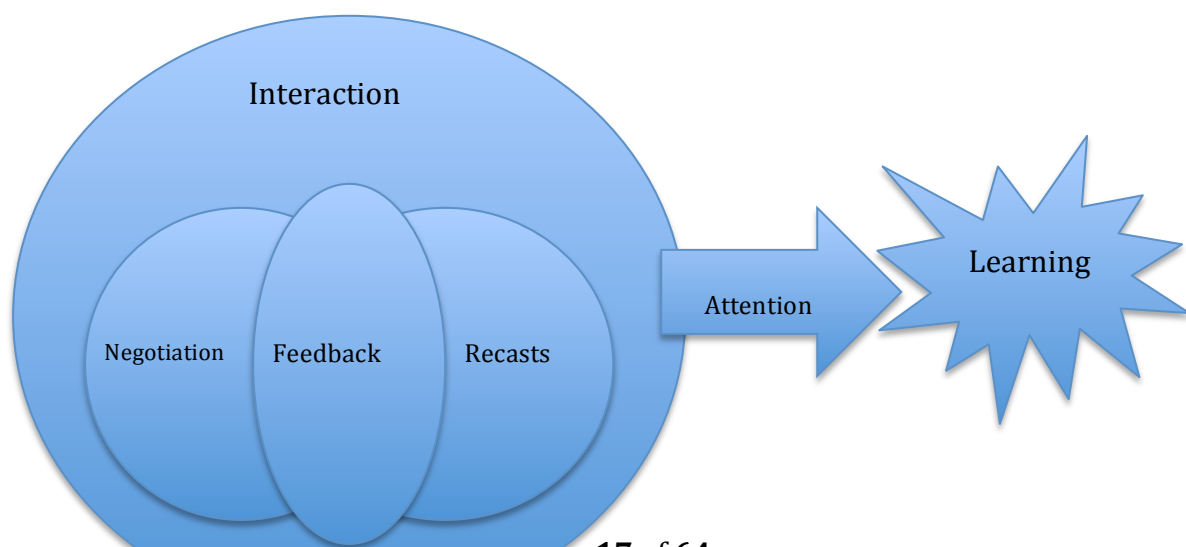
*"...there is an expectation for perfect English when reading an argument or opinion from another user, and your credibility is hurt if you have grammatical errors in your comment. By participating in a discussion on this website, you will have to produce perfect English in*

*order to be taken seriously. By writing imperfect English, the content of your argument or opinion will most likely be disregarded and your grammar will be corrected by other users. Users of Reddit know this, which might contribute to raising the threshold for daring to submit a comment in fear of writing ungrammatical English.” (2017:pp 12-13)*

Oral output works differently, in part because of the arenas where it is used, and in part because of the participants using it. When one is, for example, playing a video game, or taking part in a video group chat, the language is rarely criticized. Groups playing games together, are working towards the same goal – the language used is of less concern as long as everybody understands each other (Chik, 2014). Similarly, one can imagine the reaction if someone in a group chat were to correct the language used. The expectations are generally lower, and one can also imagine it being harder to criticize someone’s language directly. Criticizing, or in Internet terms, “trolling”, the language of others is presumably much easier in writing. There is time to check the correct way to write the phrase in question, there is never a risk of having to face the receiver of the criticism, and there is no pressure to produce a quick and correct response of one’s own. There is a phrase describing people who criticize online, whether it concerns language or otherwise, and it is to “hide behind your keyboard”.

This sort of criticism is, of course, something that isn’t, or at least shouldn’t be found in classrooms. Output, both verbally and in written form is encouraged, and as I have mentioned earlier, the feedback of such output happens in a controlled environment with either a teacher providing it, or managing the output provided by classmates.

The combined effect of the various forms of input and output towards learning is illustrated in the following model from Gass & Selinker (2013:pp 360)



### 3 Previous research

This section contains an overview of relevant research that I have used in the process of creating this study.

I have used a study of digital reading assessment (two of the basic skills highlighted in the curriculum of LK06 – digital skills and reading) where Frønes, Narvhus & Aasebø (2013) analyze a PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) assessment of digital reading from 2009 where Norway was one of the participating countries. The students participating were 10th graders, so they were a few years older than my participants, and they were reading in L1. The study concludes with “[i]n all the PISA countries, the gender differences are in the girls’ favour when it comes to reading on paper.” The papers had both academic language and everyday language.

I have chosen to include this because if there isn’t any gender gap in the levels of proficiency in my survey, the media habits could be a contributing factor to this. Another study backing this was made by Brevik, Olsen & Hellekjær (2016). This study showed a large gender difference in L1 and L2 proficiency as seen in table 1. The study used data from two national reading tests, which meant that as large a sample of 10 311 16-year-old students in Norwegian schools created the base for the data gathered.

**Table 1**

L1-L2 sample (N=10,331)	Gender		Study programme	
	Boys (n=5,398)	Girls (n=4,943)	Vocational (n=5,345)	General (n=4,900)
Percentage	52	48	52	47*
L1 mean (SD)	72.9 (18.6)	79.7 (17.7)	70.2 (19.2)	82.6 (15.2)
L2 mean (SD)	18.3 (7.6)	19.4 (7.2)	15.8 (7.6)	22.2 (5.5)
Cohen’s d in L1	0.37		0.7	
Cohen’s d in L2	0.15		0.9	

The table shows that when boys and girls read in the L1, girls perform much better than boys. However, when reading in L2, boys almost match the girls’ performance.

Perfetti & Harris (2017) states that because of the lack of transparency in English orthography, children who learn English often “*adopt decoding strategies that differ from those used by learners of more transparent orthographies*” (Verhoeven & Perfetti, 2017:pp 358). English-reading children in a study by Ellis & Hooper (2001) were shown to use none-decoding whole-word strategies in word identification. As a result they were twice as likely to make whole-word substitution as Welsh-reading children (Verhoeven & Perfetti, 2017).

This, to me, indicates the importance of a certain level of proficiency when reading English, and is part of the reason why I believe books may be the type of media with the clearest positive tendency.

Reading, and recognizing a word is also a crucial part of *knowing and comprehending* that word. Paul Nation (2013) and Anne Golden (2009) claim that by knowing a word one needs to know the following:

1. *The form of the word*: Knowing how the word is pronounced, how it sounds, *how it is written* and which possibilities are available in terms of conjugation and derivation.
2. *The semantic possibilities and limitations of the word*: Knowing what the meaning of the word is in different contexts. Knowing the metaphorical uses of the word, and what other words or type of word that are used with this word.
3. *The use of the word*: Knowing how the word is used in different contexts – pragmatic knowledge. Knowing how formal/informal the situation is, and if the has any positive or negative associations and in which combinations of words the word appears in – idioms, expression, etc.
4. *The syntactical possibilities and limitations of the word*: Knowing what syntactical function the word has in any given sentence and being able to place the word(s) correctly depending on their syntactical function.  
(Bjørke, Dypedahl & Myklevold, 2014).

Much of this knowledge is either necessary for, or can be gained by reading. This is especially true if the reading is encouraged and followed up by a teacher. This strengthens my hypothesis of books being the media variant with the most positive tendency towards higher levels of proficiency.

In terms of watching video, I focused on research concerning the effect of *listening* to new languages. I found a study which I found interesting, where van Zeeland & Schmitt (2013) examined to what degree English speakers could acquire three vocabulary knowledge dimensions in a non-language by listening. The participants scored highest in recognizing the form of the language, followed by the ability to recognize the grammar, and lastly they scored lowest in recalling meaning two weeks later. The study showed that L2 listening is a source of incidental vocabulary learning. The participants showed an improved knowledge of about 7 (29%) of the non-words immediately after listening, and retained knowledge of 4 or 5 (19%) of the words until two weeks later.

Table 3. The number of times each target item was answered correctly on the three tests, categorised according to the items' concreteness-abstractness, part of speech, and frequency of occurrence.

Target word	Nonword	C/A	POS	F	Form		Grammar		Meaning	
					Imm	Del	Imm	Del	Imm	Del
					Max20	Max10	Max20	Max10	Max20	Max10
Book	<i>vinse</i>	C	N	3	11	1	8	2	2	2
Community	<i>grike</i>	A	N	3	3		2	1		
To touch	<i>to lulk</i>	C	V	3	1		2	2		
To understand	<i>to cluss</i>	A	V	3	3		1	1	1	2
Sunny	<i>droil</i>	C	A	3	10	1	5	4	2	1
Difficult	<i>quirt</i>	A	A	3	5	3	2	1		
Burglar	<i>brouth</i>	C	N	7	13	4	11	4	2	3
Idea	<i>nunce</i>	A	N	7	13	3	10	4	1	
To sleep	<i>to belve</i>	C	V	7	8	2	10	3	2	
To try	<i>to glabe</i>	A	V	7	3	1	8		1	
Loud	<i>krung</i>	C	A	7	10	1	2			
Important	<i>tulse</i>	A	A	7	10	1	1	1		
Blood	<i>sulp</i>	C	N	11	19	7	17	6	14	4
Life	<i>troice</i>	A	N	11	12	2	11	2	1	

To run	<i>to treb</i>	C	V	11	8	5	6	6		
To help	<i>to voadge</i>	A	V	11	16	7	11	3	4	
Quick	<i>drepe</i>	C	A	11	9	7	3	1	1	1
Normal	<i>yince</i>	A	A	11	7	1	6	2		
House	<i>grath</i>	C	N	15	17	5	15	7	4	3
Time	<i>zouch</i>	A	N	15	8	1	5	2	1	2
To say	<i>to nersh</i>	C	V	15	14	3	9	2	2	
To need	<i>to strose</i>	A	V	15	8	2	8	2		
Big	<i>clauve</i>	C	A	15	6	1	8	1	1	
Good	<i>mulse</i>	A	A	15	6	2	1	2	2	
Total of correct answers				220	60	162	59	41	18	
(Max 480 on immediate, 240 on delayed)				45.8%	25.0%	33.7%	24.6%	8.5%	7.5%	
Mean number of correct items (Max 24)				11.00	6.00	8.10	5.90	2.05	1.80	

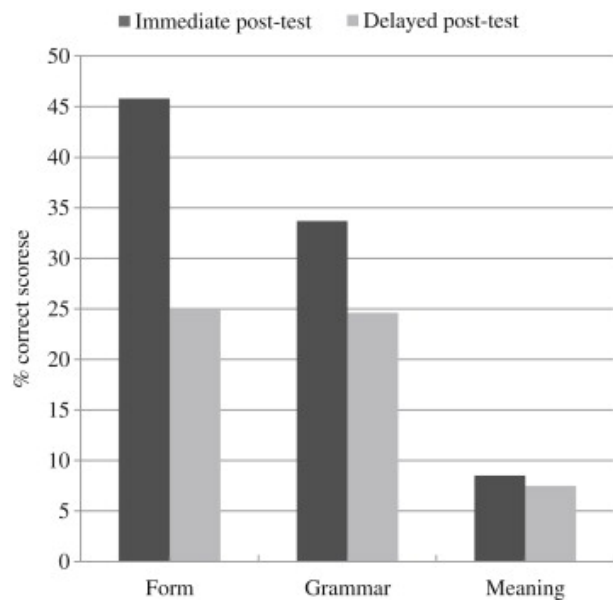
Imm = immediate post-test.

Del = delayed post-test.

C/A = concrete or abstract item.

POS = part of speech (Noun, Verb, Adjective).

FOO = frequency of occurrence.



(van Zeeland & Schmitt, 2013:pp 616-617).

The participants in my study obviously aren't tested in a non-language, but in a language that they have some degree of proficiency beforehand, and where there is a significantly larger source of input. So based on this, there would seem to be some potential for video as a means of increasing English proficiency.

## 4 Research questions

I have three research questions which I will try to answer in this thesis. The preceding theory section explains why I have chosen these research questions.

### PRIMARY RESEARCH QUESTION

*1. How can the information gathered here contribute to a higher learning outcome in English for Norwegian pupils?*

- Prediction: As this is a question that will have to be answered by the virtue of interpretation and theory it is hard to make a prediction towards anything. But if I was to predict anything it would be that this survey might provide some suggestions towards which of the basic skills in LK06 that can benefit from using media in teaching English.

### SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

*2. Does the use of English media result in a higher level of English proficiency among 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> grade pupils in Norway?*

- Prediction: Yes. I predict that the increased amount of input the regular use of English media provides will on the whole result in an increased level of proficiency. This does not mean that I believe that all of the media variants will have the same effect, but rather that the overall tendency will be positive.

*3. Which of the different types of media input addressed in this survey has the most positive tendency towards higher English proficiency?*

- Prediction: I predict that reading books will have the most positive tendency towards higher English proficiency. The reason for this is that in order to have some pleasure and dividends of reading, the reader needs to have a mental word bank of sorts in



order to automatically process the words in the text as they appear (Bjørke, Dypedahl & Myklevold, 2014). Reading regularly will also in my opinion potentially expand the reader's vocabulary to a greater extent than listening will, seeing as fewer words will "disappear" in the input process. Reading also eliminates the dialect/accents factor, which might serve as a distraction for an English learner.

## **5. Methodology**

While in the early phases of writing my master's thesis I got a job at a local primary school in my district. This changed my plans on how to recruit participants. Originally I planned to distribute my survey by E-mailing it to schools I had previously worked on as a substitute teacher both in my former and present hometown. The data was collected using an online service called Google Forms, due to the fact that the school where I work and performed the test has a Google-based digital system. First, I considered a service called SurveyGizmo, but because of the nature of my method for acquiring participants, SurveyGizmo was too difficult to use because this service records IP-addresses, which means I would have needed to get participants to sign an agreement in order for them to legally be able to answer the survey. Our Google network, on the other hand, does not store any IP-addresses and is completely anonymous outside of the school hub, which makes collecting data, and assuring the pupils' anonymity, much easier. It would also be more challenging convincing my colleagues to agree to use a different system because of the fact that everything that is done in the Google universe is substantially less time consuming at our school.

My goal was to get a hold of 2-3 teachers in addition to myself, who would ask their pupils to answer my survey, giving me approximately 130-150 participants.

By doing it this way, the teachers at the school could easily use the surveys in their classes. I went door-to-door asking teachers to use my survey. The arguments I used while talking to the teachers were that the test only took 15 minutes to complete, it included an English test which meant it was not a waste of time because the students did something of significance to the subject – and lastly, the test was easily accessible by simply accessing our shared web interface. All of the data was obtained over a period of three weeks.

### **5.1 The Survey**

The survey consists of 2 parts to be specified below:

- *Media habits:*

Participants specify the number of hours they spend on different types of media.

- *English proficiency test:*

This is a standardized test where the participants are given a score from 1 to 29 depending on how well they did on the test. To answer my three research questions I will compare the participants' time spent on the different types of media with their score from the English proficiency test.

### **Media habits**

This is the part of the survey that focuses on how much time the participants spend on various types of media. The participants are presented with different types of media, and they are to choose between the alternatives 0-1, 1-2, 2-3, 3-4, or more than 4 hours spent on the different variants, for example watching TV, playing video games or reading books. This section includes questions asking how many hours they spend on:

- Listening to English music

There is an uncertainty on my part concerning the effects of listening to English music, especially the participants' age taken into consideration. There is a real possibility that the lyrics matter little to these listeners, and that they as a consequence pay little notice to it. In addition to this, listening to music is not very likely to be the primary focus of attention for a Norwegian preteen for several hours each day.

- Reading English books

I do not anticipate that a large number of the participants are reading English literature regularly, but there might be many enough that this kind of media warrants investigating. What I, as mentioned earlier, *do* anticipate is that those who read regularly have a higher level of proficiency than those who don't, and that the average score on the test will increase in proportion to the number of hours spent on reading. It is unlikely that someone with a lower level of proficiency will spend much time reading English, simply because there is presumably little joy to be had from reading something which one struggles to understand. Many of the other media variants have aids, such as subtitles, body language or in the case of video games, some form of inherent logic.

- Watching TV where the content is in English

I anticipate that the vast majority of the participants watch *some* TV, but I also anticipate that most participants will spend more time on sites like YouTube and Netflix than they do watching TV. Linear TV simply doesn't have the position it had even 5-7 years ago, and the importance and position of this medium, especially for children/youth, has diminished significantly during this period in time.

- Playing video games

I am not quite sure what to expect from this category. As Flakowski Andersen (2017) states, output is an important part of learning English, and video games are one of the best opportunities for communicating in English for children and youth. Because of this, I have chosen to include the same question as Flakowski Andersen, asking "How often do you communicate with other players when you are playing video games?" Rather than giving a certain number of hours per day as alternatives to this question, the alternatives go from "never" to "all of the time". On the other hand, I have experienced first hand that many of the "gamers" are children or youth who spend a disproportionate amount of time playing video games at the expense of many other things, including academic work. Because of this, I am not more than cautiously optimistic on the behalf of those spending many hours per day playing video games. I expect to see *some* improvement, but not much.

- Websites

I have included a small selection of different types of websites in the survey. The various categories offer different kinds of input, and are represented by the most popular sites within each category (SimilarWeb, 2018).

- Social Media

Most of the children taking part in the survey are in a transitioning period *into* the world of social media, and the amount of time spent on these mediums varies greatly. In addition to this, the content on sites such as Facebook is in no small part in the participants' native language. Because of these reasons I have chosen to exclude social media from the survey.

- YouTube, Netflix, and other similar websites for video and streaming

This is also a category that could potentially go either way. I predict that the tendency relating to hours spent vs. English proficiency will be positive, because the users can, in large part tailor the content to their own English proficiency. However, for exactly that reason the opposite effect might be possible. If the level of proficiency with the user is low, said user might not be able to recognize some of the poor English spoken on YouTube, and accept it as correct. Netflix and other similar streaming sites where the content is less user-based would be safer in this regard. Correct English is more or less guaranteed in the English content these streaming sites provide. Overall, I believe that these video websites will have a positive effect, but there are possible pitfalls.

- Reddit, 9gag or similar websites

*“While Youtube, Netflix and similar sites offer great oral input, Reddit offers all kinds of input. Reddit is a forum where different news articles, pictures and videos appear in a newsfeed. It is similar to Facebook’s newsfeed in nature, but Reddit allows for discussions and has almost exclusively English content. Users of Reddit and similar sites might spend several hours a day reading arguments from other users and participating in discussions themselves. Frequent users of Reddit are exposed to a lot of written input, and the ones participating in discussions themselves also produce output.”* (Flakowski Andersen, 2017:pp 23)

I do not anticipate that many of the pupils participating in my study frequently visit sites like Reddit, but those who do may show a positive tendency towards higher English proficiency.

- Other websites where the content is in English

There are several pupils in this age group that use lesser known forums/web based games, or chat functions several hours a day as well as other web sites that were not listed in the survey. I will not put much focus on this question, as I cannot know what type of input the sites offer.

### **English proficiency test**

The last and longest part of the survey is a modified version of The Standardized Oxford Proficiency test. I got the test from Flakowski Andersen (2017) after my supervisor

recommended looking at Andersen's work. This test was used in experiments by linguist Roumyana Slabakova. (Slabakova & Garcia Mayo, 2015) The full test consists of 50 questions, but I did not include the last 21 because of their difficulty considering the age of the pupils.

The test contains sentences where some words are missing. Three alternatives are given, where one of them is correct. The test gets harder as the responder progresses. These are the two first sentences in the test:

Water \_\_\_\_\_ at a temperature of 100° C.

- is to boil
- is boiling
- boils

In some countries \_\_\_\_\_ very hot all the time.

- there is
- is
- it is

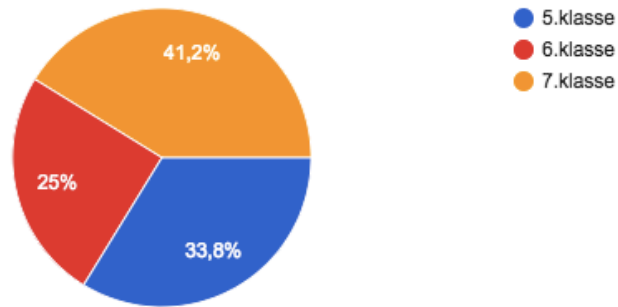
## **5.2 Participants**

The participants are students attending 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade at an elementary school in Asker commune, Norway. I teach the 5<sup>th</sup> grade myself. I also know the academic background of each pupil in the classes participating in the study.

In total there were 148 pupils taking part and they were distributed as follows:

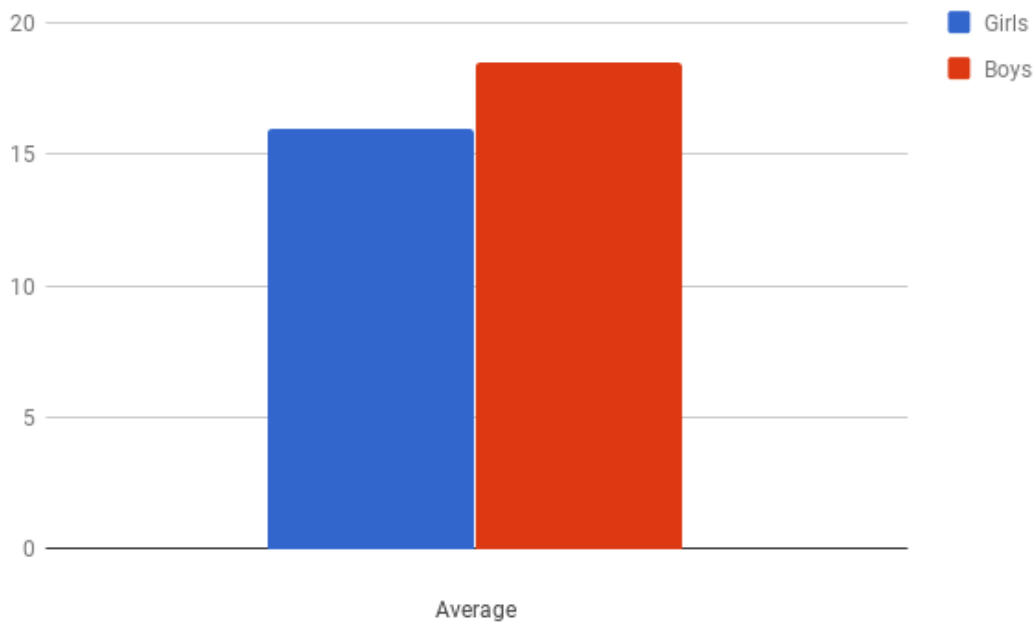
## Trinn

148 svar

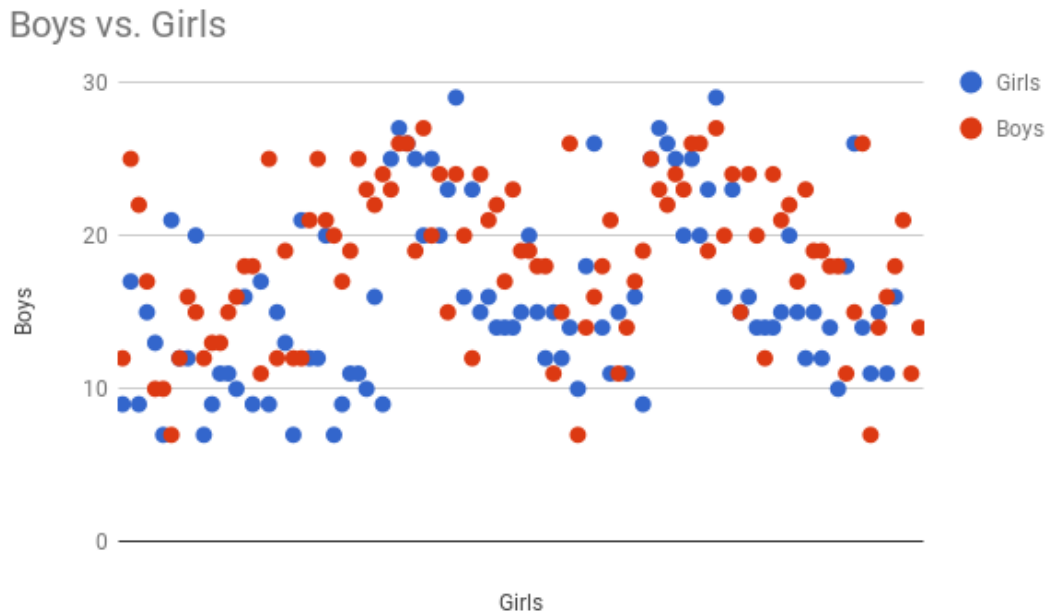


## 6 Results

*Gender: Average score out of 29.*

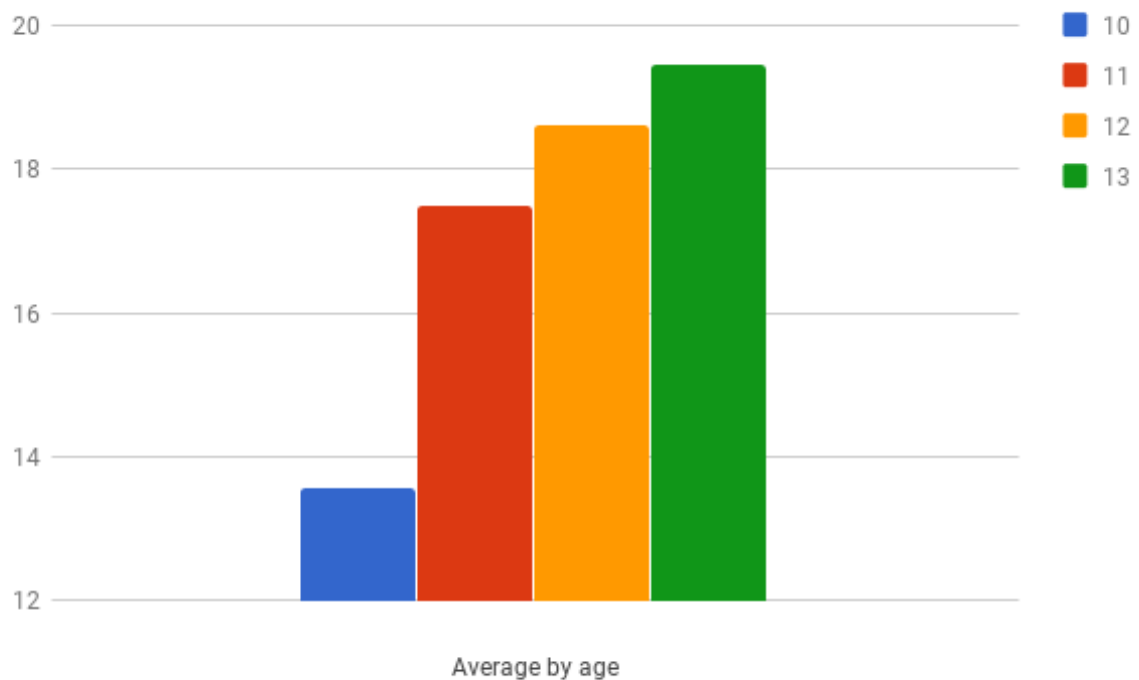


Gender: Individual score out of 29

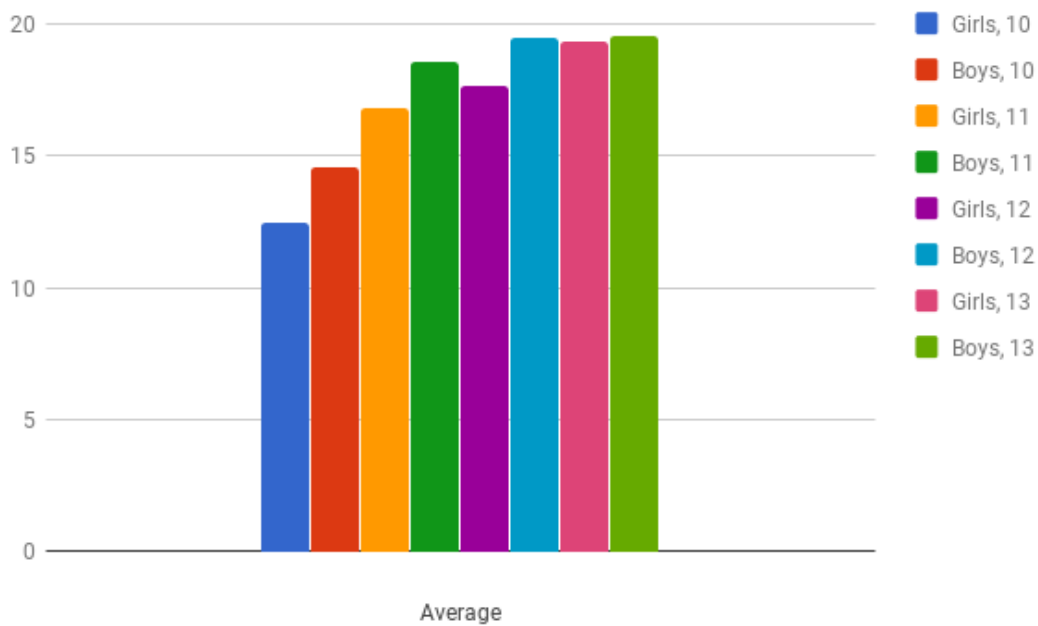


In this group, the boys came out on top with a higher average than the girls. The top two pupils were both girls, with scores of 27 and 28 out of 29, but on average, the boys had just under 18,5 out of 29, while the girls scored just under 16 out of 29.

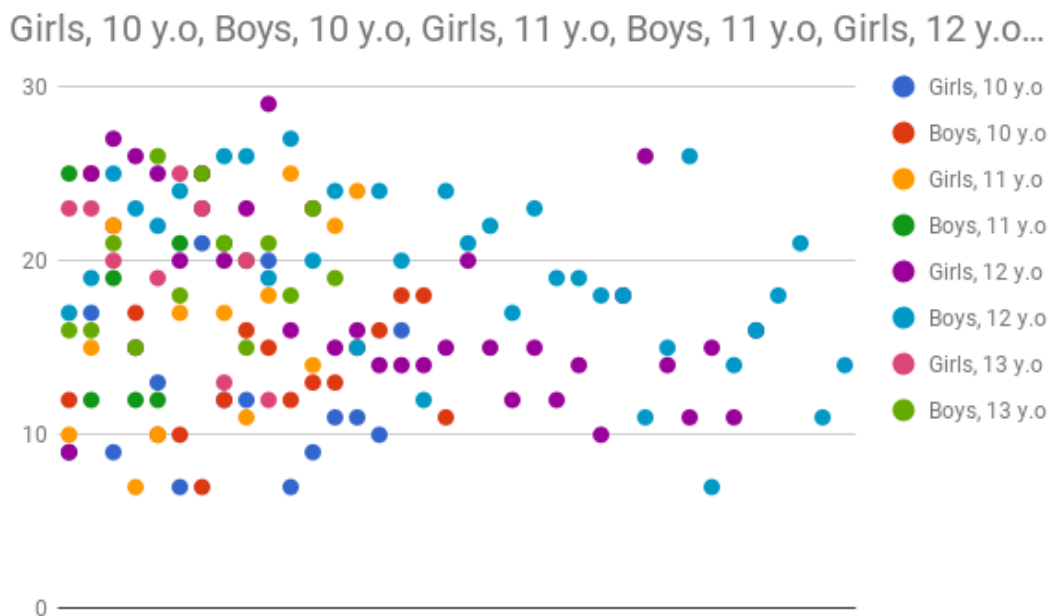
Average score by age regardless of gender out of 29:



*Age and gender: Average score out of 29*



*Age and gender: Individual score out of 29*

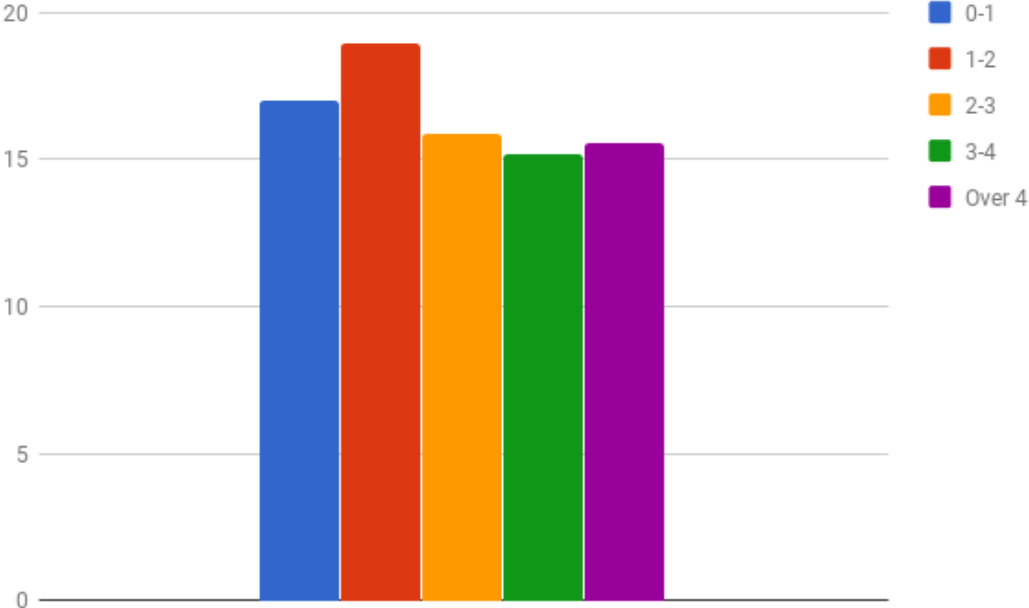


As we can see, age is clearly an important factor for English proficiency in this age bracket. The clear tendency is that the older the pupils get, the more proficient they become, with the slight exception of the twelve year old girls among my participants. The 10-year-old girls participating had the lowest average score of just under 12,5 out of 29, while the 13-year-old



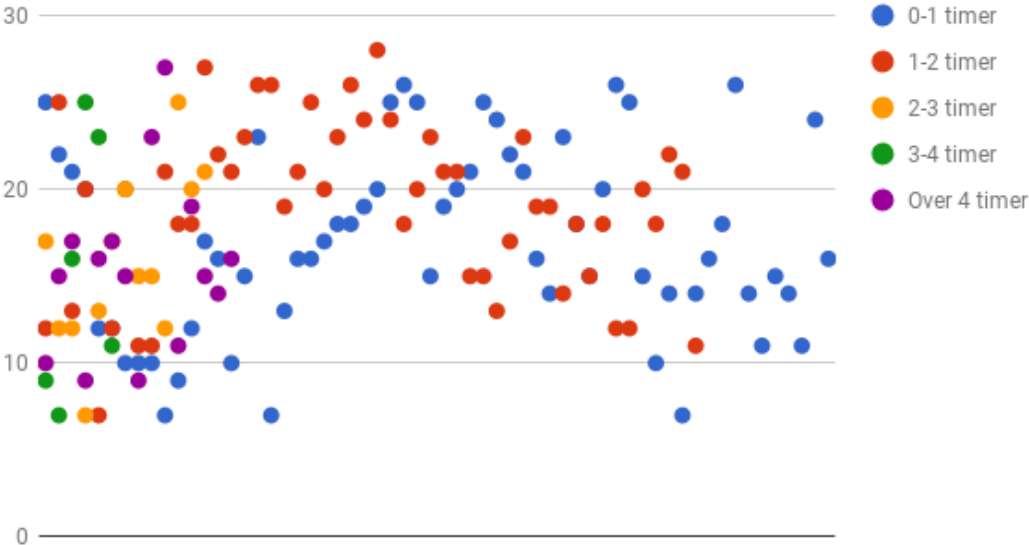
boys had the highest average score of just over 19,5 points. If we disregard gender, the increase is steady from the 10-year-olds who score an average of 13,5, via the 11-, and 12-year-olds scoring respectively around 17,5 and 18,5 and up to the 13-year-old who, on average, scored close to 19,5 points.

*English music: Average score out of 29*



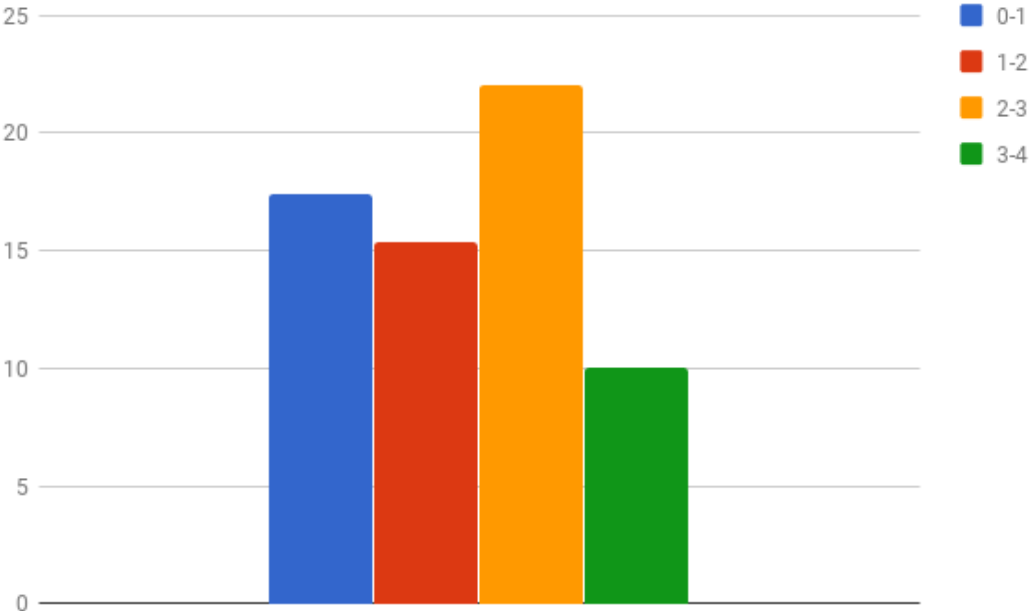
*English music: Individual score out of 29*

0-1 timer, 1-2 timer, 2-3 timer, 3-4 timer and Over 4 timer

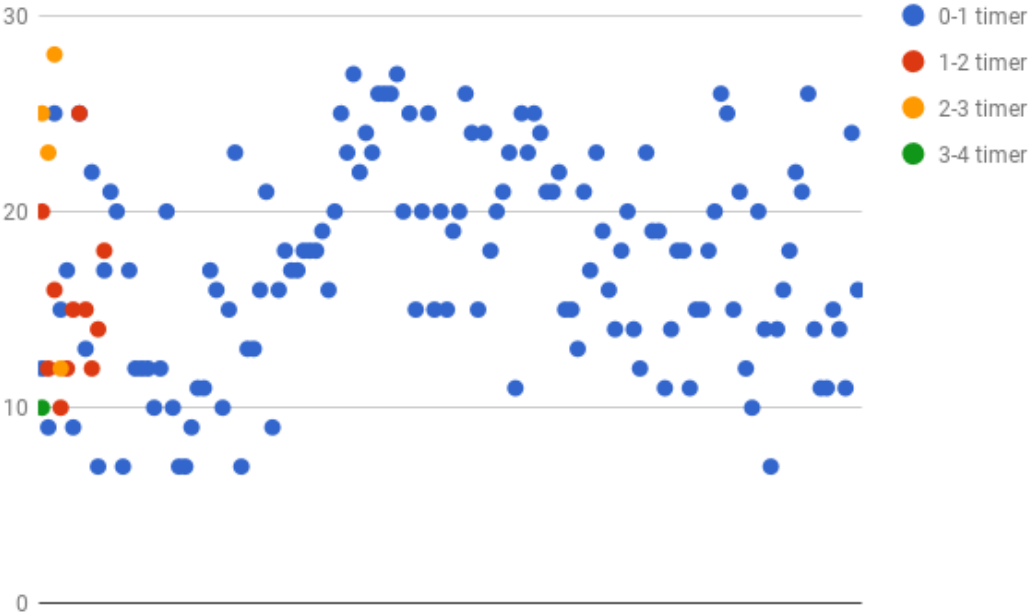


When we look at the graphs in relation to listening to English we can see that the tendency is actually negative. There is no immediately positive link between listening to English music and increased English proficiency in the test group whatsoever.

*English books: Average score out of 29*

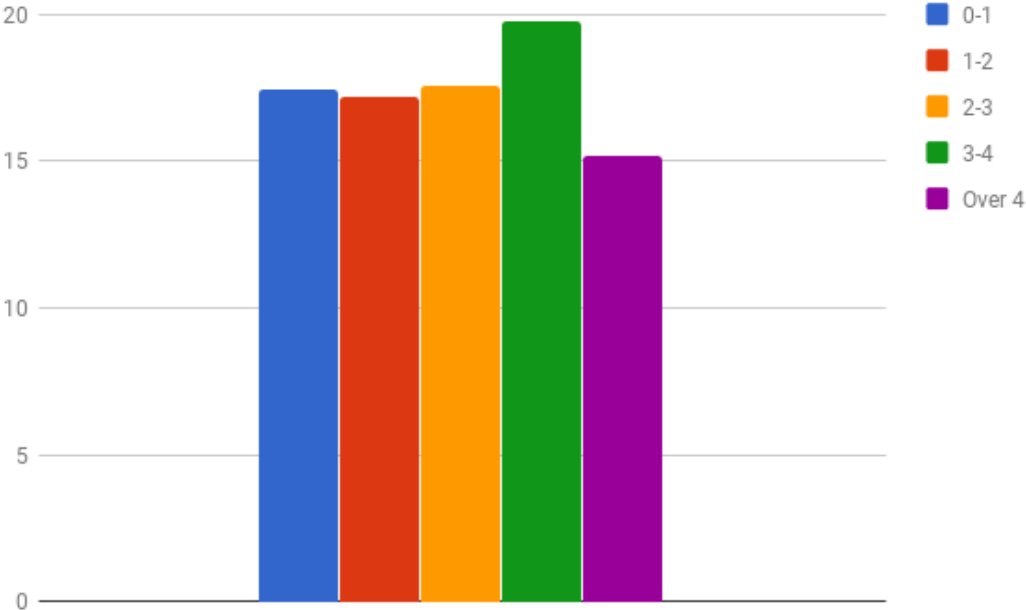


*English books: Individual score out of 29*



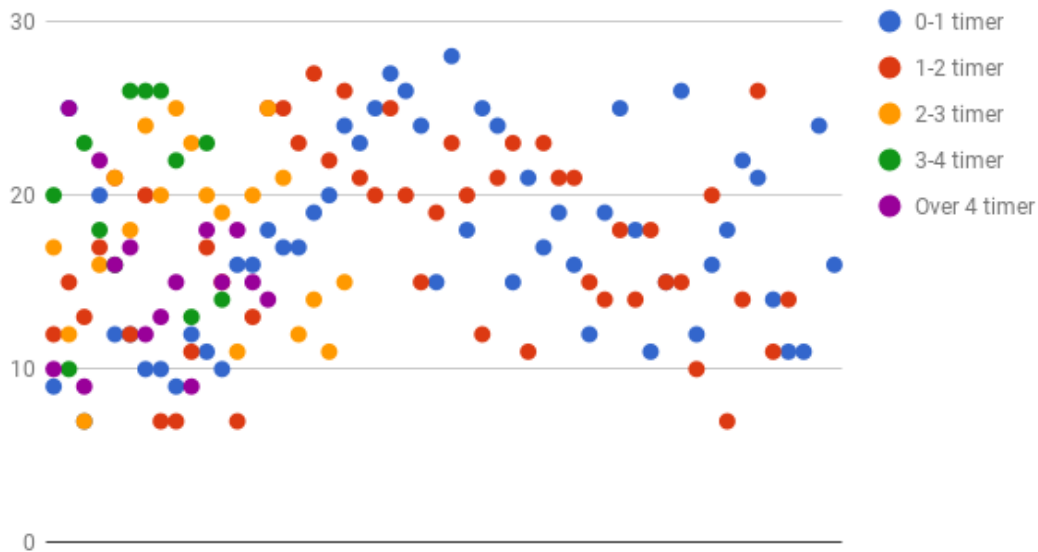
There is a clearer positive tendency when it comes to the pupils who read English books. The 3-4 hours per day should not be given too much weight, as it was only one pupil who answered that, and that would be well into any margin of error. The pupils who answered that they read English books 2-3 hours a day have an average score of 22 out of 29. No one answered that they read English books for more than 4 hours a day. It needs to be pointed out that 132 out of the 148 participants answered 0-1 hours on this question. This indicates that a vast minority of the pupils participating in this survey read English books at all.

*English television: Average score out of 29*



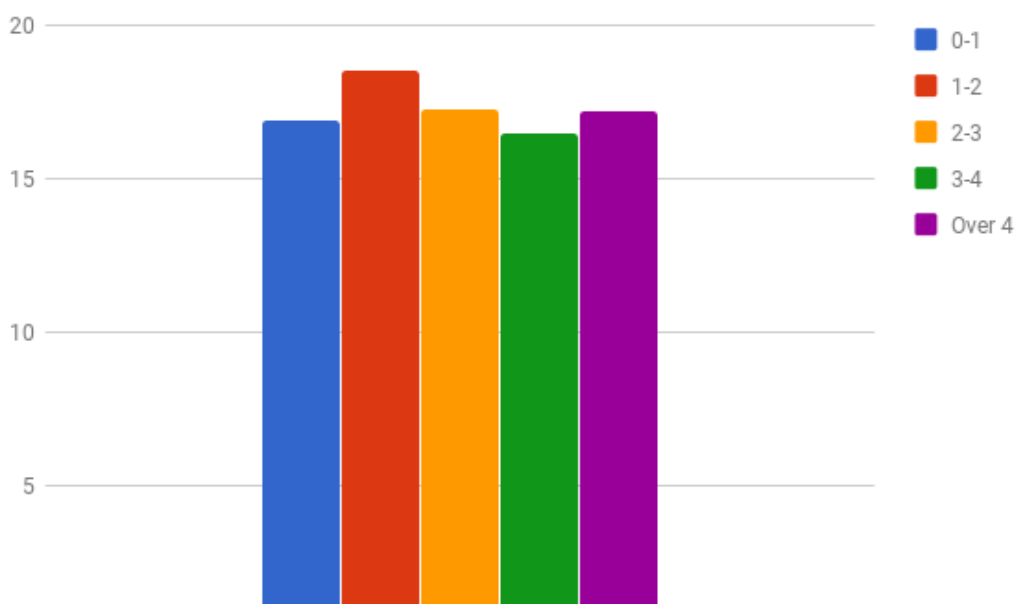
*English television: Individual score out of 29*

0-1 timer, 1-2 timer, 2-3 timer, 3-4 timer and Over 4 timer



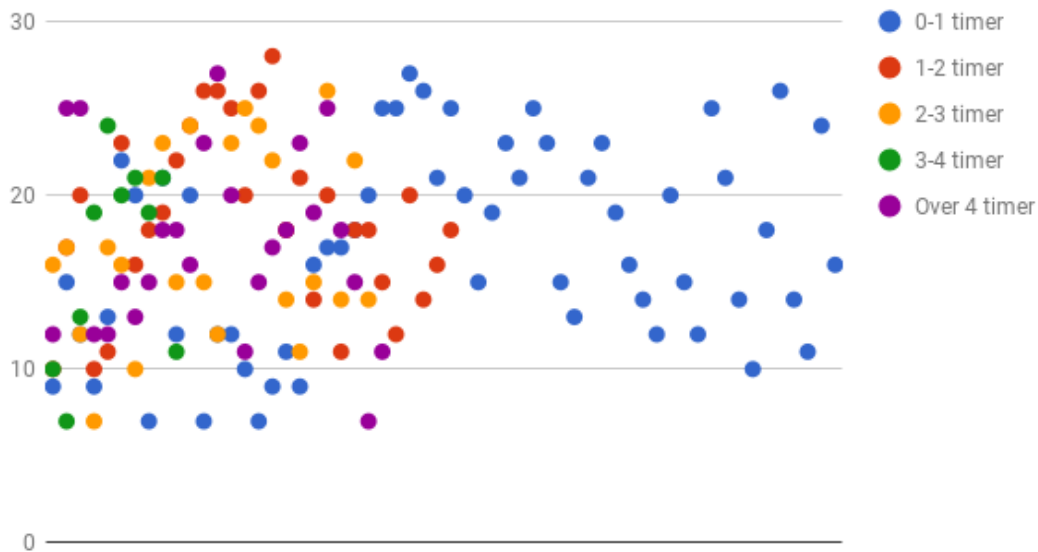
For those watching English television more than 1 hour per day, the tendency is positive up until the final group of those watching more than 4 hours per day. The 3-4 hour group score particularly high with an average score of 19,75, compared to the three groups who watched less which were on and about 17,5 points and those who watches the most who on average scored 15 points.

*English video games: Average score out of 29*



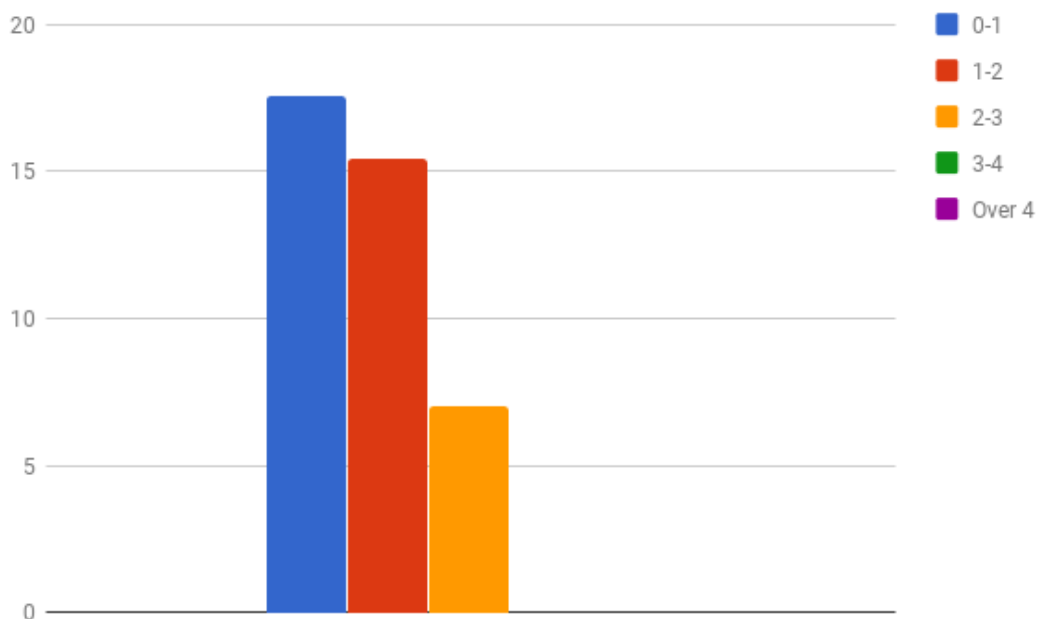
*English video games: Individual score out of 29*

0-1 timer, 1-2 timer, 2-3 timer, 3-4 timer and Over 4 timer

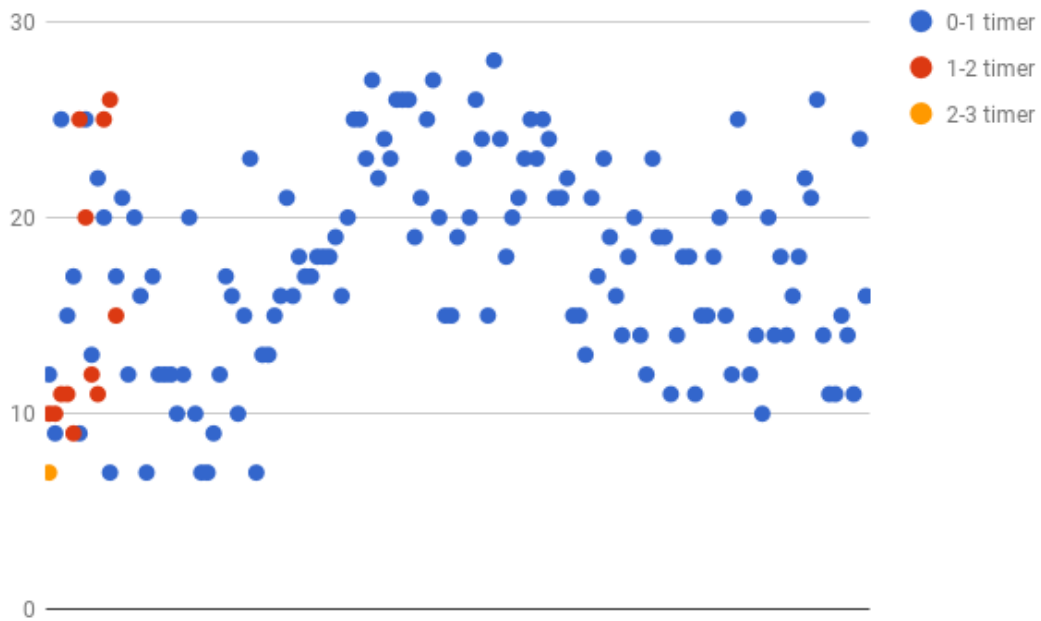


There is no clear tendency to be found in the pupils concerning playing video games and increased English proficiency. The gap between the lowest average scoring group, which was the ones playing 3-4 hours per day (16,5), and the highest average scoring group, which was the ones playing 1-2 hours (18,53) is just over 2 points.

*Reddit, 9gag and similar: Average score out of 29*

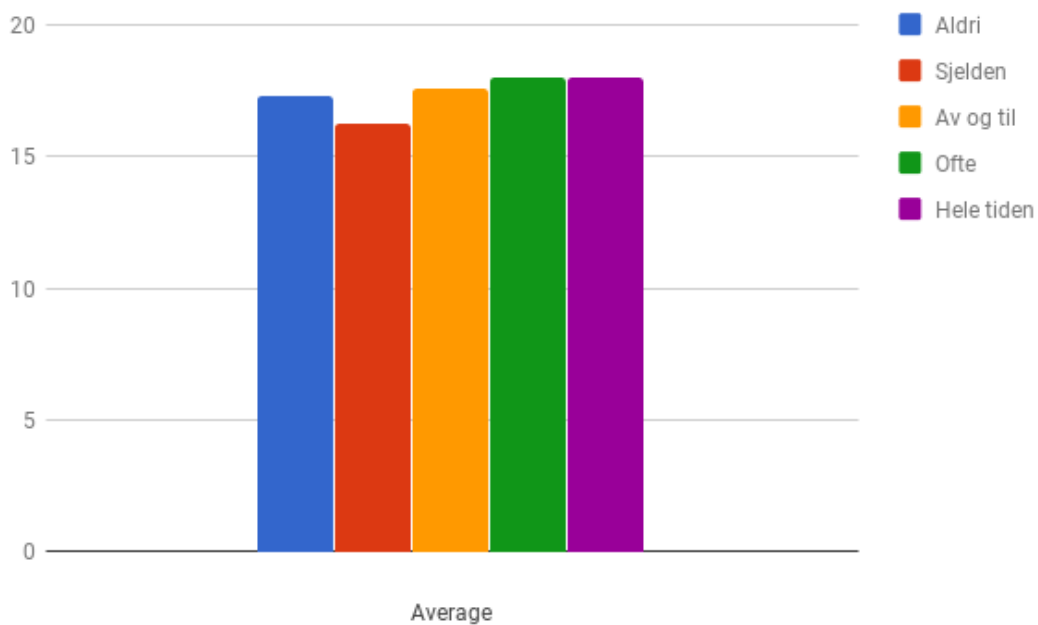


*Reddit, 9gag and similar: Individual score out of 29*

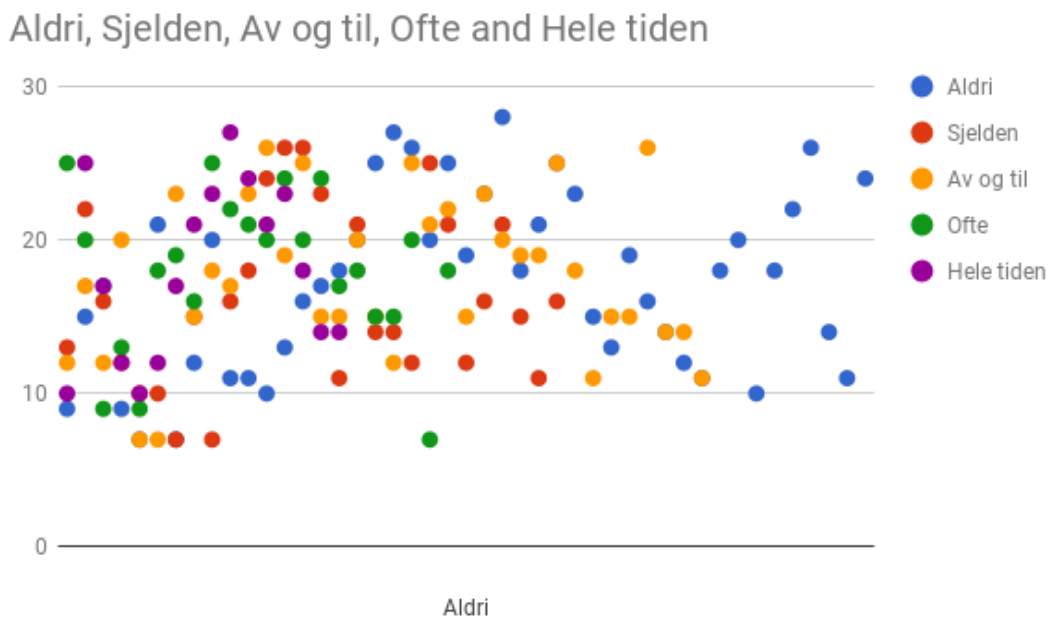


135 out of 148 participants answered 0-1 hours per day on this question, indicating that this is an age group who rarely uses these kind of forum-based websites.

*English communication while playing video games: Average score out of 29*

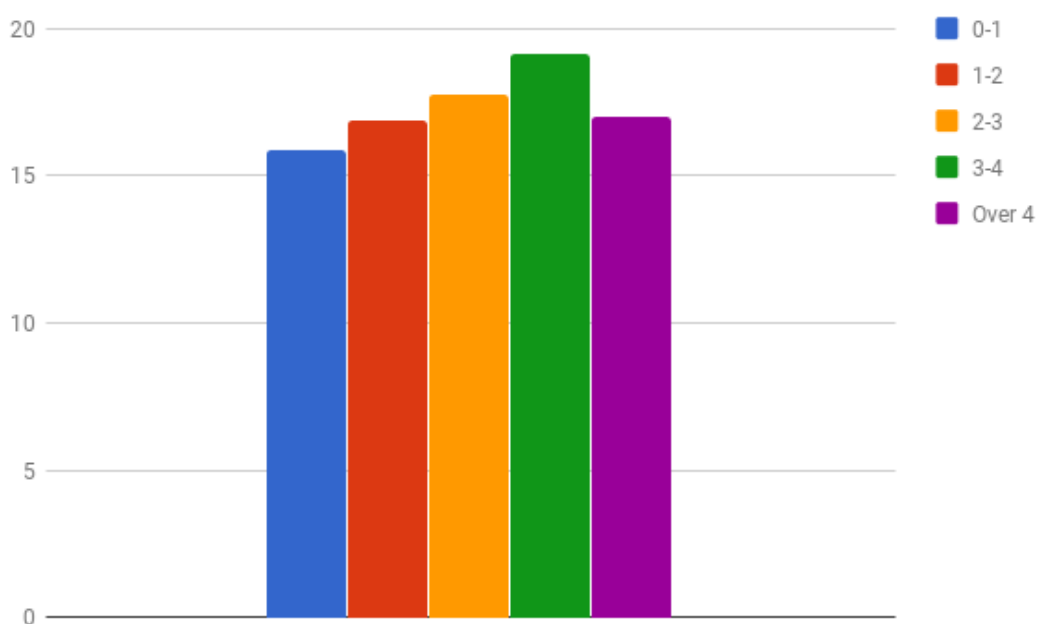


*English communication while playing video games: individual score out of 29*



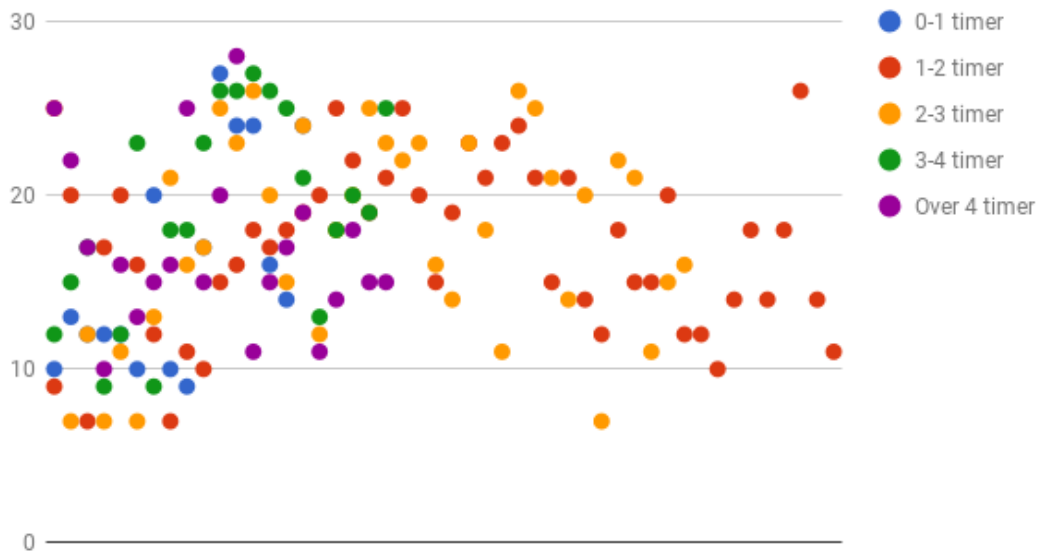
Among those who answered that they communicate in English at all while playing video games, there is a slightly positive tendency that the more they communicate in English, the higher they score on the proficiency test. But there isn't more than a 1,8 point difference between the lowest and the highest average score.

*YouTube, Netflix and other streaming sites: Average score out of 29*



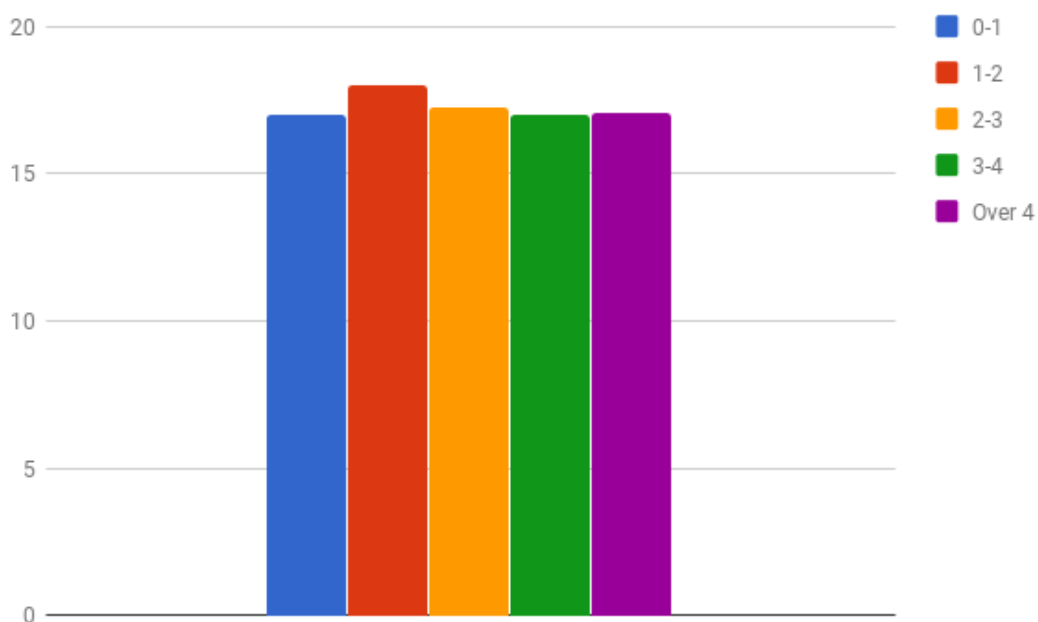
*YouTube, Netflix and other streaming sites: Individual score out of 29*

0-1 timer, 1-2 timer, 2-3 timer, 3-4 timer and Over 4 timer



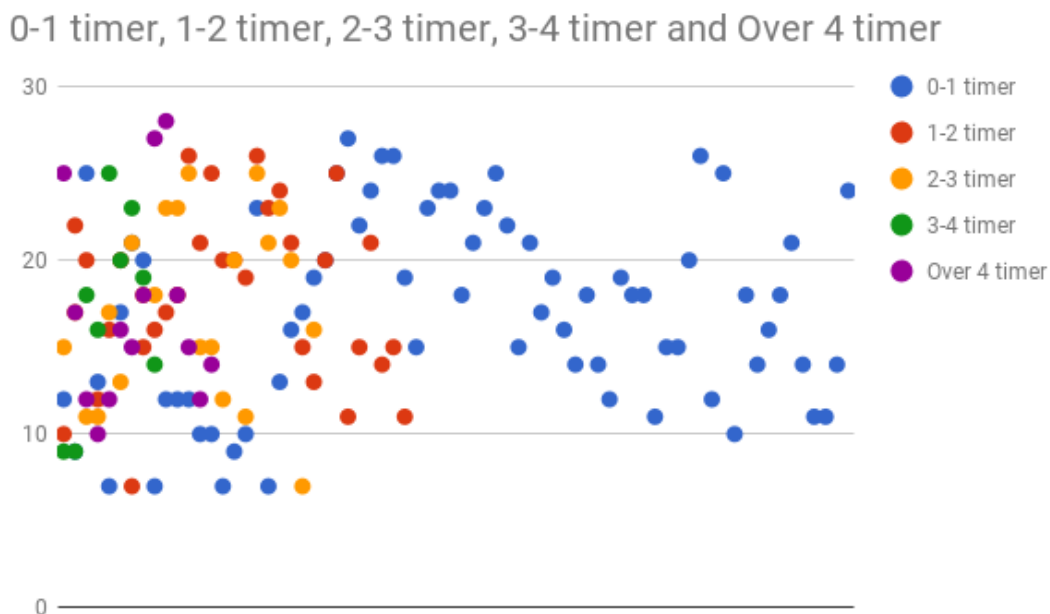
When we look at the scores compared to the answers on the question of how much they watch videos on YouTube, Netflix and other streaming sites the tendency is increasingly higher scores the more they watch (15,9 – 16,8 – 17,7 – 19,1) until the group that answered that they watch video on streaming sites more than 4 hours per day. This group scores in average 17.

*Other predominantly English sites: Average score out of 29*





*Other predominantly English sites: Individual score out of 29*



The scores in this category are so close that it is difficult to see any clear tendencies in any direction. The group answering that they spend 1-2 hours per day on other predominantly English websites have a slight advantage over the other groups with an average score of 18 compared to the others who all score on or around 17 points on average.

Note: The reason the graphs contain Norwegian words, is that the survey questions were in Norwegian.

## 7. Discussion

In this section I will answer my research questions on the basis of the data I have collected in the study and presented in the results section. I will be addressing the questions related directly to the data first, and finally the question of how the findings can be utilized.

### 7.1 Study Questions

- **Does the use of English media result in a higher level of English proficiency among 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> grade pupils in Norway?**

This is a difficult question to answer, because there are varying tendencies depending on the different types of media. While some show a positive tendency between hours spent on a

specified media outlet, some show hardly any tendency at all, and one even shows a negative tendency. If pressed to answer yes or no to this question, my answer would have to be yes, but the answer to this question needs to be more nuanced than that. There seems to be a tendency in several of the categories that there is a positive trend to be found up to a point. In several of the categories, the average score drops in the last group, in other words those who say they spend more than four hours on the media in question. So what could be the reason for this? One can only speculate, but some of the possibilities are that if too much time is spent on various kinds of media there would be less time left for homework, and possibly later bedtimes as well. Another explanation could simply be false answers, but looking at the numbers, that would mean that a significant amount of the participants have given false answers on the survey, and I find this to be unlikely.

- **Which of the different types of media input addressed in this survey has the most positive tendency towards higher English proficiency?**

The media variants with the clearest tendency towards a correlation between time spent and English proficiency are television and streaming such as YouTube and Netflix. Books also show a somewhat positive tendency, but as I mentioned in the results section 132 out of 148 participants answered 0-1 hours, 11 answered 1-2 hours, one answered 3-4 hours and no one answered over 4 hours. This means that the total percentage of the participants who indicate that they read English books at all is just 10,8%, and as such any tendencies shown in this category are circumstantial at best. In both the TV and the streaming category the tendency mentioned earlier of a drop in the final group, that is, those who answer “more than 4 hours” is seen. In both categories the peak is at the group answering 3-4 hours spent per day.

- **How can the information gathered here contribute to a higher learning outcome in English for Norwegian pupils?**

If there is to be developed any strategies for increased learning from media based on the survey performed in this thesis, we will have to base it on the media categories with the clearest positive tendency of more media input = higher proficiency. In this survey that was watching video, either on television or on streaming sites. Now we must ask ourselves what kind of skill this involves, and the answer to that is *listening*.

Listening is by Bjørke, Dypedahl & Myklevold (2014) categorized as a part of one of the five basic skills highlighted in The National Curriculum for Knowledge Promotion in Primary and Secondary Education and Training (LK06) – oral skills. They point out that if teachers are going to use videos in class, the challenges are firstly to find video sources that are suitable, that includes questions regarding the pupils interests, age, level of proficiency, and what subject the class I working on at that point in time. Secondly it has to be decided how the material is going to be used didactically. If for example the pupils are going to work on a song in the target language, the teacher needs to decide beforehand what the purpose of doing it is. Is it for practicing to listen and draw out content from what they hear, or are they to practice pronunciation by singing it? Are they going to write something based on what they hear, or are they to give a presentation where they present the underlying themes of the song? No matter what kind of method the teacher decides to utilize, and what the purpose of the activity is, it is important that there *is* a purpose to be found (Bjørke, Dypedahl & Myklevold, 2014). The goal of the teacher in doing such an activity has to be to increase the amount of *intake* the pupils get from the input they receive. Otherwise the pupils will not gain any more from such a classroom activity than they do watching videos on their spare time.

Another possible gain by including video in the classroom is increased motivation for the pupils. If we assume the principles for successful use of video as mentioned earlier, a teacher utilizing such a strategy would be likely to see an increase of *inner motivation* for the pupils. Inner motivation is described by Postholm & Tiller (2014) as humans conducting an activity because they perceive it as interesting and that they experience a spontaneous sense of satisfaction by being in this activity.

## **7.2 Further discussion**

There is one tendency, which is impossible to ignore, and that is the tendency observed concerning age vs. level of proficiency. The connection between higher age and higher level of proficiency is by far the clearest observed in the results, and as such, it needs to be addressed. The jump from the youngest 5<sup>th</sup>-graders, 10 years old, and the oldest 7<sup>th</sup>-graders, 13 years old, is almost 6 points out of a possible 29. While significant, this is neither surprising, nor hard to explain. These children are still at a relatively early stage of their English learning process, and the developmental curve during this period is quite steep, which

both the curriculum and the books that are used show. The sections in the curriculum, defining what the children are supposed to learn are divided into what they should know after 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup> grade in primary and lower secondary school (<https://www.udir.no/kl06/ENG1-03/Hele/Kompetansemaal>: May 2018). In other words, the 5<sup>th</sup> graders answering this survey are in their first year of a new section of the curriculum that concludes at the end of 7<sup>th</sup> grade, which the oldest participants were closing in on at the time of the study. This provides a good explanation for the gaps in proficiency in context with age.

The negative tendency in term of listening to English music is difficult to explain, and trying to do so would mean turning to unfounded speculation. The only speculation I will allow myself to make is that it is likely that children this age pay little attention to the lyrics when listening to music in general, and music in English in particular.

The results in the Reddit, and other forum based websites category tell us little other than these kinds of websites are not regularly frequented by the vast majority of the pupils participating in this survey.

The same can be said of reading books. I had predicted that this would be the category with the clearest positive tendency between time spent and English proficiency. It would seem, however, that I overestimated the amount of pupils actually reading English books regularly at this age. I knew that few of the 5<sup>th</sup> graders participating read English books, seeing as I am their English teacher, but I had thought the number of pupils reading English literature would increase more than it did among the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders. What we *can* see, is that the four pupils who have answered that they read 2-3 hours per day have the highest average score of any category answered by more than one pupil throughout the entire survey. This is consistent with my prediction, and does give a small indication that the primary school pupils who read the most English literature generally have a high level of proficiency for their age.

### **7.3 Tendencies vs. correlation and causation**

I have consistently been avoiding the use of the terms correlation and causation, because I do not believe my survey is neither large nor detailed enough to warrant the use of such terms. Instead I have chosen to use the word tendency or tendencies in describing the results of the

survey. There are several factors that forces me to use this term rather than correlation and causation, the main one in my opinion being that exclusively the pupils of a single school answered the survey. This school is in addition to this a school with a very homogenous student group compared to many other schools in the immediate area of the country (<http://statistikbanken.oslo.kommune.no/webview/>: May, 2018).

My prediction of reading books being the type of media with the highest effect on English proficiency might still be correct, and if I had ten times the number of participants, there would perhaps be a tendency clear enough to see some correlation. As it stands, my database is simply not large enough considering the limited amount of pupils in this age group who regularly read English literature. A reason why I believe my hypothesis can be true even if my data is inconclusive is based on some of the previous research I have mentioned earlier in this paper. There is so much research backing the positive effects of reading in the target language, and in the case of reading English as an L2 learner, I find the study by Perfetti and Harris (2017) particularly important. The findings they presented of children implementing none-decoding whole-word strategies when reading indicates, to me, the importance of a somewhat developed vocabulary in order to be able to successfully read English literature and at the same time avoiding the whole-word substitutions Perfetti and Harris witnessed. This vocabulary is constantly improved in Norwegian learners by both the English education they receive in school, and the various other forms of input they receive every day by media. So if my hypothesis of books being the most effective type of media for increasing English proficiency, there probably needs to be a certain level of proficiency in place beforehand.

This, in turn, points towards another theory as to why my hypothesis turned out not to be true and that is the age of my participants. Based on the results of this survey, I am led to believe that my participants were simply too young. Flakowski Andersen (2017) based his thesis on pupils attending upper secondary school, and suggested that younger pupils might be a better target group for the purposes of this study. My subjects are in primary school. Albeit in the final three years, but there is a notable difference between 10-13 year olds and 13-16 year olds. This might be something to consider, and perhaps lower secondary school is the most suitable group for this study.

In total, it is difficult to see any tendency in either direction based on this survey

My findings indicate that there is a positive tendency between *some* media habits and English proficiency, but there are others that show no tendency at all, and there is actually a negative tendency between English proficiency and listening to a lot of English music. In terms of gender, the boys performed better than the girls, but as I have no hard data regarding any of the other subjects in school, I cannot draw any conclusions based on that. None of the aforementioned factors showed, however, as clear a tendency as the age of the participants did. The fact that we can see a steady rise in proficiency along with the increased age of the participants, is the main reason why I believe that the group taking part in this survey were on the whole, too young.

## 8 Conclusions

The aim of this study was to compare students' media habits with English proficiency, and if any positive tendencies were found, I wished to explore how these could result in a higher learning outcome for Norwegian children. My predictions were that English media exposure in general, and reading English books in particular, would generate positive tendencies towards higher levels of English proficiency. The results were not as decisive as I had expected them to be. The only media variant where a clear positive tendency that more input generated a higher level of proficiency was video, both in the shape of linear television, and streaming websites such as YouTube and Netflix. There was, however, a recurring tendency of the participants selecting the alternative indicating the largest amount of hours spent, having a lower level of proficiency compared to the group who watched the second most. I speculate that a reason for this is that such a large amount of hours spent on any form of media, results in less time spent on schoolwork.

A moderate amount of hours spent reading English literature also showed a tendency towards higher levels of proficiency, but the sample size was too small for any conclusive evidence to be drawn by it. Despite of this, I remain firm in my belief that reading English literature in general has a positive effect on the level of English proficiency in children, based on previous research on this matter.

The clearest conclusion that can be drawn from this is that the latter years of primary school is a period in the English education of Norwegian children where the academic development from one year to the next has a much larger effect than any form of media input.

The pupils taking part in this survey were between 10 and 13 years, and I think it is safe to conclude that this is the main reason why my results did not show what I had anticipated. If the youngest pupils had been excluded, the results might have shown a clearer tendency.

When only 10 years old, many Norwegian children simply does not have the English proficiency for a test like this to be expedient. 13-15 years old is in my view the age group where both media habits are a large enough part of the subjects everyday lives, and the English proficiency is at an adequate level for them to benefit from their media habits.

## 9 Works cited

- Andersen, D. (2017) The effect of media habits on English proficiency: A study of L1 Norwegian teenagers. Provided by supervisor Marit Westergaard, september 2017.
- Ayuanita, K. (2013). The Crucial Function of Foreigner Talk in Acquiring L2. [Okara: Jurnal Bahasa dan Sastra](#). 2013;7(2)  
doi: [10.19105/ojbs.v7i2.443](https://doi.org/10.19105/ojbs.v7i2.443)
- Brevik, L., Olsen, R., & Hellekjær, G. (2016). The complexity of second language reading: Investigating the L1-L2 relationship. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, Volume 28, No. 2, 161-182.
- Chik, A. (2014). "I don't know how to talk basketball before playing NBA 2K10": using digital games for out-of-class language learning. In D. Nunan, & J. C. Richards, *Language Learning Beyond the Classroom* (pp. 75-84). New York: Routledge.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics: Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Methodologies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fathman, A. (1976). Variables Affecting the Successful Learning of English as Second Language. *TESOL Quarterly*, 10(4), pp. 443-441. doi:10.2307/3585524
- Foursha-Stevenson, C., Schembri, T., Nicoladis, E. et al. (2017). *J Psycholinguist Res* (2017) 46: 329. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10936-016-9441-3>
- Frønes, T., Narvhus, E., & Aasebø, M. (2013). Nordic results from the PISA digital. Retrieved from [https://www.idunn.no/file/pdf/61221164/nordic\\_results\\_from\\_the\\_pisa\\_digital\\_reading\\_a](https://www.idunn.no/file/pdf/61221164/nordic_results_from_the_pisa_digital_reading_a)
- Gass, S., & Selinker, L. (2013). *Second Language Acquisition. An Introductory Course*. (4th ed.). Broadway: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc. Retrieved from <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/tromsoub-books/reader.action?docID=1356283&ppg=423#> on 2018-03-04 12:30:28.



Koepp, M., Gunn, R., Lawrence, A., Cunningham, V., Dagher, A., Jones, T., Brooks, D., Bench, C., and Grasby, P. (1998). Evidence for striatal dopamine release during a video game. *Nature* 393, 21 (May 1998), 266–268.

Kuppens, A. (2008). Incidental language acquisition from television, video games, and music: An empirical study with Flemish youngsters. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

Long, M., & Porter, P. (1985). Group Work, Interlanguage Talk, and Second Language Acquisition *TESOL Quarterly* Vol. 19, No. 2 (Jun., 1985), pp. 207-228

Lyster, R. (1998). Recasts, repetition, and ambiguity in L2 classroom discourse. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 20, 51-81.

Matychuk, P. (2005, May). The role of child-directed speech in language acquisition: a case study. *Language sciences*, Volume 27, Issue 3, pp. 301-379, ISSN 0388-0001.

Porter, P. (1986). How learners talk to each other: input and interaction in task-centered discussions. In R. Day (ed.), *Talking to Learn* (pp. 200-224). Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

SimilarWeb. (2018, 5 14). Retrieved from <https://www.similarweb.com/top-websites/norway>

Simonsen, A. (2005). Ja, engelsk er noe vi møter som barn og det er ikke lenger et fremmedspråk. *Sprogforum*, 35, 57-61.

Slabakova, R., & Garcia Mayo, M. (2015). The L3 syntax–discourse interface. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, 18(2), 208-226. doi:10.1017/S1366728913000369. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, 18(2), 208-226. doi:10.1017/S1366728913000369

Swain, M. (1985). Communicative competence: some roles of comprehensible input and comprehensible output in its development. In S. Gass, & C. Madden, *Input in Second Language Acquisition* (pp. 235-253). Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

- Swain, M. (1995). Three functions of output in second language learning. In G. Cook, & B. Seidlhofer, Principle and Practice in Applied Linguistics (pp. 125-144). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Utdanningsdirektoratet. (2013). Læreplan i engelsk. Retrieved from <https://www.udir.no/kl06/ENG1-03/>
- Utdanningsdirektoratet. (2013). Læreplan i engelsk. Retrieved from <https://www.udir.no/laring-og-trivsel/vurdering/om-vurdering/underveisvurdering/>
- Verhoeven, L., & Perfetti, C. (Eds.). (2017). Learning to Read across Languages and Writing Systems. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.  
<http://doi.org/10.1017/9781316155752>
- van Zeeland, H., & Schmitt, N. (2013) Incidental vocabulary acquisition through L2 listening: A dimensions approach. In System, Volume 41, Issue 13, September 2013, pp 609-624.

## 10. Appendix

### The survey and The Standardized Oxford English Proficiency Test

#### English proficiency test

Masteroppgave Audun Bakkevoll

E-postadressen din ( [REDACTED] ) blir registrert når du sender inn dette skjemaet. Er det ikke deg? [Bytt konto](#)

\*Må fylles ut

#### Tittel uten navn

Water \_\_\_\_\_ at a temperature of 100° C. \*

- is to boil
- is boiling
- boils

In some countries \_\_\_\_\_ very hot all the time.

- there is
- is
- it is



In cold countries people wear thick clothes \_\_\_\_\_ warm. \*

- for keeping
- to keep
- for to keep

In England people are always talking about \_\_\_\_\_.

- a weather
- the weather
- weather

In some places \_\_\_\_\_ almost every day. \*

- it rains
- there rains
- it raining

In deserts there isn't \_\_\_\_\_  
grass. \*

- the
- some
- any

Places near the Equator have  
\_\_\_\_\_ weather even in the cold  
season. \*

- a warm
- the warm
- warm

In England \_\_\_\_\_ time of  
year is usually from December to  
February. \*

- coldest
- the coldest
- colder

\_\_\_\_\_ people don't know what it's like in other countries. \*

- The most
- Most of
- Most

Very \_\_\_\_\_ people can travel abroad. \*

- less
- little
- few

Mohammed Ali \_\_\_\_\_ his first world title fight in 1960. \*

- has won
- won
- is winning

After he \_\_\_\_\_ an Olympic gold medal, he became a professional boxer. \*

- had won
- have won
- was winning

His religious beliefs \_\_\_\_\_ change his name when he became a champion. \*

- have made him
- made him to
- made him

If he \_\_\_\_\_ lost his first fight with Sonny Liston, no one would have been surprised. \*

- has
- would have
- had

He has travelled a lot \_\_\_\_\_  
as a boxer and as a world-famous  
personality. \*

- both
- and
- or

He is very well known  
\_\_\_\_\_ the world. \*

- all in
- all over
- in all

Many people \_\_\_\_\_ he  
was the greatest boxer of all time.

\*

- is believing
- are believing
- believe



To be the best \_\_\_\_\_ the world is not easy. \*

- from
- in
- of

Like any top sportsman, Ali \_\_\_\_\_ train very hard. \*

- had to
- must
- should

Even though he has now lost his title, people \_\_\_\_\_ always remember him as a champion. \*

- would
- will
- did

The history of \_\_\_\_\_ is

\*

- airplane
- the airplane
- an airplane

\_\_\_\_\_ short one. For many centuries men \*

- quite a
- a quite
- quite

\_\_\_\_\_ to fly, but with \*

- are trying
- try
- had tried

\_\_\_\_\_ success. In the  
19th century a few people \*

- little
- few
- a little

succeeded \_\_\_\_\_ in  
balloons. But it wasn't until \*

- to fly
- in flying
- into flying

the beginning of \_\_\_\_\_  
century that anybody \*

- last
- next
- that

\_\_\_\_\_ able to fly in a machine

\*

- were
- is
- was

\_\_\_\_\_ was heavier than  
air, in other words, in \*

- who
- which
- what

\_\_\_\_\_ we now call a  
'plane'. The first people to achieve  
'powered flight' were the Wright  
brothers. \*

- who
- which
- what

**Alder \***

- 10
- 11
- 12
- 13

**Kjønn \***

- Gutt
- Jente

**Trinn \***

- 5.klasse
- 6.klasse
- 7.klasse

**Morsmål \***

- Norsk
- Engelsk
- Annet



Hvor mange timer bruker du daglig på å høre på engelsk musikk? \*

- 0-1
- 1-2
- 2-3
- 3-4
- Mer enn 4

Hvor mange timer bruker du daglig på å lese engelske bøker? \*

- 0-1
- 1-2
- 2-3
- 3-4
- Mer enn 4

Hvor mange timer bruker du  
daglig på å se på engelskspråklig  
TV? \*

- 0-1
- 1-2
- 2-3
- 3-4
- Mer enn 4

Hvor mange timer bruker du  
daglig på å spille dataspill? \*

- 0-1
- 1-2
- 2-3
- 3-4
- Mer enn 4

Hvor ofte kommuniserer du på engelsk med andre spillere når du spiller dataspill? \*

- Aldri
- Sjelden
- Av og til
- Ofte
- Hele tiden

Hvor mange timer bruker du daglig på nettsider som Youtube, Netflix, Twitch og lignende nettsider for video og streaming?

\*

- 0-1
- 1-2
- 2-3
- 3-4
- Over 4



Hvor mange timer bruker du daglig på nettsider som Reddit, 9gag eller lignende nettsider? \*

- 0-1
- 1-2
- 2-3
- 3-4
- Over 4

Hvor mange timer bruker du daglig på andre nettsider der det hovedsaklige innholdet er på engelsk? \*

- 0-1
- 1-2
- 2-3
- 3-4
- Over 4

