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The effects of vocabulary-oriented warm-up tasks on student vocabulary acquisition and task value beliefs

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Abstract

This thesis explores the possible interactions between vocabulary-oriented warm-up tasks and students' vocabulary acquisition, and how these tasks can foster motivated students.

A quasi-experiment was conducted in a Norwegian lower secondary school. It examined the effects of using a vocabulary-oriented, word guessing style game inspired by the board game Alias, through a receptive vocabulary test and a task value beliefs questionnaire. The teaching procedure in the experiment group consisted of using Alias as a warm-up task followed by reading and related comprehension tasks, and the control group's treatment consisted of reading and related comprehension tasks.

The data obtained during this quasi-experiment was analyzed using independent means t-tests, Mann Whitney U tests and Wilcoxon Signed-Ranks tests. The results indicate that the teaching procedure in the experiment group led to a higher degree of acquisition of the target vocabulary items compared to the teaching procedure in the control group. These findings are supported by previous research. Additionally, it was found that the students in the experiment group expressed more positive task value beliefs toward warm-up tasks after playing Alias, suggesting a positive relationship between playing Alias as a warm-up task and motivated students.

On the basis of these findings, I make a strong case for the use of warm-up tasks such as Alias to help students acquire new vocabulary while at the same time supporting an interesting and enjoyable learning environment for students.

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1. Introduction

This inquiry into warm-up tasks is in part inspired by Dörnyei (2001, p. 73) strategies for making learning more stimulating and enjoyable for students by breaking the monotony of learning, making tasks more interesting and increasing the involvement of the students. Teachers should always be on the lookout for new and interesting activities in order to help students learn and to establish positive environments for learning. The warm-up stage at the beginning of a lesson is a unique window of opportunity in which teachers can experiment with new teaching methods.

This thesis in the form of a quasi-experiment seeks to explore the possible interactions between vocabulary-oriented warm-up tasks and students' vocabulary acquisition, and how these tasks can foster motivated students. This potential interaction is examined using a pre-test, post-test quasi-experimental design with one independent and two independent variables.

The independent variable of this thesis is Alias as a warm-up task. The dependent variables are a receptive vocabulary test on target-words found in the students' textbook and a questionnaire about task value beliefs toward warm-up tasks. The study is conducted in a Norwegian lower secondary school, in an English as a second language context. The warm-up task used in this thesis is a word guessing-style game inspired by a well-known board game in Norway called Alias. Alias was used as a pre-reading warm-up task at the beginning of two English sessions.

Three major elements are explored in this thesis: warm-up tasks, vocabulary acquisition and motivation in the form of task value beliefs. A warm-up task is defined as a short, interesting task at the beginning of the lesson which promotes a positive atmosphere for learning and redirects attention toward the coming lesson. This study focuses on the receptive meaning aspects of vocabulary knowledge. Motivation is defined as interest and enthusiasm for the tasks and material used and explored within an expectancy-value framework of motivation in related to tasks. All the elements will be explained further in the theoretical framework of this thesis.

The justification for this investigation is purely practical. It seeks to be of use to teachers planning lessons, and to explore new, creative tasks and activities which promote a more enjoyable learning experience for students.

1.1 Research Questions

Through exploration of possible benefits of using warm-up tasks, this thesis aims to investigate the value of warm-up tasks in the English classroom, and thus advocate for their use. The aim is explored through two research questions:

RQ1) How do vocabulary-oriented warm-up tasks affect the students' vocabulary acquisition?

RQ2) How do vocabulary-oriented warm-up tasks affect the students' task value beliefs?

As the two research questions are concerned with cause and effect in a natural classroom setting, a quasi-experiment is the most appropriate research design. In order to investigate the research questions, a control group, pre-test, post-test quasi-experiment with one independent and two dependent variables was conducted. The independent variable of this thesis is Alias as a warm-up task, which was conducted in the experiment group. The dependent variables were a (1) receptive vocabulary test on target-words found in the students' textbook and (2) a questionnaire about task value beliefs related warm-up activities. Two hypotheses were formed in order to answer the research questions:

H1) Using vocabulary-oriented warm-up task will lead to better acquisition of target vocabulary items in the experiment group compared to the control group.

H2) Using vocabulary-oriented warm-up tasks will produce a change in the experiment group students' task value beliefs.

The first hypothesis (H1) is linked to the first research question (RQ1) and predicts that using Alias as a pre-reading warm-up task, complementary to text reading and comprehension tasks, will lead to better acquisition of the target vocabulary items in the experiment group compared to the control group. In other words, the experiment group should achieve higher scores than the control group on the post-vocabulary test. This hypothesis is first and foremost based on the authors own assumptions and personal experience that Alias and similar word guessing-style tasks and games promote the use of synonyms, antonyms and hypernyms in explanations and create fun and entertaining atmosphere with which the students can associate the target vocabulary. This assumption is also supported by Stahl and Nagy's (2006, p. 71) assertion that word guessing tasks are a creative way of reviewing and learning new vocabulary and by Krashen's Pleasure Hypothesis (1994). If the students have fun learning, it is more likely that they will remember what they have learned.

The second hypothesis (H2) is linked to the second research question (RQ2) and predicts that having Alias as a warm-up task will produce a positive change in the experiment groups' task value beliefs towards warm-up tasks. That is, that the experiment group will assign higher task value beliefs to warm-up tasks on the post-questionnaire in comparison to the pre-questionnaire. The questionnaire about task value beliefs was administered as an attempt to conceptualize how having warm-up tasks can result in more interested and motivated students. This hypothesis is indirectly supported by several studies in classroom settings which have found that warm-up tasks and games promote motivation (Afari, 2012; Estalkhbijari & Khodareza, 2012; García & Martin, 2004; Gaspar, Leòn, et al., 2016; Neyadi, 2007; Velandia, 2008; Zaabi, 2007).

1.2 Ethical considerations

Several steps were taking in order to ensure ethical treatment of the participants in this study. This is of utmost importance as the participants are youths and not yet at an age where they can give consent to be part of the experiment themselves. Consent forms were therefore sent home with the students to their parents and retrieved before the start of the study. The consent form informed participant and parents of what was going to be investigated, the scope and length of the study and how the data was going to be used. Other ethical considerations were

taken into account to protect the anonymity of the participants. It was established through communication with the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD) that the study did not use any personal information that could be traced back to the students or the school. The participants were also instructed to use a codename to mark their tests and questionnaires, ensuring that the test instrument could not be traced back to them.

2 Theoretical framework

This chapter will present the previously conducted research and theoretical framework related to warm-ups tasks, vocabulary acquisition, task-based learning and motivation in relation to tasks. The chapter is roughly divided into three parts. The first part of the chapter will present important aspects and definitions of warm-up tasks and report on contemporary research. Questions of interest are: What are warm-up tasks, and why do we have them? Additionally, this section will draw relevant connections between warm-up tasks and games in an educational context. The second part of the chapter will focus on vocabulary acquisition and task-based vocabulary instruction. In this section, special attention is given to Laufer and Hulstijn's Involvement Load Hypothesis (2001a). It will explore how one can teach vocabulary through tasks and how some tasks promote better vocabulary acquisition than others. The third section will explore task value beliefs and motivation in relation to tasks. This is done within an expectancy-value framework of motivation.

2.1 Warm-up tasks

As elegantly put by Robertson and Acklam (2000, p. 12): "Every lesson has a beginning. And like the beginning of a book or a film, if it doesn't interest the reader, viewer or in our case, the student, then it may not be successful". Robertson and Acklam (2000, p. 12) suggest that a good way of making the beginning of a lesson interesting is through the use of warm up activities. A good warm-up activity serves the purpose of warming up the students – similarly to how a football player would stretch or do side-shuffles in preparation of an important match. However, in contrast to athletes, students in a classroom do not have to stretch and warm-up any muscles in order to perform or avoid injury. For students, warming up and setting the stage for learning involve redirecting attention, creating a positive atmosphere for learning and activating previous knowledge.

Robert and Acklam (2000) state that a warm-up activity is a short activity that demands an active involvement from students. In a second language learning context, warm up activities also provide the students with an opportunity to make the switch from their native language to the target language (p. 12). With a focus on involvement, such a definition can be connected to ideas of active or experimental learning. According to Nunan (2004, p. 12), experimental learning takes the learner's immediate personal experience as a point of departure. The active

involvement of the learner is conveniently conceptualized by the rubric ‘learning by doing’. Nunan contrasts this approach with what he calls a “transmission” approach to education in which learners passively acquire knowledge from the teacher.

Rushidi (2013, p. 130) defines a warm-up task as a preparatory task which helps the students feel relaxed and in a positive frame of mind – “with the feeling that the learning is going to be easy and fun”. This is related to the not too radical assumption that individuals learn best when they are comfortable and relaxed. Fuscoe (2020) connects this view with Maslow’s Hierachy of Needs (1954) which suggests that basic emotional and psychical needs first have to be met for motivation and successful learning to occur. She writes that it is not “[...] that we cannot learn when the conditions are not ideal, but that we learn best when our physical and emotional needs are satisfied” and suggests that warm-ups tasks which promote fun and relaxation are a good way of starting a lesson.

Velandia (2008, p. 11) argues that a “warming up activity is a motivating starting point that will lead students to become animated to work efficiently in the language class”. Emphasizing that language learning is a social endeavor which eventual success depends on pupils’ positive attitude toward the lesson, she suggests that the use of warm-up tasks is a good opportunity to break what might cause monotony in the learning process and to make learners more interested in what is going on. She goes on to propose several aspects to be considered in a warm-up activity in a diagram (2008, p. 13). Her diagram can be seen in figure 1.

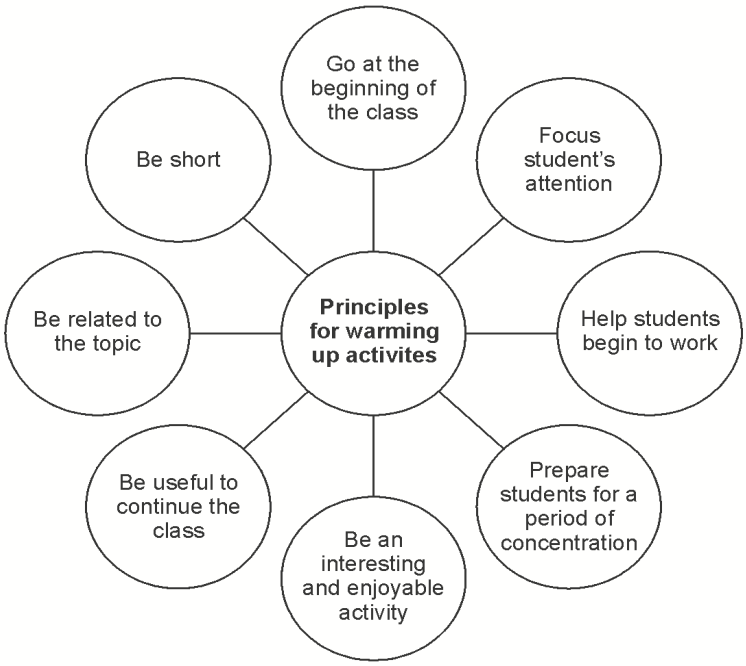

Figure 1 - Aspects to be considered in a warm-up activity (Velandia, 2008, p. 13)

In her 2008 study, Velandia investigated the effects of implementing "short and enjoyable" warm-up activities into the lesson plans of 68 7th grade students in Bogota, Colombia. Examples of these activities were activities such as Hangman and Bingo. She suggests on the basis of student journals and observations, that the use warm-up activities is an effective way of promoting a good learner environment, catch students' attention, and facilitate interaction at the beginning of an English lesson. As stated by Velandia (2008), "[...] *with warm ups students paid closer attention, asked better questions and seemed a bit more excited than before*" (p. 20).

2.1.1 Relevant Research

Present studies and action research on the effects of warm-up activities in classrooms have focused primarily on motivational and attentional benefits using interviews, observations and questionnaires, and yielded positive results (see, e.g. Akther, 2014; Estalkhbijari & Khodareza, 2012; García & Martin, 2004; Gaspar, Leòn, et al., 2016; Seçer, Şahin, et al., 2015; Velandia, 2008) However, effects on academic performance have also been briefly visited.

One of the studies investigating benefits of warm-up activties on performance is Estalkhbijari and Khodareza's study from 2012. Their study, which included 60 Iranian EFL students, age 20–23, investigated the effects warm-up tasks on writing production. The warm-ups used included activities which involved matching pictures to expressions, drawing, and guessing vocabulary items related to routines and daily activies. To measure the effect, Estalkhbijari and Khodareza used a pre- and post-tests in which the students' had to write two paragraphs of about 150 words. Paragraphs were scored by "three experienced raters" using a modified version of an essay scoring by Hughes (see Estalkhbijari & Khodareza, 2012, p. 199). Results from the study showed that the implemention of warm-up tasks had a "significant effect on the experiment group's writing ability" (p. 196). Motivational effects of implenting warm-up activties are also supported by Estalkhbijari and Khodareza's study. The researchers' observations also suggest that warm-ups help catch students' attention and facilitate interaction and involvement.

García and Martin (2004) also discovered benefits related to performance from warm-up activities. They investigated the effects of warm-up tasks on students enrolled in a Technical English course at the School of Engineering at Malaga University. The warm-up tasks used were focused on association techniques and semantic networks. Leading up to a reading activity dealing with the word *flamecutting*, which is an advanced word in itself, the verb *to cut* would be used as an hyponym in order to activate previous knowledge: " […] the students would progressively provide the appropriate words (nouns, verbs and adjectives) related to the material involved, its molecular structure, the type of cutting, the kind of finish etc" (2004, p. 18). Using cloze tests and multiple-choice exercises, they found that: (1) warm up tasks boost paradigmatic and syntagmatic word relations, and (2) the students' mental lexicon gets activated and re-arranged with new links. In light of this, they concluded that "the production of utterances to exploit rhetorical functions such as definitions, classifications, descriptions, etc. by using the vocabulary presented is, by itself, a worthwhile activity" (p. 36). Findings from García and Martin's study also suggest that dedicating around 10 minutes to warm-up tasks at the beginning of a class can result in more motivated students (García & Martin, 2004, p. 17).

The activation of students' mental lexicon, as put by Garcia and Martin, is related to what Carrel (1983) refers to as schemata or, more pragmatically explained, background knowledge.

Carrel explains that schemata may be thought of as interacting knowledge structures stored in hierarchies in long term memory (p. 82), through which we interpret new information.

Drawing on the research presented, one can argue that warm-up tasks seem to promote active, motivated students by letting them be more involved in their own learning process. As noted by Velandia (2008, p. 13), the use of warm-up activities also provide a good opportunity to break the monotony of learning by letting students take part in enjoyable and interesting activities which offer an often needed break from standardized lessons. The implementation of warm-up tasks in lessons does not only seem to have motivational benefits, as it has been shown to lead to improvement in academic performance as well (Estalkhbijari & Khodareza, 2012; García & Martin, 2004). Garcia and Martin's study also suggests that students background knowledge, in their case other words related to a target-word, gets activated.

Tasks which teachers can use as a warm-up activity can come in various colors. However, in the authors view, what separates a task suited for use as a warm-up task is that it is entertaining and fun, revolves around authentic materials related to the students' interests, and that it is relatively risk free. Similarly, Nseendi (1984) suggests that students will become more motivated to learn if the activities or exercises are interesting and entertaining (see Cheung, 2001, p. 59). A good way to meet these requirements is by using a game as a warm-up activity.

2.2 Games

A game is an activity or task with a certain set of rules in which learners interact with each other. Games also include an element of fun. By using a game, perceived by learners as fun or pleasant, as a warm-up task, the positive traits denoted as interest and enjoyment are strengthened. The assumption that fun equals good is supported by Stephen Krashen's (1994) pleasure hypothesis. The pleasure hypothesis is in essence that those activities or tasks perceived by learners as pleasant are good for language acquisition, while those not perceived so are not optimal for language acquisition.

Hadfield (1999) states that there are two overarching types of games: competitive games, in which players or teams race to be the first to reach a pre-determined goal, and cooperative

games, in which players work together towards a common goal. In the L2 educational setting, these types can be further divided into linguistic games and communicative games. The goal of linguistic games is linguistic accuracy: that is, in a vocabulary-oriented game – remembering the correct word, meaning(s), connections to other words, and form. The goals of communicative games focus more on free production, interaction and communication without a strict focus on correct form (Hadfield, 1999, p. 4).

Some studies have been conducted to test the effectiveness of games in a classroom setting (Afari, 2012; Neyadi, 2007; Zaabi, 2007). Afari (2012) investigated the effects of a *Jeopardy* style guessing game on 90 Abu Dhabi math students in terms of classroom environment, attitudes and achievement. His study showed that games had a positive effect on students' attitudes towards the learning of mathematics and perceptions of classroom environment as well as achievement (p. iv). The action research conducted by Al Neyadi (2007) and Al Zaabi (2007) both contribute as evidence that games can enhance student attention, motivation to learn vocabulary and encourage interaction between students. After implementing the use of games in vocabulary instruction, Al Neyadi (2007) concluded, on the basis of interviews, observations and journaling, that using games to practice and recycle vocabulary seems to: (1) increase word memorization, (2) foster student interaction, and (3) enhance student motivation (pp. 103-104).

The research and studies mentioned reveal a connection between games, motivation and vocabulary learning. They also act in support of Krashen's Pleasure Hypothesis (1994) and the assumption that fun equals good. However, these studies rely primarily on qualitative results – surveys, questionnaires, observations and interviews. There is a lack of substantial quantitative test evidence on whether games promote vocabulary acquisition or not.

Hadfield (1999) argues that games should be used only to review vocabulary, not introduce it. The current study hypothesizes that games can be used to do both, and that educational games can also be used as a warm-up task to introduce vocabulary in a fun and creative way. At the same time, when one is designing warm-up games to use as a tool to promote vocabulary acquisition, one must always keep in mind the complexity of word knowledge, and how this type of knowledge is learnt.

2.3 Vocabulary and its importance in L2 learning

One might argue that words are the very building blocks of language (Bjørke, 2018, p. 178). It is impossible to communicate properly without knowing a certain set of words. Their importance is pragmatically explained by Bjørke (2018): "*A message can be imparted without grammar, but without words we are at best limited to communication that consists of facial expressions and gestures*" (p. 178). An error in concord might render the message less accurate, but the essence of the message is most likely intact, and the sentence still "makes sense" to the receiver.

The term vocabulary is often used to discuss word knowledge. However, word knowledge, or knowledge about words, is a vague term which in turns needs to be specified in order to be properly discussed. Researchers have tried to specify what elements exactly is involved when one knows a word. As early as in 1942, Cronbach summarized important behaviors on the area. He considered vocabulary knowledge as the ability to define the word, to recognize its use and appropriateness to a situation, to understand the different meanings the word may have in different contexts, and lastly, the ability to make use of the term in thinking and context (Cronbach, 1942, pp. 206-207). Over time, more aspects of vocabulary knowledge have been the target of research and recognized as important, such as morphosyntactic properties, pronunciation, orthographic features, and semantic and pragmatic features (see Read, 2000, pp. 40-41). In other words, vocabulary knowledge can be viewed as a sum of different aspects of knowledge. Considering these aspects, Nation (2001) used three general terms to conceptualize the different aspects of vocabulary knowledge, and what is involed in knowing a word: form, meaning and use. The details of these terms are summarized in table 1. In the table, R stands for recepetive vocabulary knowledge of an aspect and P stands for produce vocabulary knowledge.

Form	Spoken	R	What does the word sound like?
		P	How is the word pronounced?
	Written	R	What does the word look like?
		P	How is the word written and spelled?

	Word parts	R	What parts are recognizable in this word?
		P	What word parts are needed to express the meaning?
Meaning	Form and meaning	R	What meaning does this word form signal?
		P	What word form can be used to express this meaning?
	Concepts and referents	R	What is included in the concept?
		P	What items can the concept refer to?
	Associations	R	What other words does this make us think of?
		P	What other words could we use instead of this one?
Use	Grammatical functions	R	What other words could be use instead of this one?
		P	In what patterns must we use this word?
	Collocations	R	What words or types of words occur with this one?
		P	What words or types of must we use with this one?
	Constrains on use (register, frequency)	R	Where, when, and how often would we expect to meet this word?
		P	Where, when, and how often can we use this word?

Table 1 - What is involved in knowing a word (see Nation, 2001, pp. 40-41, table 21)

In Nation's model, form includes knowledge about word parts, spoken and written forms, meaning involves form and meaning, concepts and referents, and associations and use includes grammatical functions, collocations and constrains on use (Nation, 2001, pp. 40-41). These aspects are further explained in table 1 above.

Another distinction made in vocabulary knowledge is the difference between receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge. According to Nation, (2001) "receptive vocabulary use involves the ability to perceive the form of a word while listening or reading and retriving its meaning. Productive vocabulary use involves wanting to express a meaning through speaking or writing, and retrieving and producing the appropriate spoken or written word form (p. 38)". As mentioned, this distinction in relation to vocabulary knowledge is explained in table 1 under the labels R for receptive knowledge and P for productive knowledge. Nation (2001) brings forth the word *underdeveloped* to explained what is involved in knowing a word from a receptive and productive knowledge point of view. Receptive knowledge of the word *underdeveloped*, related to form, involves "being able to recognize the word when it is heard", and to be "familiar with its written form so that it is recognized when it is met in reading (Nation, 2001, p. 41). Productive knowledge, on the other hand, involves being able to say it with correct pronounciation, including stress, being able to write it with correct spelling, and to produce the word in different contexts in order to express the different meanings of the word (p. 41).

Another way of viewing the receptive-productive dichotomy and the relationship between them is by using the terms active and passive vocabulary (Nation, 2001, p. 38). Using this distinction, passive vocabulary is what one can understand when prompted by an external source. A passive vocabulary item is a word one is unconciously aware of and reminded of when encountered, but "not through associational links". In contrast, "active vocabulary can be activated through other words, because it has many incoming and outgoing links with other words" (Nation, 2001, p. 38).

As mentioned in the introduction, this thesis focuses on the *meaning* aspects of vocabulary knowledge, "in contrast to written word recognition and use which involves recognizing the written form of words" (Stahl & Nagy, 2006, p. 1).

2.4 Teaching and learning words in an L2 setting

Learning new vocabulary is not an easy undertaking. The process of learning new vocabulary is often conceptualized in three parts (Golden, 1998; Hadfield, 1999; Stahl & Nagy, 2006). The difficulty of retaining new words is presented by Hadfield (1999):

> "Words are slippery things: before you know it, they've wriggled away and are gone. It takes a lot of effort to keep them where you want them. It seems to me that in order to retain a word, students have to go through three distinct processes. They have to fix the meaning of the word in their minds; they have somehow to make their own – to personalize it so that it takes on a color and a character for them and becomes part of their individual word store – they have to use it creatively in context for themselves. (Hadfield, 1999, p. 4)

Hadfield presents a three-way process in which learners focus on understanding, personalization, and creative use. Her process highlights the importance of personalizing the target-vocabulary. This process can be related to background knowledge and schemata, which was mentioned earlier in relation to Carrel (1983). Learners interpret new words through their own background knowledge, thus forming new assosciations with the new word and the words already known.

Golden (1998, p. 114) also describes the process of learning words as a three-way process, consisting of an understanding process, a storage process, and a retrieval process. The understanding process is when the semantic meaning of the word is learnt. To understand its meaning, we must look at the context it appears in, analyze the unique parts, compare it with words we already know, and use compensation strategies such as consulting a dictionary or asking the teacher or a friend. After a new word is understood, the storage process begins. For a word to be properly stored, it has to be used in new, authentic contexts. In this way, new association networks are created which makes it easier to remember and retrieve the word when it is needed.

Something the mentioned approaches have in common is the importance of semantic and assosiation networks. The words in our vocabulary are organized in terms of relationships and contrasts, such as antonyms, synonyms, hypernyms and other pragmatic attributes. Synonyms are words with the same or similar meanings, antonyms refer to words with opposite meaning, and hyponyms refer to semantically superordinate or subordinate words (Bjørke, 2018, p. 193). An example of such an assosciative network can be seen in figure 2.

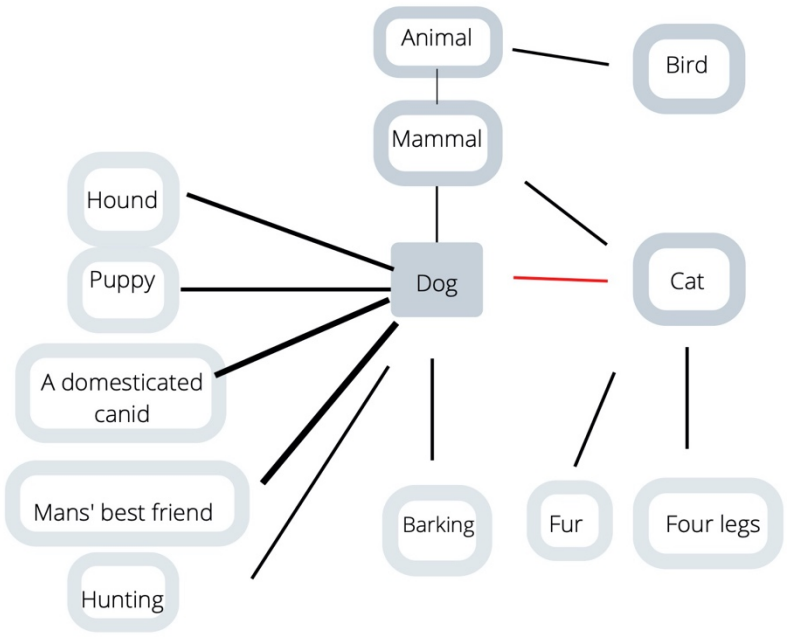

Figure 2 - Illustration of an assosciative network

These networks are important for understanding the meaning of a word, but also for whether or not the word will be stored in our long-term memory. Words in these networks are activated by other words and are closely related to the passive-active vocabulary dichotomy.

Hadfield (1999, p. 4) proceeds to ask the question how one can design tasks that can help students learn vocabulary. Such tasks should help the students: (1) fix the meaning of the word in their minds, (2) make the word their own and (3) use the word to interact and communicate with others. This assertion was kept in mind during the planning of the present study's experimental treatment.

2.5 Task based learning and vocabulary learning

Pedagogical tasks involve conscious techniques that teachers or learners employ to help students learn. A proper definition is needed in order to discuss tasks. Ellis (2003) provides an appropriate definition of a pedagogical task to the current study's cause – a pedagogical task is:

> [A] work plan that requires learners to process language pragmatically in order to achieve an outcome that can be evaluated in terms of whether the correct or appropriate propositional content has been conveyed. To this end, it requires them to give primary attention to meaning and to make use of their own linguistic resources, although the design of the task may predispose them to choose particular forms. A task is intended to result in language use that bears a resemblance, direct or indirect, to the way language is used in the real word. Like other language activities, a task can engage productive or receptive, and oral or written skills and also various cognitive processes (Ellis, 2003, p. 16).

This definition highlights pragmatic and communicative use of language as central to the task. Such tasks can be evaluated whether the a correct, or an appropriate answer, is given. In task-based learning, the word appropriate is key. Since learners, at different levels, make use of their own resources to come up with an answer, answers will vary. If one gives three students the task of summarizing a chapter in a book, it is extremely unlikely that they would produce identical summaries. Their summaries would be personalized by their own experiences and interests, resulting on a likely focus on different elements from the chapter. However different, the results would still be appropriate and therefore no less correct as long as they relate to the same chapter.

Stahl & Nagy (2006) writes about how vocabulary instruction can foster "ownership" of words. Successful vocabulary instruction must meet three criteria: (1) include both definitional information and contextual information about the word's meaning, (2) involve learners more actively in word learning and (3) provide multiple exposures to meaningful information about the word (p. 62). They include word guessing as a creative task to encourage learners to think about how to convey a meaning using synonyms, categories, antonyms, hyponyms, practical examples, and by manipulating the contrast between the target word and related words. Word guessing games are a variant of information gap games, where one learner has access to information withheld from the other. The active guessing makes the guesser think about the given information, not only the word given, but also other words with similar meanings (Stahl & Nagy, 2006, p. 71).

One can argue that word guessing tasks are comprised of both communicative and linguistic elements. As a task, the game revolves around using free-form language to deliever as presise a message as possible, so that the guesser can think of the correct answer. Thus, word Guessing games like the one mentioned above, are best played in pairs or in a small group.

The importance of using pair or small group that requires communicative interaction between students is thoroughly reviewed in literature, and it is now commonly accepted within SLA literature that there is a robust connection between interaction and learning (Gass & Mackey, 2014, p. 181). Several theoretical approaches provide a rationale for their use. The Interaction Approach (Long, 1996), incorporating elements from both the Input Hypothesis (Krashen, 1982) and the Output Hypothesis (Swain & Lapkin, 1995), focuses on the relationship between input, interaction and output in second language learning. The relationship can be viewed in Long's (1996) own words:

> *[N]egation for meaning*, and especially negotiation work that triggers interactional adjustments by the NS or more competent interlocutor, facilitates acquisition because it connects input, internal learner capacities, particularly selective attention, and output in productive ways (pp. 451-452).

The approach emphasises the importance of negation for meaning in learner to learner interaction. Negation of meaning occurs when the comminucation is disrupted – when one of the learners says something that the other do not understand the meaning of. To explain better, the speaker can slow down speech, paraphrase using a different set of words adapted to the listener or speak more clearly. The listener can also ask for clarification or ask questions to achieve a greater understanding – producing output. In pedagogical research, group work has also been showed to reduce anxiety and to promote comfort in language learning (see e.g. Koch & Terrel, 1991).

2.6 Task-induced involvement

Laufer and Hulstijn (2001a) proposed a hypothetical model, the *Involvement Load Hypothesis,* to explain what is involved in deep processing. The Involvement Load Hypothesis is a motivational-cognitive construct on involvement which embraces three basic involvement components: need, search, and evaluation (Jahangard & Akbari, 2012, p. 9). The hypothesis perceives involvement as a motivational-cognitive construct which can explain and predict learners' success in the retention of hitherto unfamiliar words (Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001a, p. 14), based on the assumption that retention of incidentally processed words is conditional on three factors of involvement in a task: *need*, *search* and *evaluation*. If all factors are involved in a task, learners should retain and learn more words.

The first factor, need, is a motivational component of involvement, according to Laufer and Hulstijn (2001a). Need can either be viewed moderate (1) or strong (2). The need factor of a task can be viewed as moderate when it is imposed by the teacher, or strong when the students' themselves initiate the task. Search and evaluation are cognitive components of involvement which deal with information processing (Jahangard & Akbari, 2012, p. 10). Search involves learners attempting to find the meaning of an unknown L2 word, or trying to find the L2 word form expressing a certain concept. Search can be viewed as moderate (1) or strong (2). Evaluation is when students compare a given word with other words in order to then select the most fitting for use in a specific context. As Laufer and Huljstin (2001a) states: "evaluation implies some kind of selective decision based on a criterion of semantic and formal appropriateness of the word and its context" (2001a, p. 15). The varying degrees of the mentioned involvement components are explained by Tsubaki (2007, p. 178) in figure 3.

Components	**Degrees of the Involvement Load**	**Explanations**
Need	Index 0 (None)	The learner does not feel the need to learn the word.
	Index 1 (Moderate)	The learner is required to learn the word.
	Index 2 (Strong)	The learner decides to learn the word.
Search	Index 0 (None)	They do not need to learn the meanings or forms of the word.
	Index 1 (Moderate	The meaning of the word is found.

	Index 2 (Strong)	The form of the word is found.
Evaluation	Index 0 (None)	The word is not compared with other words.
	Index 1 (Moderate)	The word is compared with other words in the provided context.
	Index 2 (Strong)	The word is compared with other words in self-provided context.

Figure 3 - Components and degrees of involvement load explained see (Tsubaki, 2007, p. 178)

Lee and Hirsh (2012) writes about the importance for researchers to identify how some vocabulary practice activities provide better opportunities to acquire new words than others. Further questions of interest are "whether retention depends more on what one does with the word or how often one meets it (Lee & Hirsh, 2012, p. 79). Studies investigating the effectiveness of different types of tasks on vocabulary acquisition (see Fuente, 2006) have suggested that tasks requiring deeper processing do seem to improve vocabulary acquisition.

Laufer and Hulstijn's parallel study from (2001b) also found that words processed with a higher involvement load was retained better than words processed with a lower involvement load (2001b, p. 552). More recent studies also support this hypothesis (see Ghorbani & Rahmandoost, 2012; Shoari & Asl, 2015), however, other studies have found ambigous or contradicting results (see Folse, 2012; Martìnez-Fernàndez, 2008).

2.7 Motivation and second language learning

Motivation is one of the key factors that predict successful acquisition of a second language, and it is widely accepted by researchers that the absence or presence of it in learners can be a deciding factor that influence success or failure, in language acquisition (Dörnyei, 1998, p. 117). The current study employs definition of motivation put into terms by Crooke and Schmidt (1991 as cited in Peacock, 1997): "interest in and enthusiasm for the material used in class; persistence with the learning task, as indicated by levels of attention or action for an extended duration; and levels of concentration and enjoyment" (p. 145). This definition aligns

with the goals of this study, in that enhanced participation and enjoyment are worthy goals in themselves. The theoretical framework for measuring student motivation is based on Pintrich and De Groot's adaptation of the general expectancy-value model of motivation (cf. Pintrich & Groot, 1990, p. 33). Two important factors are included: (a) utility value, which includes the students' belief about whether or not the task will be useful, and (b) an intrinsic value factor, including students' emotional attitudes and reactions to the task.

In his paper from (1998), Dörnyei considers the difficulties in discussing motivation in education and research contexts. He writes that even though researchers tend to agree that motivation is responsible for determining human behavior by energizing it and giving it direction, the great variety of accounts put forward in the literature of how this happens may surprise even the seasoned researcher. The diversity and range of accounts is no accident, as it would be naïve to assume that there would be any simple and straightforward answer to explain why humans behave the way they do (p. 117). Thus, as stated by Dörnyei: "it is not the lack but rather the abundance of motivation theories which confuses the scene (1998, p. 118)".

Dörnyei (1994) writes that motivation for second or foreign language learning presents a unique situation due to the multifaceted nature and role of language. In addition to being a communicating coding system, it is also an integral part of individual identity and an important channel of social organization. The learning of a second language is, in result, a more complex affair than simply mastering new information and knowledge. Together with environmental and cognitive factors generally associated with learning, it also involves various personality traits and social components (p. 274). Some problems that second or foreign language learners might face is that they are not able to express themselves as well in the target language as they can in their native tongue. This conflict within themselves can result in foreign language anxiety (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 125), and avoidance of involvement in tasks in which they have to express themselves independently.

2.7.1 Expectancy-value beliefs

One influential method of conceptualizing motivation related to task-solving and achievement is to use the *expectancy-value* framework of motivation. Modern expectancy-value theories are based on John Atkinson's achievement motivation theory (see Reeve, 2009, p. 175),

which hypothesizes that achievement-related behaviors are determined by achievement motives, expectancy for success, and incentive values (see Wigfield, Tonks, et al., 2004). Subsequent research has focused on broadening Atkinson's concept of values (see Wigfield, Tonks, et al., 2004, pp. 167-171).

As done by (Wigfield, Eccles, et al., 2015, p. 659), the discussion of motivation in an expectancy-value framework can be organized around three broad but practical questions:

(1) Can I do this task?
(2) Do I want to do this task and why?
(3) What do I have to do to succeed on this task?

To describe the first question, "Can I do this task?", Eccles and colleagues (Wigfield, Tonks, et al., 2004) used the term competence-related beliefs. They use the term in order to distinguish between expectancy for success and ability belief. Expectancy for success refers to learners' belief about how well they will do in an upcoming task. Ability belief refers to learners' evaluation and assessment of their own competence, and how they compare to other students (p. 171). The importance of ability belief is prominent of many motivation theories and overlaps in some areas with construct of 'self-efficacy' (see Bandura, 1997, in Reeve, 2009, p. 233). The expectancy for success is based on the learners' beliefs about his or her own ability to succeed in a task.

The question "Do I want to do this task and why?" is related to the construct of value which the learner assigns to a task. Eccles and colleagues (Wigfield, Tonks, et al., 2004) proposed four major components of subjective values: (1) attainment value, (2) intrinsic value, (3) utility value and (4) cost (p. 171). (1) Attainment value is defined as the importance of doing well on a task and is determined by how a task is relevant to the fulfillment of the learner's concept of self-identity. In other words: "Does this task help me become closer to the person I want to be?".

Intrinsic value (2) comes from the enjoyment one gets from the task. As put by Eccles and colleagues (2004, p. 171): "This component is similar in certain aspects to notions of intrinsic motivation and interest (e.g. Self-determination theory), but it is important to acknowledge

that these constructs come from different theoretical traditions" (brackets my own). However, it is agreed upon that when learners intrinsically value an activity, they often become more deeply engaged in it and can persist at it for a long time (p. 171). Utility value (3) refers to the usefulness of a task. It concerns how useful the task is to achieve long-term goals, which are not necessarily related to the task itself. Further classroom related practical questions can be raised: "Will this task help me become a better English speaker?" or, "Does this task raise or lower my stress level"? Eccles and colleagues stress that these values must be considered in the context of (4) cost – "What do I have to do to succeed in this task"? If the costs are too high, the other value components are affected.

Several studies have shown positive correlation between task value, academic achievement and motivated students (see, for example, e.g. Al-Harthy & Aldhafri, 2014; Liem, Lau, et al., 2008; Metallidou & Vladchou, 2010). In a study on task values and self-efficacy in relation to achievement, which included 284 university students, Al-Harthy and Aldhafri (2014) found a positive correlation between task value, self-efficacy and achievement. Their findings also interestingly suggested that task value predicted students' self-ability beliefs. Similarly, Metallidou and Vladchou (2010) investigated the relationship between teachers' evaluation of Greek upper-elementary school pupils and the pupils' task value beliefs. The results suggested that "students with high value beliefs in mathematics were described as more cognitively, metacognitively, and motivationally competent learners as compared to students' with lower value beliefs" (2010, p. 776).

As explained by Dörnyei (1998): "According to the main principles of expectancy-value theories, motivation to perform various tasks is the product of two key factors: the individual's *expectancy of success* in a given task and the *value* the individual attaches to success in that task. The greater the perceived likelihood of goal-attainment and the greater incentive value of the goal, the higher the degree of the individual's positive motivation" (p. 119). Contrarily, if it is likely a task will not contribute positively towards the goals and values of an individual, the degree of positive motivation will be lower. Concluding, task values may be viewed as if-then statements. If I engage in a certain activity, then I can expect a certain outcome.

3 Method

In this chapter, the method employed in order to investigate the aims of this study will be presented. The chapter will include information about dependent variables i.e. the vocabulary test and the questionnaire, in addition to a more in-depth description of the independent variable of the study, Alias. Information about the selection process of participants and target words will also be included. Steps taken to address the reliability and validity of this quasi-experiment will then be discussed.

As mentioned in section 1.1, this thesis aims to investigate the value of warm-up tasks in the English classroom, and thus advocate for their use. The aim is explored through two research questions:

RQ1) How do vocabulary-oriented warm-up tasks affect the students' vocabulary acquisition?

RQ2) How do vocabulary-oriented warm-up tasks affect the students' task value beliefs?

With the related hypotheses:

H1) Using vocabulary-oriented warm-up task will lead to better acquisition of target vocabulary items in the experiment group compared to the control group.

H2) Using vocabulary-oriented warm-up tasks will produce a change in the experiment group students' task value beliefs.

The research questions were investigated through null hypothesis testing using different statistical tests. Potential pre-existing group differences in vocabulary knowledge of the target words in relation to RQ1[1] were investigated using an independent means t-test. A Mann-Whitney U test and Wilcoxon Signed-Rank tests were then conducted to measure significant

[1] How do vocabulary-oriented warm-up tasks affect the students' vocabulary acquisition?

differences on the vocabulary post-tests and progress from pre to post vocabulary test. RQ2[2] was explored using a Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test to measure potential increase in positive task value beliefs toward warm-up tasks.

3.1 The quasi-experimental design

This study features a control group, pre-test, post-test quasi-experimental (see Dörnyei, 2007, p. 120) design. These types of studies in an educational context may also be characterized as intervention research (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 119). In contrast to a true experiment, the participants in this study were not randomly assigned to groups. With a goal to conduct an experiment that would be of practical value to language teachers, which could also be easily implemented in a normal lesson, I decided to conduct the experiment in a natural classroom setting. This included using pre-existing groups and a quasi-experimental design. An additional reason for choosing a quasi-experimental design was that randomizing the group could potentially create an artificial environment which could negatively affect the results.

This study utilized a design with one independent and two dependent variables. The independent variable of this thesis is Alias as a warm-up task. The dependent variables are a receptive vocabulary test on target-words found in the students' textbook meant to investigate the first research question, and the questionnaire about task value beliefs related warm-up activities meant to explore the second research question. Both groups had two English classes each week in which the experiment took place. The lessons were all on different days. That is, two lessons for both groups, over the course of four days. The lessons were taught and carried out by the author, with some logistical help from the students' regular teacher. The design of the inquiry is illustrated in figure 4.

[2] How do vocabulary-oriented warm-up tasks affect the students' task value beliefs?

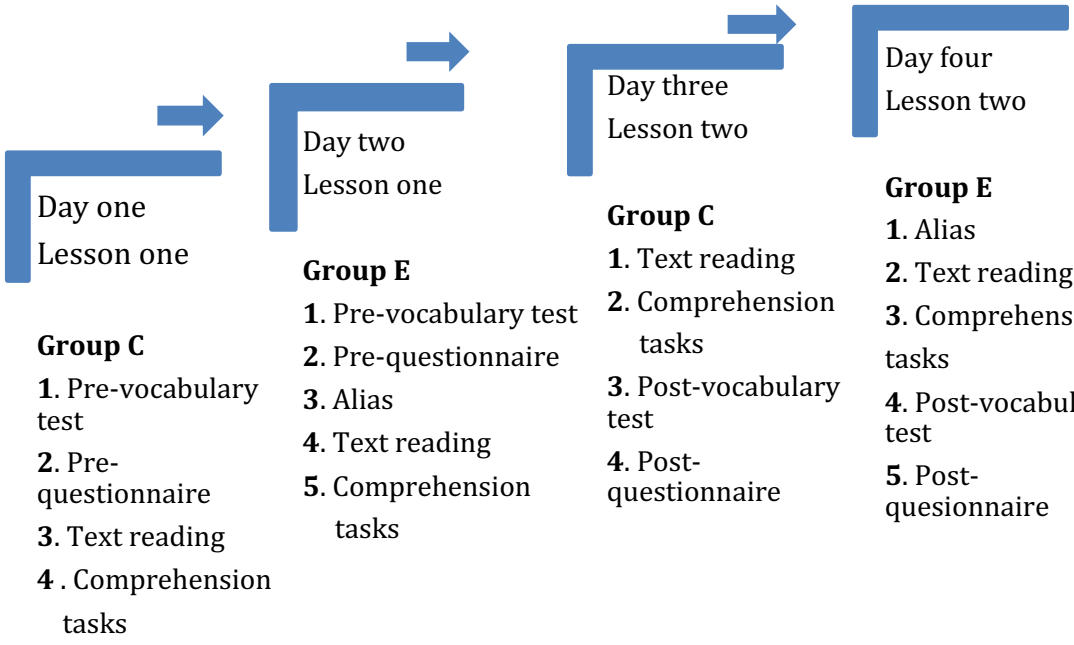

Figure 4 - Illustration of the quasi-experiment.

3.1.1 Selection of participants

Being able to conduct the experiment at the lower-secondary level was a goal set early in the process. The eight grade, the first year of lower-secondary school, serves as a springboard for students' future education. In Norway, this is the grade where students start to receive graded feedback on their assignments. On account of this, establishing proper working habits and exploring new methods of learning becomes even more important. It is also generally expected that most students' have some mastery of the English language, to the degree that they are able to use it well to communicate. Under ideal conditions, the students' mastery and knowledge of English would have been explored through an English proficiency test, .e.g. the

Oxford test of English[3], or alternatively a vocabulary size test[4]. This is not possible to do however, in the short time span and scope of this thesis.

The groups in the study were already being taught by a colleague who had showed interest for the study. After reaching out to him, he proposed that I could perform the experiment in his two English groups, as long as it did not put them too far behind the other classes in the same grade. Out of the two groups made available to the study, one of the groups were arbitrarily chosen to be the experiment group (group E). The other group formed the control group (group C). This was done by flipping a coin.

The participants were 42 grade 8 students, all in the Norwegian Public-School System. Lower secondary school is Grade 8 to 10 in Norway. The students were between 13 and 14 years old. In Norway, students start learning English in their first year of elementary school, resulting in an L2 English age of onset of 5-6 years. The participants of this study had been learning English in school for approximately seven and a half years.

All Lower-Secondary schools in Norway employ the same English core curriculum nationwide (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2013a). The national curriculum is based on competence aims, which the students are expected to master. Since the students had just recently completed grade 7, the curriculum and competence aims from "After grade 7" is most relevant to describe their educational background. Competence aims after grade 7 (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2013b, p. 8) include objectives which focus on general language learning, oral communication, written communication, and culture, society and literature.

3.2 The independent and dependent variables explained

This section will present the independent and the dependent variables of this study in detail. It is divided into three parts. The first part will present the game Alias, which is the treatment this study is based on, and explain the rules. Secondly, it will present the vocabulary test used

[3]A standardized test measuring English proficiency - www.oxfordtestofenglish.com

[4] A good example is the Paul Nation Vocabulary Size Test - https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/lals/about/staff/publications/paul-nation/Vocabulary-Size-Test-14000.pdf

to answer the RQ1[5] and provide a rational for its use. Lastly, it will present the questionnaire which conceptualizes motivation in an expectancy-value framework. The questionnaire was conducted in order to answer RQ2[6].

3.2.1 Alias

Alias is a word guessing and explanation game, and the use of it as a warm-up task functions as the independent variable of this quasi-experiment. The game is played in teams of two or more individuals on each team. In essence, it revolves around explaining and guessing words provided to you. Players are to explain and describe words by using verbal clues, without using the word itself, in such a way that the players on the same team understand and are able to guess as many words as possible within a certain timespan. For each word correctly guessed, the team gets one point. The game is usually played on a fixed playing-board, on which one point equals one step forward. The words to be explained are listed on a card, picked by one of the players on the team. In the standard version of Alias, the highest possible score each turn is eight. An hourglass is also included to limit the amount of time a team has.

Alias is a well-known game in Norway, to such a degree that most people have either played it or at least heard of it. Similar types of word-guessing party games are known abroad as Catch Phrase, or Taboo.

In the process of adapting Alias to a pedagogical context, I chose to remove the use of the hourglass and the playing board. The hourglass was cut in order to make the task less stressful for the students. This was also done believing that the combination of forced-output and a time-limit can cause foreign language anxiety. The removal of the playing-board was for practical reasons, as it would be difficult to procure the ten or more copies of it needed, and that a potential "completion" of the game using the playing-board would take significantly more time.

25 target words were also chosen from texts on the students' syllabus to be used in the game. The students were instructed to explain and guess one word at a time, and to switch persons

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[5] How do vocabulary-oriented warm-up tasks affect the students' vocabulary acquisition?

[6] How do vocabulary-oriented warm-up tasks affect the students' task value beliefs?

doing the explaining and the guessing for each word. The target-words are further discussed in section 3.2.2.

3.2.2 The vocabulary test

In order to explore group similarity and to provide a baseline for further testing of RQ1[7], I conducted a vocabulary test (Appendix 2) which included 25 target words found in the students' textbook. The 25 test words were picked from two pre-determined texts on the students' syllabus. Some of the words were target-words already selected and defined by the editors in the textbook's sidebar, others were selected because of other factors. These factors or criteria were relatedness to the target text and syllabus, frequency and level of difficulty.

The test was divided into three parts: (1) recognize synonyms, (2) recognize definitions, and (3) recognize and pick the correct word in context. Both the recognize synonyms and definitions part of the test was inspired by the Word Association Test[8] by John Read (1998). The WAT is an established vocabulary assessment tool used to capture receptive knowledge of meaning, orthographic form, semantic association and collocation (Zhong, 2012, p. 45). The third part of the vocabulary test, which revolved around recognizing and picking the correct word, was included in the belief that the synonyms and definitions are not worth much on its' own unless it can be used and understood in a sentence and appropriate context.

The text both groups read during their first lesson was an excerpt from Mark Haddon's 2003 young adult mystery-crime novel *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time.* The story revolves around a young boy who, initially, sets out to find out who killed their neighbor's dog. In regards to the competence aim, that the students are supposed to be able to "…understand and use a general vocabulary related to different subjects" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2013a), I chose to embrace and make use of the crime and mystery-related words in the text. Words such as wound, legal and terrified are some of the words chosen according to these criteria. The words mentioned are not particularly difficult words, but I considered them to be low-frequency words which are mostly used in a crime and mystery context. A different word from the recognize definitions part of the vocabulary test

[7] How do vocabulary-oriented warm-up tasks affect the students' vocabulary acquisition?

[8] Word Association Test (Read, 1998) - https://www.lextutor.ca/tests/wat/

was *Muzzle*, meaning the projecting nose and mouth of an animal. This word was chosen because it was considered a rather difficult low frequency word, but also because knowing it would promote better comprehension of the text. By letting the students attend to *Muzzle* during the Alias as warm-up task, the students would recognize the word easier when encountering it in reading.

The text that the students read in their second lesson was a text called "My London Adventure". This text, written in a letter format, revolves around a girl that writes to her friend about her trip to London. In this text, the writer is very descriptive of her surroundings. Thus, some vocabulary related to clothes were chosen, for example the words dress-code and blazer. These were words which I suspected the students to have receptive knowledge of, but that they might have problems explaining. Other words, for example bin, where chosen because of their status as traditionally British words.

3.2.3 Questionnaire

In order to assert group similarity and to provide a baseline for the investigating of RQ2[9], a questionnaire about task value beliefs related to warm-up tasks (Appendix 3) was conducted. This section will focus how on the questionnaire was made and provide a rational for its use. The questionnaire survey-research was conducted based on the assumption that, according to Dörnyei and Csizér (2012), the basic idea behind survey research is: "the recognition that the characteristics, opinions, attitudes, and intended behaviors of a large population (e.g., second language (L2) learners in a country) can be describes and analyzed on the basis of questioning only a fraction of the particular population" (p. 74).

Students were to give their opinion on 12 statements using a Likert scale. The answer alternatives in the scale were labeled with numbers 1 through 5. Only the extremes (1 and 5) were marked by verbal labels. These were *Strongly Disagree* and *Strongly Agree*, respectively. The two first items were test-items. As the goal of the questionnaire was to investigate task value beliefs, items of peripheral interest not directly related to the variables and hypothesis included in the research questions was not included in the data analysis (Dörnyei & Csizér, 2012, p. 76). These items included question one, "*I know what warm-up*

[9] How do vocabulary-oriented warm-up tasks affect the students' task value beliefs?

activities related to teaching situations are" and two, "*I am familiar with warm-up activities in the English classroom*".

The remaining 10 items were aimed towards investigating students' perceived utility and intrinsic value beliefs toward warm-up tasks and Alias. In order words, the item scale had two categories. Eight items had the objective of investigating utility task value beliefs. As mentioned in section 2.7.1, utility value refers to the usefulness of a task, that is: "how will this task help me improve?". An example item in this category is: Warm-up activities help me make the mental switch from Norwegian to English". Intrinsic value comes from the enjoyment one gets from the task (Wigfield, Tonks, et al., 2004, p. 171). Two items were aimed at investigating intrinsic task value beliefs. One of example item in this category was: "*I find warm-up activities fun*". All items were positively worded.

Steps were taken to counter potential problems related to the analysis of questionnaire data related to second language research. One of them is that the participants may face problems responding to statements about internal-learner phenomena in their second language (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 96). Thus, the questionnaire was administered to the students in their native language, Norwegian. The translation back to English was supervised by two experienced bilingual reviewers.

3.3 Treatment

This section will present what was done during the intervention in both groups. Eventual differences in the post-test are inspected to most likely be an outcome of the differences. The differences in treatment during the intervention are summarized in table 2 and 3. Both lessons are included.

Experiment Group	Control Group
Introduction	Introduction
Pre-testing	Pre-testing
Alias	-----
Reading	Reading
Comprehension tasks	Comprehension tasks

Table 2 - Summary of the teaching procedures in both groups, Lesson 1

Experiment Group	Control Group
Introduction	Introduction
Alias	-----
Reading	Reading
Comprehension tasks	Comprehension tasks
Post-testing	Post-testing

Table 3 - Summary of the teaching procedures in both groups, Lesson 2

3.3.1 The control group

Lesson one in the control group started with pre-testing. The vocabulary test came first, then the questionnaire. Students were given the questionnaire right after handing in the vocabulary test. The students who finished early were given the task of writing down key glossary for the next chapter in their textbook. After 20 minutes, when all students were finished with both the test and the questionnaire, the students started reading an excerpt from the book *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* in their textbooks. They read the story twice with the classmate sitting beside them, switching readers each paragraph. The students spent approximately 20 minutes on this task. Afterwards, they started doing a summarizing exercise in the textbook. They were to answer given questions about the excerpt, in key words.

Afterwards, they used these notes to write a short plot summary. Students who finished early were told to write down new and unknown words from the text.

Lesson two started with reading another text called ‘My London Adventure’ from the textbook. This lesson followed the same pattern as the first one. 20 minutes of reading and 20 minutes of exercises connected to the text followed by 20 minutes of post-testing. It is worth noting that the students spent less time in general on both the vocabulary test and the questionnaire. Students who finished earlier than expected were given the task of writing down unknown words from ‘My London Adventure’. A number of students noted both days during the study that they recognized some target-words from the test in the two texts.

3.3.2 The experiment group

Lesson one in the experiment group started in a similar way to the control group. This group were also given 20 minutes initially to do the pre-vocabulary test and the pre-questionnaire. After the testing, I spent approximately two minutes explaining Alias to the students that had no previous experience with the game and dividing them into pairs. At this point, their normal teacher was present in the classroom to help me choose fitting pairs. The students seemed to understand the activity without any notable problems. Only a few students got through all the 25 target words. Everything, including the explanation and dividing students into pairs, took 15 minutes. After the warm-up activity, the students were told to read the excerpt from The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time once, then start with comprehension tasks. They were to answer given questions about the excerpt, in key words. Afterwards, they used these notes to write a short plot summary. The few students who finished early were told to write down new and unknown words from the text.

Lesson two in the experiment group started with 15 minutes of Alias. It should be noted that a majority of the students got through all of the target on this day. Even though they played with the same word as in lesson one, sentiment was high. Nearing the end of these 15 minutes, I could see that a few students had stopped playing and told me they were finished. I just told them to start over again, without any protest. After the warm-up, they read *My London Adventure* once with a classmate, then started on the comprehension tasks. When 20 minutes remained, I started with the post-testing. The Students used more or less the same

amount of time in the post-testing as they did in the pre-testing. Students who finished early were told to write down new and unknown vocabulary from My London Adventure.

3.4 Reliability and validity measures

Given the randomization and lack of control in quasi-experimental studies, there is bound to be confounding variables which threaten the validity of the results of the study (Maciejewski, 2020, p. 38). Similarly, Dörnyei (2007, p. 116) stresses that there can be a wide range of different factors contributing to the potential differences found in the results and writes that "in practical terms, in order to be able to make causal claims based on a quasi-experimental study, the effects of the initial group-differences need to be taken into account (2007, p. 116). This section will identify and address potential confounding variables found in this study.

The major confounding variable that needs to be addressed is that of group differences i.e. pre-existing differences in knowledge of the target-words and experience with warm-up tasks between the two groups, in light of Dörnyei's (2007, p. 116) assertion. This is related to both research questions, but in different ways. Because of the short time frame in which the study could be conducted, no baseline language proficiency tests were conducted. Instead, the pre-vocabulary test functioned as a baseline for investigating group differences. It is important to note that the students could also have had different experiences in relation to warm-up tasks from the beginning. That is, a student who engage in psychical activities in his or her spare time might have a different relationship to the term warm-up than students without this experience. The pre-questionnaire functioned as a tool to address these pre-existing differences in experiences with warm-up tasks. These differences are taken into the account when analyzing the results.

In relation to the validity of the questionnaire, Dörnyei (2007) writes that multi-item scales including composite variables are only effective if the items that make up the variable work together in a homogeneous manner. This means that all items relating to a certain variable should correlate with each other, and is related to Likert's own criterion of "internal consistency" (p. 206). Interval consistency reliability is measured by the Cronbach Alpha coefficient. This is a figure ranging between 0 and 1. The higher the number, the more consistency there is between items (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 206-207) Naturally, such a reliability test should preferably have been conducted on results following a pilot-test of the

questionnaire in order to ensure reliability between the different categories. However, investigating the reliability of the items is still interesting after the tests have been conducted. Reliability analysis on the pre-questionnaires revealed a high (+ 0.9) Cronbach Alpha coefficient in both groups. This indicate that all the items on the questionnaire are investigating a similar variable.

4 Results

This chapter is devoted to presenting the results from the pre and post vocabulary receptive vocabulary test, and the pre and post questionnaire about task value beliefs. The first section of the chapter will focus on descriptive statistics and distribution of the scores. In the second section, inferential statistics will be used to explore the research questions of this thesis:

RQ1) How do vocabulary-oriented warm-up tasks affect the students' vocabulary acquisition?

RQ2) How do vocabulary-oriented warm-up tasks affect the students' task value beliefs?

With the related hypotheses:

H1) Using vocabulary-oriented warm-up task will lead to better acquisition of target vocabulary items in the experiment group compared to the control group.

H2) Using vocabulary-oriented warm-up tasks will produce a change in the experiment group students' task value beliefs.

All statistical tests were computed using IBM SPSS 26.

4.1 Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics is, according to Dörnyei (2007), used to summarize findings by describing general tendencies in the data. This includes reporting the spread of the scores, that is, how varied the scores are. There are two main categories of descriptive statistics: measures of central tendency and measures of variability (p. 213). In this study, the included measure for central tendency is mean, which is the average of the scores. This is a good measure because it takes into account all the scores, but it comes with an disadvantage: namely that extreme scores skew it considerably (Dörnyei, 2007). For measures of variability, the

standard deviation will be included. The standard deviation is an indicator of the "average distance of the scores from the mean" (p. 214).

Because some parametric statistical tests make the assumption that the scores within a given sample is normally distributed (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 208), it is necessary to explore whether not our samples meet this assumption. To test of normality of the data collected, Shapiro-Wilk (Shapiro & Wilk, 1965) of normality tests were conducted. The Shapiro-Wilk test of normality has been shown to be a powerful tool to measure normality in small (< 50) samples (Razali & Wah, 2011). The Shapiro-Wilk test results in a W-value between zero and one. Small values below the null hypothesis '< 0.05' leads to rejection of normality whereas values above '> 0.5' indicates normality of the data (Razali & Wah, 2011, p. 25). When the data collected approximate normality, it is assumed that the population from which the sample are drawn is a normal population (Reber & Reber, 2001). In practice, this means that if the if the data is viewed in a histogram, it should have a symmetrical, bell-shaped curve – with the greatest frequency of scores in the middle, and with smaller frequencies towards the extremes (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 208).

4.1.1 Vocabulary test

The vocabulary pre-test assessed the students' pre-existing knowledge of the target vocabulary items. The test was administered to the experiment group at the beginning of the first lesson on the second day of the experiment, and to the control group at the beginning of the first lesson on the first day. The post-vocabulary test assessed the students' knowledge of the target vocabulary items after the experimental treatment. The test was administered to both groups at the end of their second lessons. Both tests were identical to the pre-test. The test had a maximum score of 25 points.

In group E, the pre-test mean score was 21.67 (SD = 2.13, SE = 0.465), with a 95% confidence level of 20.70 - 22.65. The minimum score was 18, and the maximum was a full score of 25. In the post-test, group E had mean score was 23.33 (SD = 1.02, SE = 0.222), with a 95% confidence interval of 23.87-24.80. The minimum score was 21 and the maximum score of 25.

The development of the students' knowledge of the target-words from pre to post test is presented in figure 5. The two bars report scores of the pre-test and post-test, respectively.

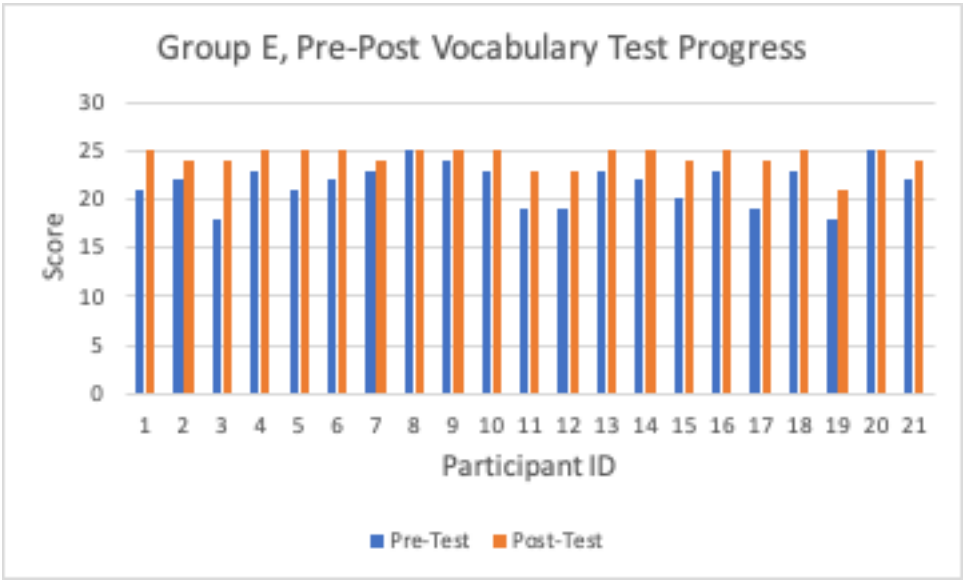

Figure 5 - Bar graph illustration the experiment group's vocabulary test progress

In group C, the pre-test mean score was 17.62 (SD = 4.04, SE = 0.881), with a confidence interval of 15.78-19.46. The minimum score was 10 and the maximum score was 24. In the post-test, group C had a mean score of 19.48 (SD = 3.50, SE = 0.764), with a 95% confidence interval of 17.88-21.07. The minimum score was 10, and the maximum score was 25. The development of the students' receptive knowledge of the target-words from pre to post test is presented in figure 6. The two bars report scores of the pre-test and post-test, respectively.

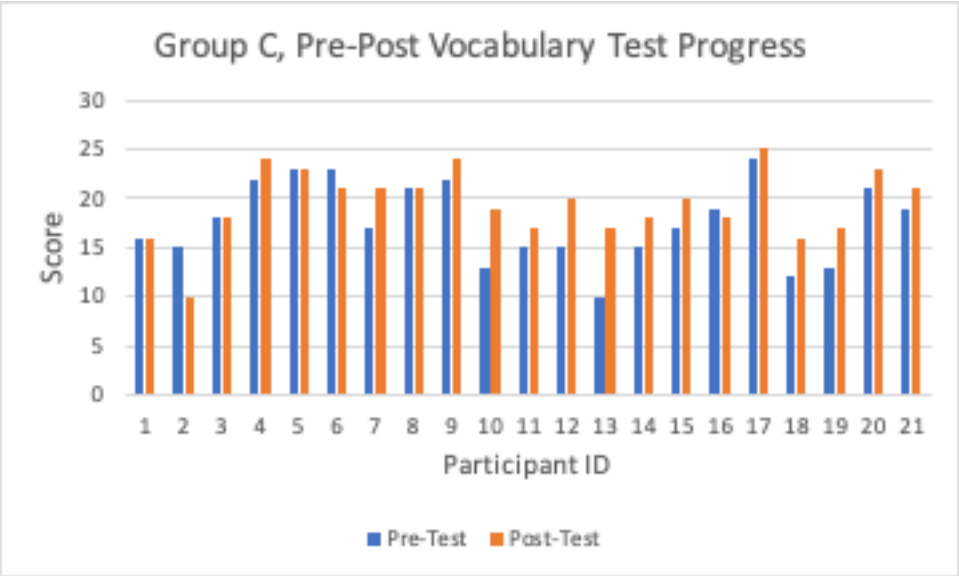

Figure 6 - Bar graph illustrating the control group's vocabulary test progress

As mentioned in the introduction to the chapter, Shapiro-Wilk test of normal distribution was conducted in order to do inferential statistics on the data. The results of the Shapiro-Wilk tests on vocabulary test data can be seen in table 4.

Vocabulary Tests	Statistic	Shapiro-Wilk	
		df	Sig.
Group E Pre	.925	21	.110
Group C Pre	.957	21	.464
Group E Post	.691	21	.000
Group C Post	.942	21	.241

Table 4 - Tests of Normality - Vocabulary Tests

As seen in the table above, the data results show that all tests, expect group E's post-test, seem to meet the requirements 'p >0.05' for a normal distribution, and can therefore be analyzed using parametric tests. Considering that many of the participants in group E's post-test achieved the maximum score, it is not surprising that it does not meet the requirements for a normal distribution. This can be further visualized by graphically analyzing the histogram of the results.

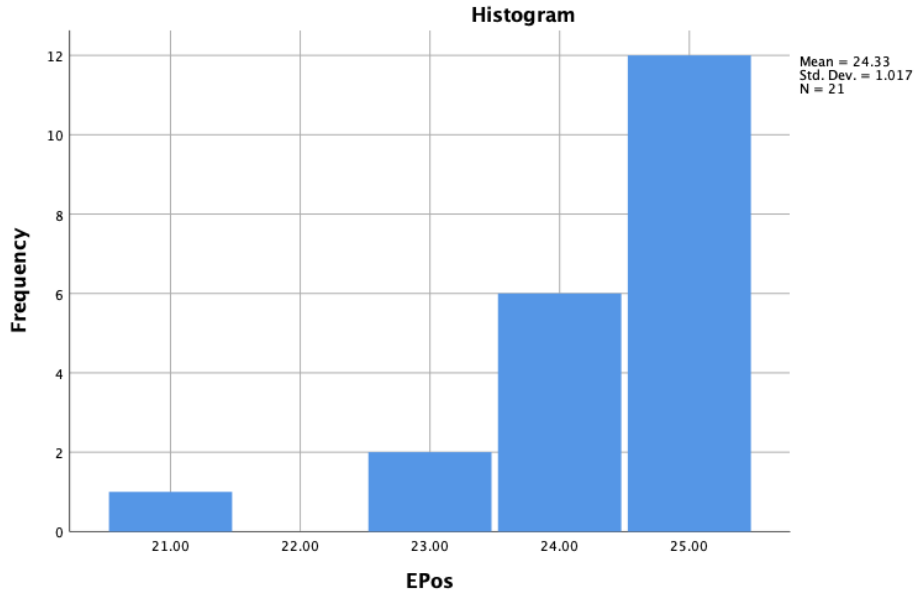

Figure 7 - Histogram illustrating skewed data distribution in group E's post-vocabulary test scores

As mentioned in the introduction to the chapter, for a distribution to be considered normal, the histogram should follow a 'bell-curve' with the results spread out around the middle. This is not the case in Figure 7. The histogram shows a very skewed distribution, "where the peak is shifted away from the center" (Dancey & Reidy, 2017, p. 83). As recommended by Dancey and Reidy (2017, p. 228): when your data is extremely skewed and you have a very small participant number, you will need to consider a non-parametric test. This is because non-parametric tests do not make assumptions about normality". Thus, non-parametric tests need to be used in order to inferential statistics on group E's posttest. However, Dörnyei (2007, pp. 227-228) argues that the parametric tests, which make assumptions about normal distribution, are a more powerful statistical procedure because they utilize more information than their non-parametric counterparts. Thus, this study will use parametric tests when requirements of

normality are met, and non-parametric test to analyze the data when it cannot be considered normally distributed.

4.1.2 Questionnaire

The questionnaire was used to investigate the students' value beliefs in relation to warm-up tasks in the English classroom. The questionnaire was administered immediately after the vocabulary test in both group conditions, on both days.

The test as it was administered had 12 Likert-scale elements (Strongly Disagree – Strongly Agree 1-5) in addition to two questions which the students could answer using free-form. In an effort not to make it too obvious for the students to find out what precisely was being investigated, the two items in the intrinsic value category was not side by side in the questionnaire when it was administered (Appendix 3). During the statistical analysis, the items were re-organized, and the two first test-items were removed. Participants who only responded to one of the questionnaire, or responded to less than half of the items in a test, were excluded. The item scale as it was used in the analysis can be seen in table 5.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Warm-up activities provide me with a soft transition from the previous to the current lesson.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Warm-up activities help to make the mental switch from Norwegian to English.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Warm-up activities are great because I get to interact with others.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Warm-up activities help me improve my English.	1	2	3	4	5

5. I am under the impression that I remember content, words and text better when we have related warm-up activities.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Warm-up activities make it easier for me to achieve the learning objectives of a lesson.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I am under the impression that the use of warm-up activities improves my learning outcome.	1	2	3	4	5
8. The use of warm-up activities makes speaking English less stressful.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I find that using warm-up activities make the lesson more exciting.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I find warm-up activities fun.	1	2	3	4	5

Table 5 - The questionnaire item scale as it was used in the analysis

In Group E, the overall inter scale mean score for all items were 3.58 on the pre-questionnaire and 4.07 on the post-questionnaire. This inter scale mean score was found using the Cronbach Alpha coefficient. One participant did not respond to any of the items and was excluded from the data analysis. The analysis also shows that two students did not respond to the four last questions, which were on the second page two of the questionnaire. This is believed to be because that they simply forgot to turn to the last page. The results of the descriptive analysis for Group E's questionnaires can be seen in table 6.

Group E =n20	Pre-Q			Post-Q		
Items	Mean	SD	=n	Mean	SD	=n
1. Warm-up activities provide me with a soft transition from the previous to the current lesson.	3.75 ≈ Agree	.850	20	4.20	1.105	20
2. Warm-up activities help to make the mental switch from Norwegian to English.	3.40 ≈ Neutral	1.188	20	3.80	1.399	20
3. Warm-up activities are great because I get to interact with others.	3.65 ≈ Agree	1.182	20	4.05	1.317	20
4. Warm-up activities help me improve my English.	3.75 ≈ Agree	.967	20	4.30	.801	20
5. I am under the impression that I remember content, words and text better when we have related warm-up activities.	3.55 ≈ Agree	.945	20	4.15	.933	20
6. Warm-up activities make it easier for me to achieve the learning objectives of a lesson.	3.45 ≈ Neutral	.887	20	4.25	.726	20
7. I am under the impression that the use of warm-up activities improves my learning outcome.	3.25 ≈ Neutral	1.208	19	4.17	1.043	18
8. The use of warm-up activities makes speaking English less stressful.	3.53 ≈ Agree	1.020	20	3.77	1.352	18
9. I find that using warm-up activities make the lesson more exciting.	3.80 ≈ Agree	1.056	20	4.00	1.084	18
10. I find warm-up activities fun.	4.05 ≈ Agree	.945	20	4.22	1.060	18

Table 6 - Descriptive statistics on the questionnaires in the experiment group

In group C, the overall “inter” mean score for all items were 3.12 on the pretest, and 3.22 on the posttest – found using the Cronbach Alpha coefficient. Six participants did not respond to any of the items and were subsequently excluded from the data analysis. One participant responded only to the test-items unrelated to the research questions and was excluded.

Another participant was excluded he or she only responded to the post-test. The results of the descriptive analysis for Group C's questionnaires can be seen in table 7.

Group C =n13	Pre-Q			Post-Q		
Items	Mean	SD	=n	Mean	SD	=n
1. Warm-up activities provide me with a soft transition from the previous to the current lesson.	3.31 ≈ Neutral	1.316	13	3.08	1.382	13
2. Warm-up activities help to make the mental switch from Norwegian to English.	3.08 ≈ Neutral	1.188	13	2.92	1.115	13
3. Warm-up activities are great because I get to interact with others.	3.38 ≈ Neutral	1.446	13	3.31	1.494	13
4. Warm-up activities help me improve my English.	2.77 ≈ Neutral	1.363	13	3.00	1.528	13
5. I am under the impression that I remember content, words and text better when we have related warm-up activities.	3.15 ≈ Neutral	1.405	13	3.46	1.127	13
6. Warm-up activities make it easier for me to achieve the learning objectives of a lesson.	3.15 ≈ Neutral	1.281	13	3.31	1.109	13
7. I am under the impression that the use of warm-up activities improves my learning outcome.	2.85 ≈ Neutral	1.281	13	3.08	1.038	13
8. The use of warm-up activities makes speaking English less stressful.	2.92 ≈ Neutral	1.553	13	3.31	.947	13
9. I find that using warm-up activities make the lesson more exciting.	3.15 ≈ Neutral	1.405	13	3.23	1.166	13
10. I find warm-up activities fun.	3.38 ≈ Neutral	1.387	13	3.54	1.391	13

Table 7 - Descriptive statistics on the questionnaires in the control group

Shapiro-Wilk tests of normal distribution was conducted in order to do inferential statistics on the questionnaire data. The results of the Shapiro-Wilk tests data can be seen in table 8.

Questionnaire - Task value belief	Statistic	Shapiro-Wilk	
		df	Sig.
Group E Pre-Q	.978	20	.907
Group E Post-Q	.890	20	.026
Group C Pre-Q	.962	13	.791
Group C Post-Q	.956	13	.695

Table 8 - Tests of Normality – Questionnaires

Similar to the vocabulary test, the data results show that all tests, expect group E's post-questionnaire, seem to meet the requirements 'p = 0.05' for a normal distribution, and can therefore be analyzed using parametric tests. Graphic analysis of the histogram of group E's post-questionnaires show similar distribution with the equivalent vocabulary test.

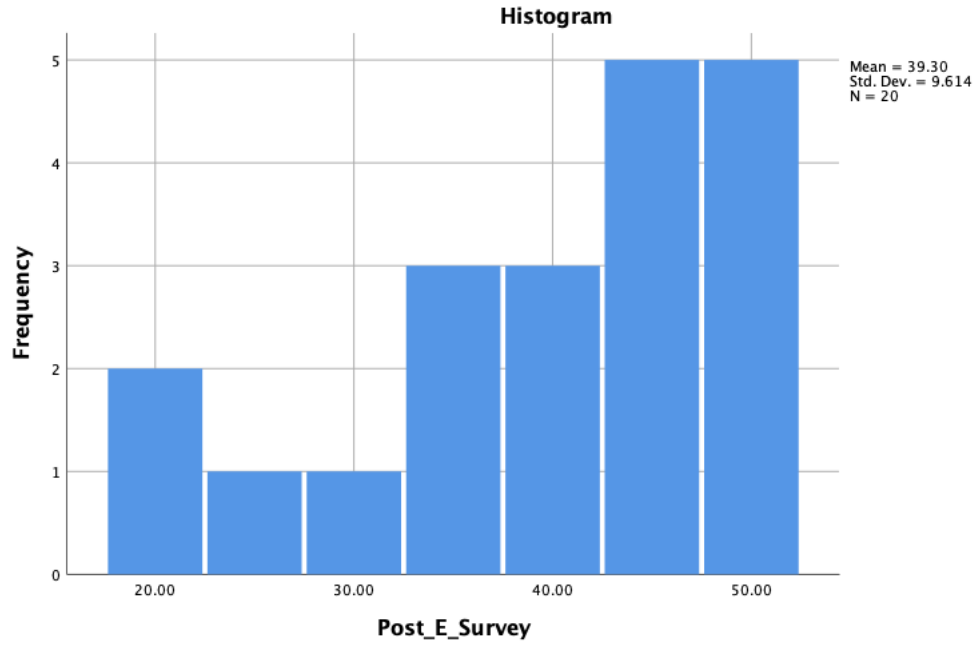

Figure 8 - Histogram illustrating skewed data distribution in group E's post-questionnaire scores

The graph also shows a very skewed distribution, "where the peak is shifted away from the center" (Dancey & Reidy, 2017, p. 83). Thus, non-parametric tests need to be used in order to conduct inferential statistical analysis group data in which group E's posttests in included.

4.2 Inferential statistics

In this section, the aims and research questions will be discussed using the findings from the inferential statistics. As mentioned, this thesis aims to investigate the value of warm-up tasks in the English classroom, and thus advocate for their use. The aim is explored through two research questions:

RQ1) How do vocabulary-oriented warm-up tasks affect the students' vocabulary acquisition?

RQ2) How do vocabulary-oriented warm-up tasks affect the students' task value beliefs?

With the related hypotheses:

H1) Using vocabulary-oriented warm-up task will lead to better acquisition of target vocabulary items in the experiment group compared to the control group.

H2) Using vocabulary-oriented warm-up tasks will produce a change in the experiment group students' task value beliefs.

Each of the research questions will be investigating by using a combination of parametric non-parametric tests. First, potential pre-existing differences between the experiment group and the control group will be investigated using an independent samples t-test, which compares the means of two populations. These are used when one wants to compare the results of two groups that are independent of each other (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 215). The independent t-test results in a t-value and a p-value. The null hypothesis tested in the independent t-test is that the population means from the two independent groups are equal. The t-value is a figure that represents how likely it is that the difference between groups is not a result of sampling error (Dancey & Reidy, 2017, p. 225). The obtained p-value is the probability of whether or not your obtained t-value has arisen by sampling variation, or error. This means that if one gets a low p value of for instance $p = 0.001$, there is only one chance in a thousand of this result arising from sampling error, given that the null hypothesis is true. (Dancey & Reidy, 2017, p. 225)

Dancey and Reidy (2017) propose the Mann-Whitney U and Wilcoxon Signed-Rank tests as good non-parametric alternatives to the independent and paired t-tests (Dancey & Reidy, 2017, p. 521), to be used when the data collected cannot be considered normally distributed. These tests overcome distributional problems (which was found with group E's post-vocabulary test and post-questionnaire) by ranking the data (Field, 2018, p. 389). All of participants' scores are ranked from lowest to highest. That is, scores for both conditions are involved in the ranking process. These tests operate with the null hypothesis that median of the groups are equal.

4.2.1 On pre-test and pre-questionnaire group differences

As earlier mentioned, this study features a quasi-experimental design with intact groups. When working with intact groups, in this case pre-existing English groups, it is highly likely, and to a certain degree assumed that there are underlying, pre-existing differences between the them. These differences are uncontrollable variables within a quasi-experiment design, but it is still important to keep these potential differences in mind when analyzing the remaining data material. Dörnyei (2007) writes that even though one finds difference in raw scores, one cannot automatically assume that the observed difference reflects any real difference, and "that we need t-test statistics to check whether we have got a generalizable result or whether the main score is likely to be merely an artefact of random variation" (p. 215).

On the basis of the normality tests conducted in table 4 and 8, independent samples t-tests were chosen to explore pre-existing group similarity, or differences, on the scores of the pre-vocabulary and the pre-questionnaire. The independent t-test on the vocabulary pre-tests showed a significant difference in the mean the scores of the experiment group (mean = 21.67, SD = 2.13, SE = 0.465) and the control group (mean = 17.62, SD = 4.04, SE = 0.881), t = 4.25, p = 0.001, df = 30.30. The low p value from the t-test suggest that there is indeed a significant difference between the two groups' knowledge of the items on the vocabulary pre-test, thus the null hypothesis, that they are equal, can be rejected. The differences are graphically visualized in a boxplot in figure 9.

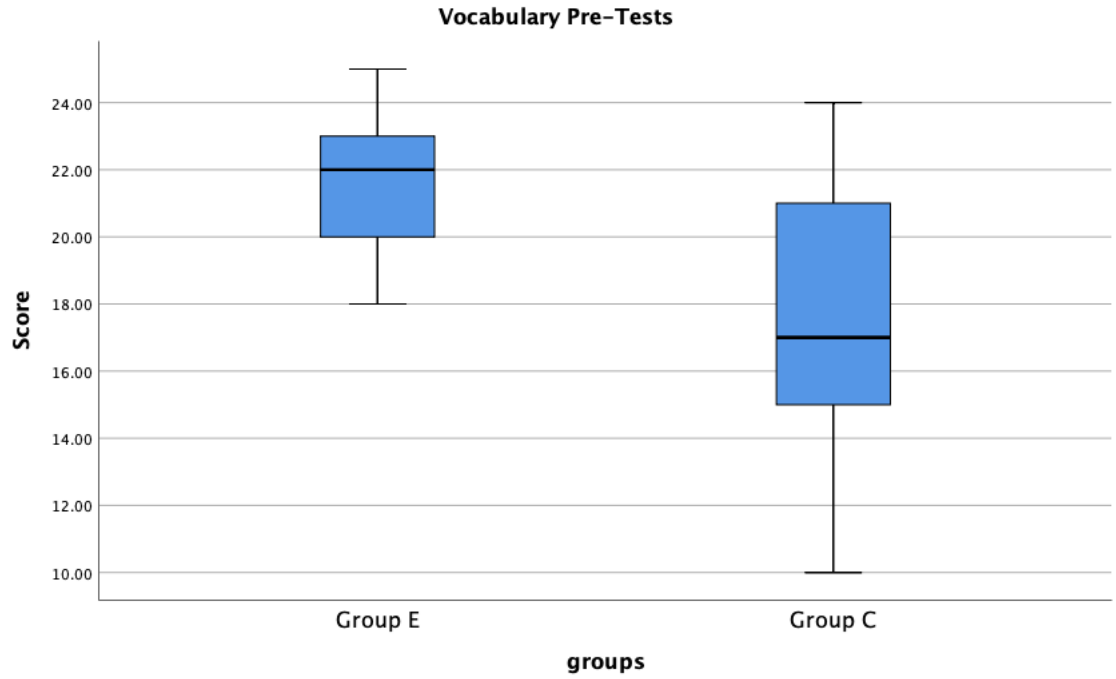

Figure 9 - Boxplot illustrating the results of the independent t-test on the pre-vocabulary test in both groups

The independent sample t-test for the pre-questionnaires revealed that there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups perception of task value beliefs related to warm-up activities (t= 1.443, p= 0.159, df = 31). These differences are illustrated in a boxplot in figure 10. The results of the independent t-test addressing group differences are summarized in table 9.

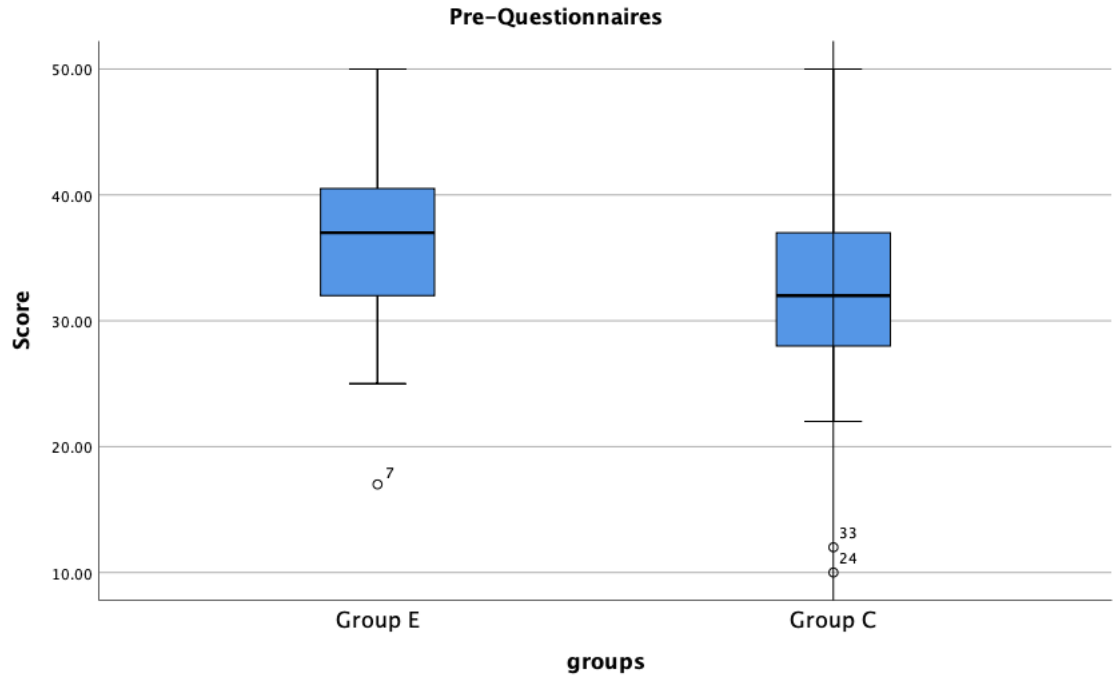

Figure - 10 Boxplot illustrating the results of the independent t-test on the pre-questionnaires in both groups

	t	df	Sig.	Mean difference
Pre-Vocabulary tests	4.06	30.30	.001	4.05
Pre-Questionnaires	1.44	31	.159	4.85

Table 9 - Independent t-tests on pre-vocabulary test and pre-questionnaires

4.2.2 How do having vocabulary-oriented warm-up tasks affect the students' vocabulary acquisition?

In order to explore the first research question, Mann-Whitney U and Wilcoxon Signed-Ranks tests were conducted on the vocabulary post-test. This test was chosen since the after-treatment results for the experiment group were very positively skewed, on both the vocabulary test and the questionnaire, thus not meeting the formal requirements for

parametric testing. The formal hypothesis (H1) related to this research question was that the use of Alias as a pre-reading warm up task would lead to better acquisition of the target-words in the experiment group compared to the control group.

First, a Mann-Whitney U test was used to investigate whether there was a statistically significant difference between the experiment and control groups' vocabulary posttests. The findings indicate that group E (mean rank = 30.43) scored statistically significantly higher than group C (mean rank 12.57), U = 33, p = 0.001. The difference in post-test vocabulary scores are graphically illustrated in a boxplot in figure 11.

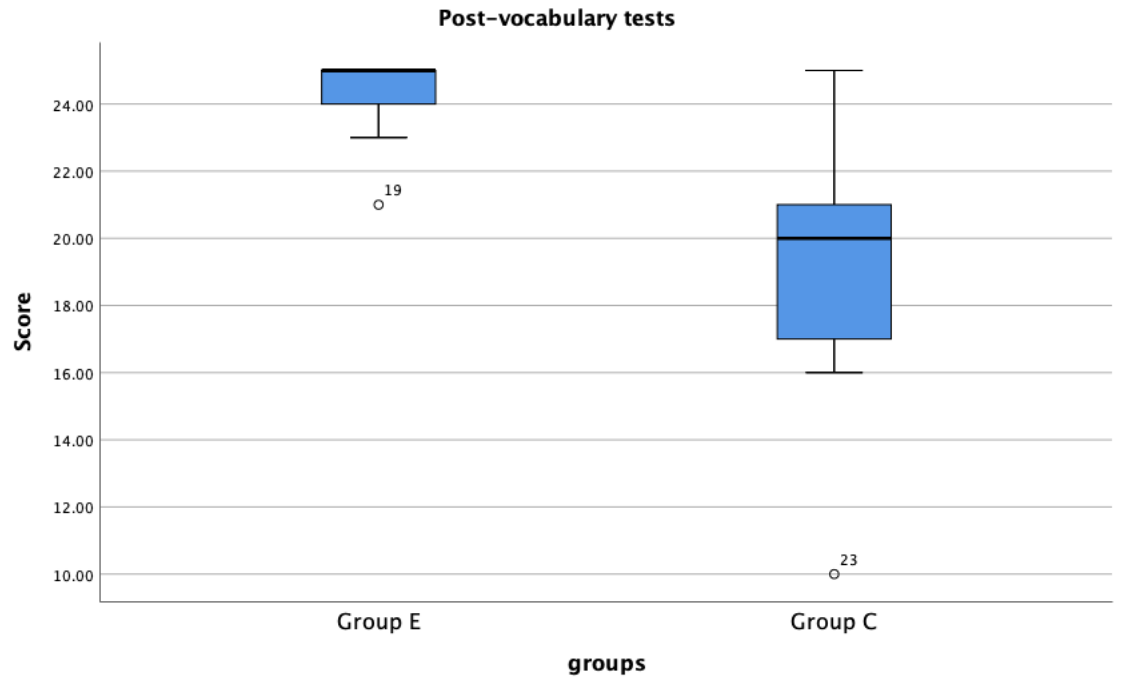

Figure 11 - Boxplot illustrating the results of the Mann-Whitney U test on the post-vocabulary scores in both groups

With the low p value, the null hypothesis can be rejected. This was not an unexpected result, seeing that group E had much more pre-existing knowledge of the target words from the onset of this study. Keeping this is mind, it is more interesting to explore how much progress the two groups made from their pretest to their posttests. In order to investigate this, effect size is reported with the results from of Wilcoxon Signed-Ranks tests. Effect size provides

information about the strength of an observed phenomenon (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 212). Effect size will be labeled with r.

The Wilcoxon Signed-Ranks test indicated that group E's vocabulary posttest scores (Mdn = 25) were statistically significantly higher than their equivalent pretest scores (Mdn = 22), t = 190, p = 0.001, r = 0.59. The progress can be seen illustrated in Boxplot 12.

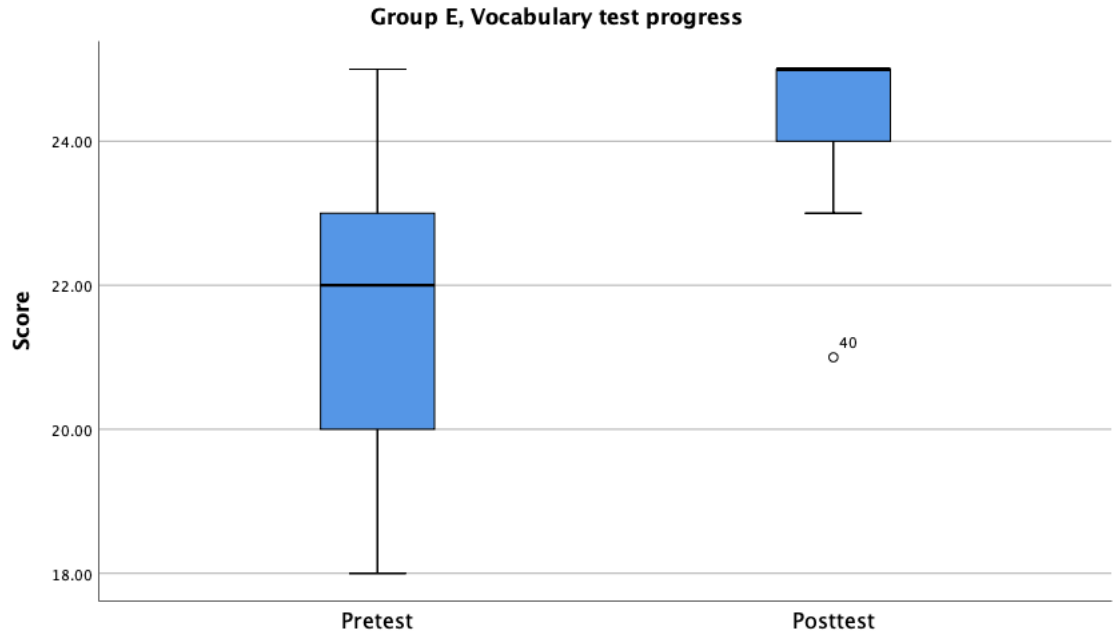

Figure 12 - Boxplot illustrating the results of the Wilcoxon Signed-Ranks test on the vocabulary test score progress in group E

A Wilcoxon Signed-Ranks test was also conducted to compare the scores of group C's pre-test to their post-test. The results indicated that group C's vocabulary posttest (Mdn = 20) scores were also statistically significantly higher than their equivalent pretest (Mdn = 17) scores, t = 131.500, p = 0.009, r = 0.40. The progress can be seen illustrated in Boxplot 13.

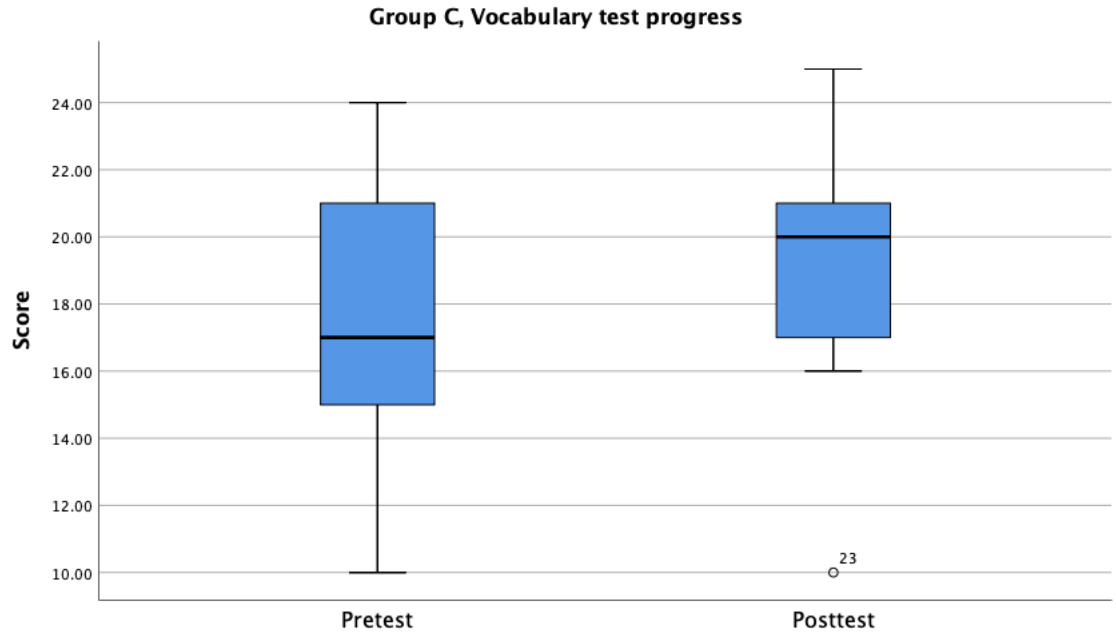

Figure 13 - Boxplot illustrating the results of the Wilcoxon Signed-Ranks test on the vocabulary test score progress in group C

The Wilcoxon signed ranks conducted on group E and C vocabulary tests both show a statistically significant progress from pre-test to post-test. However, the tests showed a larger effect size (r = 0.59) for group E's treatment of Alias + reading and comprehension task in contrast to group C's (r = 0.40) treatment of only reading and comprehension tasks. Thus, the results seem act in support of support H1[10].

4.2.3 How do having vocabulary-oriented warm-up tasks affect the students' task value beliefs?

In order to investigate RQ2[11], Wilcoxon Signed-Ranks tests were conducted on the pre and post-questionnaires of the experiment group. This test was chosen since the after-treatment

[10] Using vocabulary-oriented warm-up task will lead to better acquisition of target vocabulary items in the experiment group compared to the control group.

[11] How do vocabulary-oriented warm-up tasks affect the students' task value beliefs?

results for the group E's questionnaire was found to be very skewed, similarly to their equivalent vocabulary test. Only the results of group E were explored using statistical tests, as the results from group C were not relevant to answer the research question. The formal hypothesis related to this research question was that the use of Alias would lead to a change in task value beliefs towards warm-up tasks in the experiment group (H2[12]). On this questionnaire, a higher score equals more positive task value beliefs towards warm-up activities.

The Wilcoxon Signed-Ranks test indicated that group E's post-questionnaire scores (Mdn = 41.5) were not statistically significantly higher than their pre-questionnaire scores (Mdn = 37), t= 120.500, z = 1.874, p = 0.061. This suggests that having Alias as a warm-up activity did not lead to higher task value beliefs toward warm-up tasks. It is important to note that even though the Wilcoxon Signed-Ranks test does not show a statistically significant improvement from pre-questionnaire to post-questionnaire, a significant increase in scores was still found. The data analysis show that 14 of the participants expressed more positive task value beliefs, i.e. a higher score, towards warm-up activities after the treatment. Four participants expressed more negative value beliefs and two were tied. A boxplot and a histogram of the results for the pre-questionnaire and post-questionnaire can be found in figure 14 and 15.

[12] Using vocabulary-oriented warm-up tasks will produce a change in the experiment group students' task value beliefs.

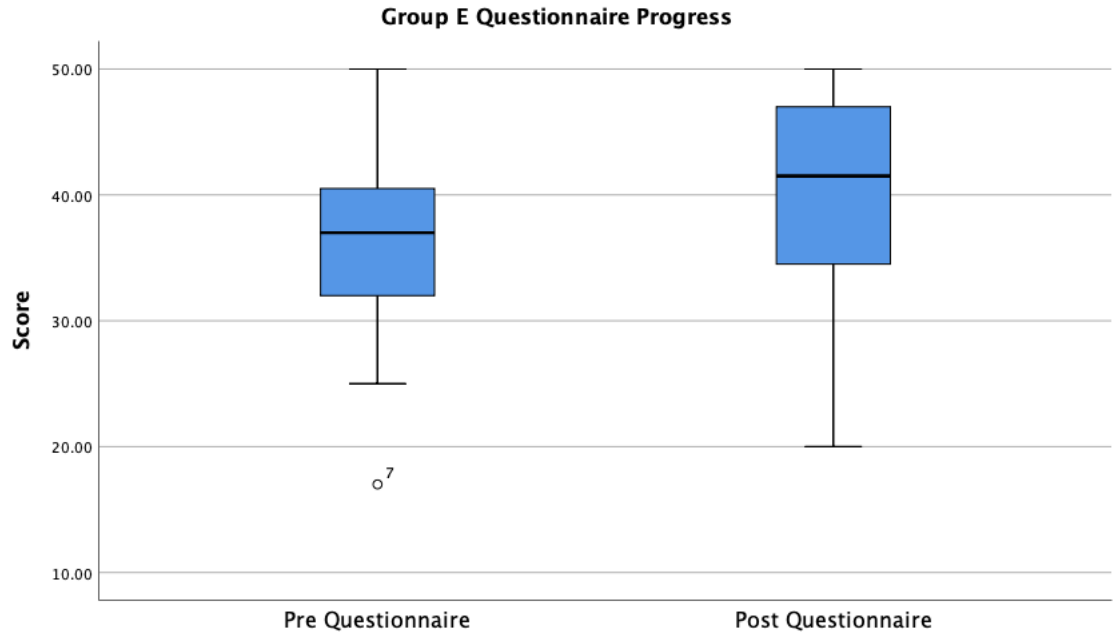

Figure 14 - Boxplot illustrating the results of the Wilcoxon Signed-Ranks test on the questionnaire score progress in group E.

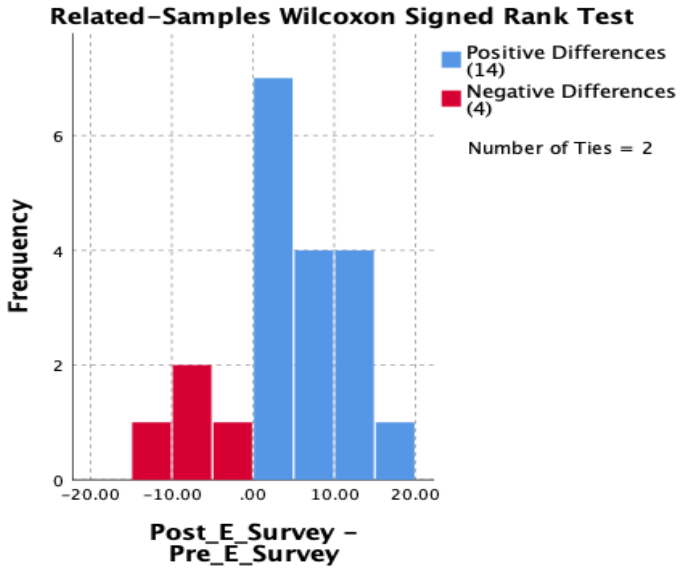

Figure 15 - Histogram illustrating the positive and negative differences in rank from the pre-questionnaire to the post-questionnaire

As can be seen in the figures 14 and 15 above, a great majority (14) of the participants expressed more positive task value beliefs after the treatment compared to before. Although this increase in questionnaire scores did not prove to be high enough to be statistically significant ($t= 120.500$, $z = 1.874$, $p = 0.061$) in the Wilcoxon Signed-Ranks test, but it is still an increase one cannot ignore. On the basis of the findings the formal hypothesis (H2) that using vocabulary-oriented warm-up tasks will produce a change in the experiment groups students' task value beliefs towards warm-up tasks is supported. However, it is important to note that it is not a statistically significant difference and not generalizable to other parts of the population.

5 Discussion

This section will discuss the findings in relation to the aims of this thesis. The aim of the thesis was to investigate the value of warm-up activities in the English classroom by exploring possible benefits and thus advocate for their use in education. The findings will be discussed in light of the descriptive and inferential statistics provided, and the theoretical framework. In order to achieve this goal, it is important to first address some weaknesses and methodological limitations which must be acknowledged. Starting with an opening statement about how the findings support our hypothesis, it will then further discuss this in light of the theoretical framework of this thesis.

5.1 Weaknesses and limitations

It is important to acknowledge some methodological weaknesses and limitations with this study. The most obvious weaknesses and limitations come as a result of using a quasi-experimental design. As this study was conducted in a natural classroom setting with pre-existing intact groups, I had no way of way of confidently excluding all confounding variables which might have affected the affect the results. Despite of the steps taken to promote reliability and validity discussed in section 3.4, it would not be possible to generalize the findings out this study to the greater population. This is arguably the major weakness with this inquiry. It should therefore be only be viewed as pilot study. One way of bypassing this weakness would be to use a true experimental design with pilot-testing of pre-existing differences, pilot-testing of the vocabulary test and questionnaire, and with random group assignment.

Another limitation of this study is the lack of qualitative interviews which could have added further evidence to RQ2[13] and the motivation aspect of this thesis. This was originally planned to be included in this thesis but proved not to be feasible because of the Covid-19 2020 pandemic. I am very aware of the subjective matter of motivation, especially in relation to language learning and identity, as mentioned in section 2.7. Small-scale interviews with

[13] How do vocabulary-oriented warm-up tasks affect the students' task value beliefs?

students and teachers on the role of warm-up activities would most likely have brought the analysis to another level.

5.2 How do vocabulary-oriented warm-up tasks affect the students' vocabulary acquisition?

The analysis of data obtained from the inferential statistics seem to fit the hypothesis that having Alias as a pre-reading warm up task strengthens and promotes better vocabulary acquisition. That is, having Alias in addition to reading and comprehension tasks seems to strengthen vocabulary acquisition of target words. This hypothesis is supported in contrast to the independent t-test in section 4.2.1, which found a statistically significant difference on the vocabulary pre-tests in favor of group E. As expected, group E post-vocabulary scores were then found to be statistically significantly higher than the post-vocabulary scores of group C. Interestingly enough, Wilcoxon Signed-ranks tests in section 4.2.2 indicated a statistically significant difference from the pre to post vocabulary tests in both groups. These findings suggest that the reading and comprehension tasks conducted in the control group were effective to teach vocabulary. However, the larger effect size of the progress in group E ($r = 0.59$) than in group C ($r = 0.40$) suggests that group E improved more than group C. This way, the results seem to fit our hypothesis that Alias would strengthen receptive vocabulary acquisition, at least in this sample.

Taking a step backwards to the theoretical framework of this thesis, Alias was believed from the beginning to be a task with a high involvement load (Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001a). That is, a task that provides learners with a high quality of exposure to target vocabulary (Lee & Hirsh, 2012, p. 81). As mentioned in section 2.2, games can be classified as competitive and or cooperative games. For revision, Alias as it was conducted in this study is explained in section 3.2.1. One can argue that both cooperative and competitive elements are included in Alias. Students are inclined to make effort trying to guess the target words in order to collect points. The role of the explainer is also of high importance. If the explainer cannot provide the appropriate synonyms or other associated words, in a sentence or on its own, none of them can achieve any points. In this way, the two roles which the student(s) had during Alias is dependent on each other. This state of equilibrium between roles, and the co-dependency that

comes along with it, promotes cooperation. 'Need (2)' is thereby intrinsically introduced by letting students engage in healthy competition and cooperation.

Co-dependent competition is also an incentive for the guesser to take the information given by the explainer and search through their mental vocabulary, semantic and associative networks to find correct the meaning and word. Similarly, the explainer also has to search through and activate their own background knowledge (Carrel, 1983) in order to find appropriate words to best describe the target words without revealing the word itself. This reasoning coincides with Martin and García (2004) findings that warm-up activities help activate the students' background knowledge and form new links. Because of the informal nature of warm-up activities and games, the threshold for asking the teacher or other students for help is also low. However, there are no direct focus on the form of the target-words in Alias. Following Tsubaki's (2007) overview in section 2.6, Alias is given a search level of 1.

The evaluation component included in the involvement load hypothesis (Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001a) is also present in Alias. As mentioned earlier, Alias and similar word guessing games are best played in pairs or small groups. Both players evaluate each other's output in order to arrive at the correct word. The explainer adapts his or her explanations of the target-word according to the guesser's initial propositions. Similarly, the guesser re-evaluates his or her own thinking of what the word in question might be according to the explainer's output. Thus, students compare and evaluates each other's output with other words already present in their mental library – in order to select the most fitting word to describe, or guess, and arrive at the correct word. New meaning is found through this exchange of information between participants. This relationship between input, output and interaction during Alias coincides with the previously mentioned term 'negation for meaning' (Gass & Mackey, 2014). Alias is therefore given an evaluation level of 3.

Looking to Tsubaki's (2007) table with explanations on what is involved in a task with a high involvement load in section 2.6 and the discussion above, it can be argued that Alias is a task with a high task involvement load of 5 (2+1-3) which provides the student with quality exposure to vocabulary. An alternative explanation of the results could be simply that the students in the experiment group were frequently exposed to the target-words more than the students in the control group.

5.3 How do having vocabulary-oriented warm-up tasks affect the students' task value beliefs?

Although the findings from the Wilcoxon Signed-Ranks test state that the change in task value beliefs is not enough to be statistically significant, I argue that the change from the pre-questionnaire to the post-questionnaire found in section 4.2.3 is enough to be support the formal hypothesis (H2[14]), at least in this sample. It would be illogical to ignore the fact that the majority of the students expressed overall more positive task value beliefs after the experimental treatment of Alias. Two of the participants in group E did not take a stance on the four statements on the second page of the questionnaire. After close inspection of the data, these students proved to be two out of the in total four participants who did not achieve a higher score on the post-questionnaire.

The questionnaire, the data obtained from it and the following analysis was conducted with the objective of investigating what the students' thought of having Alias as a warm-up task. Asking the students for their opinions is an important way of involving the students in the teaching process and letting them know that they have a real say in what they are doing. I argue that the students' perception and consequent motivation related to the teaching task is as important, if not more important, than the teachers' opinion of whether or not the task is effective.

I propose several reasons for why the participants in this inquiry assign high task value to Alias as a warm-up. When students arrive at the start of a lesson, during or at the end of a long school day, their minds are full – often full of other things that can distract them from learning. Having warm-ups helps the students redirect their attention from the previous lesson or from what went on in recess, thus providing the students with a soft transition from the previous to the current lesson. Implementation of warm-up tasks can help bring variety to lessons by breaking the monotony of familiar routines that teachers and students might settle in during the school year.

[14] Using vocabulary-oriented warm-up tasks will produce a change in the experiment group students' task value beliefs.

Well-designed warm-up tasks in the English classroom, provide the students with a low-risk opportunity to actually speak and produce output in the target language themselves – instead of just listening to the teacher. I also believe that students are much more comfortable in expressing themselves in English when they are working and interacting in small groups.

They also have the opportunity to play with the language, make jokes and have fun, thus setting the stage for a positive atmosphere. Additionally, I want to argue that one of the reasons for why the students assigned high task value beliefs toward warm-ups and Alias was the fact that this exercise was not solely based on just having fun. During Alias the students could combine having fun, having a soft transition between lessons while actually learning something.

5.4 Didactical implications

This inquiry into the potential benefits of using warm-up tasks in the English classroom has made interesting discoveries that might be of practical value to teachers.

In light of the discussion in section 5.2, a strong case can be made for the use of Alias as a warm-up activity. The results suggest that the warm-up activity can help the students learn more vocabulary by providing them with a high quality of exposure to the target words. This assertion is supported by the results of García and Martin's 2004 study, discussed in section 2.1.1, involving a warm-up activity similar in many ways to Alias. It is indirectly supported by studies on the relationship between other types of warm-up tasks and test performance (Estalkhbijari & Khodareza, 2012), and studies on vocabulary instruction through games (Neyadi, 2007; Zaabi, 2007). Interestingly enough, it was discovered in section 4.2.2 that the control group had also improved significantly from the vocabulary pre- to post-test. This result indicates that the control groups' treatment of reading followed by comprehension tasks was effective. However, it was not as effective as the experiment groups' treatment of Alias followed by reading and comprehension tasks.

Additionally, as was discussed in 5.3, a great majority of the students also expressed higher task value beliefs towards warm-up activities after playing Alias. This change (see table 6 and section 5.3) suggests that the students perceived Alias as a fun and motivating warm-up task which simultaneously helped them improve their English language skills. I argue this inquiry

makes a strong case for teachers to experiment with and use warm-up activities during lessons. Alias and similar word-guessing games are a great point of departure.

5.5 Suggestions for further studies

The results of this study revealed several elements which can be useful and interesting for language teachers, and for further research. One major weakness of this study is the short time frame in which it was conducted. It would therefore be very interesting to see the potential effects of having a longer, more extensive intervention in which possible effects of warm-up tasks are explored. Such a study would however require a much larger arsenal of warm-up tasks and activities as I strongly believe that the students would quickly become bored of having the same warm-up task too many times. I argue that potential replicating research should employ a mixed-methods research design. The research should include qualitative interviews with students in order to more precisely investigate the students' opinions about the role of warm-up tasks in the classroom. It should be noted that since the vocabulary acquisition element of this thesis is strongly connected to Alias, future research should primarily focus on the potential motivational benefits of having warm-up tasks.

A very important aspect of motivation related to second language learning is related to identity and self. This is briefly visited in the attainment value component discussed in section 2.7.1. Keeping the aims of this thesis in mind, together with the complex and subjective nature of motivation, I chose an expectancy-value framework to conceptualize motivation related to warm-up tasks and value. Even though a student knows that having a presentation in a foreign language in front of others might provide he or she with useful learning experience, the potential cost of not being able to express yourself in a way that correlates with your L1 identity (attainment value) might result in an intrinsically less enjoyable experience. All the components affect each other, deciding whether or not a student will be motivated to conduct a task. Out of the four value components, this study focused two value components, namely utility value and intrinsic value as I believe these were the two value components that can best be quantified and thus measured. I would like to argue that future research should try to implement warm-up tasks which include more casual and everyday-like conversation, thus letting the student express themselves more freely in a way that correlates with their L1 identity.

Future studies and research similar to this study could also be conducted in classrooms teaching different subjects, as many of the same potential benefits of using warm-up tasks may be relevant.

6 Conclusion

This thesis in the form of a quasi-experiment sought to investigate the value of warm-up tasks in the English classroom by exploring possible beneficial effects related to vocabulary acquisition and student's perception of warm-up tasks, and thus advocate for their use. This was done through a receptive vocabulary test and a task-value belief questionnaire related to warm-up tasks. This study was conducted in a Norwegian lower secondary school, in an English as a second language context. The warm-up task used in this inquiry was a word guessing style game inspired by the board game Alias.

The first research question explored whether having Alias as a pre-reading warm-up game would strengthen vocabulary acquisition of target words from texts in the students' textbook. The results suggest that adding Alias as a warm-up task caused a higher amount of target-word vocabulary acquisition in the experiment group compared to the control group.

The second research question sought to investigate whether or not the students liked having warm-ups and Alias in the English classroom. This was addressed through an expectancy-value framework of motivation related to tasks. The results from the questionnaire found that the students expressed higher value beliefs toward warm-up activities after having Alias as warm-ups. This indicates a positive relationship between Alias, warm-up tasks and motivated students.

Because of the weaknesses and limitations of this study, mainly related to the design, the results cannot be generalized to the greater population. Suggestions for further research were mainly directed towards the potential motivational benefits of using warm-up tasks in classrooms. In light of this, this study should be viewed as a pilot-study investigating the value of warm-up tasks.

Regardless, the findings of this study suggest that a vocabulary-oriented warm-up task such as Alias helped the participants in the experiment group learn new words. Results also show that the participants viewed having Alias as a useful and interesting activity, indicating that they had a lot of fun doing it. In light of these findings, I argue that more teachers should focus on implementing more warm-up tasks in their lessons

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Appendix

Appendix 1 – Consent Form

Til elever/foresatte

Hei! Mitt navn er Olai Koppen, og jeg er student på lektorutdanningen ved Universitetet i Tromsø. Jeg går på mitt femte år på utdanningen, og skal derfor skrive en masteroppgave våren 2020.

Jeg skal i min oppgave skrive om bruk av oppvarmingsaktiviteter i engelskfaget med fokus på motivasjon, forventning om mestring og tilegnelse av ord. Forskningsprosjektet vil foregå over to skoletimer, med tester og spørreskjema før og etter.

Alle svar og deltakelse i denne forskningen vil bli anonymisert slik at ingen som har vært med kan identifiseres. Det vil si at en kan ikke kjenne igjen verken elev, klasse eller skole.

Alle elever skal delta på undervisningen, men det er mulighet til å reservere seg fra selve testingen. Deltakelse er frivillig, så hvis du/ditt barn ikke ønsker å være med på testingen, gi beskjed om dette på siste side. Det er også mulig å trekke seg fra forskningen om det er ønsket.

Jeg håper at alle vil delta i forskningen til masteroppgaven min. Hvis det skulle være noen spørsmål, ta gjerne kontakt på mail.

Med vennlig hilsen,

Olai Koppen

Navn på elev: _____

☐ kan delta i forskningen.

☐ skal ikke være med på forskningen.

(Merk! Eleven må, uansett deltakelse i forskning, møte opp i timene)

Underskrift foresatte:

_____

Tusen takk for deltakelsen i prosjektet mitt!

Appendix 2 – Vocabulary test

Vokabularundersøkelse

Resultatene på undersøkelsen skal kun brukes til forskning, og påvirker på ingen måte deres karakter i engelsk.

Følg instruksene i boksene til hver del. Etter å ha lest alle alternativene, sett ring rundt alternativet som du tror er riktig.

Del 1

Gjenkjenn synonymer (ord som betyr det samme). Velg **ett** av alternativene nedenfor. Velg alternativet (a, b, c eller d) som du mener er har mest **lik mening** til ordet.

1. **Wound**

   a) Sound b) Hound c) Injury d) Word

2. **Stranger**

   a) Uninvited person b) Unknown person c) Danger d) Intruder

3. **Lawn**

   a) Garden b) Veranda c) Hedge d) Flower

4. **Shouting**

   a) Swearing b) Crying c) Howling d) Yelling

5. **Murder**

a) Death b) Terror c) Destruction d) Kidnapping

6. **Legal**

a) Married b) Allowed c) Full d) Smirk

7. **Terrified**

a) Scared b) Clean c) Dull d) Nervous

8. **Blazer**

a) Sparks b) Fireman c) Dress jacket d) Athlete

9. **Audience**

a) Listeners b) Rivals c) Waiter d) Conscience

10. **Paint**

a) Color b) Mast c) Book d) Movie

Del 2

Gjenkjenn definisjoner (hva ordet betyr). Velg **ett** av alternativene nedenfor.

Velg alternativet (a, b, c eller d) som du mener **forklarer ordet** best.

11.

Forehead means:

a) The part of the head above the eyebrows.

b) The entrance of a religious site.

c) The part of a garden where the grass is not cut.

c) The inside of your hands.

12.

To be **certain** means:

a) To be very serious about something.

b) To be very sure about something.

c) To be very quick doing something

d) To be very afraid of something.

13.

To be **upset** means:

a) To be walking up a set of stairs.

b) To be hungry

c) To be unhappy.

d) To leave a place very quickly.

14.

Muzzle means:

a) The door handle on a vehicle.

b) The projecting jaws and nose of an animal.

c) The part of a rifle leaning against the shoulder.

d) The challenger for a championship belt in boxing.

15.

To **reply** means:

a) To provide an answer.

b) To make someone angry.

c) To make a radio broadcast.

d) To play with a friend.

16.

Dress Code means:

a) Rules for what you are allowed to wear.

b) A court ruling.

c) Sports clothing.

d) Something you learn in university.

17.

Bin means:

a) A specific type of tourist.

b) A garbage container.

c) Something that you drink out of.

d) A very large city.

18.

To throw a fit means:

a) To give away used clothes.

b) To specialize in shotput.

c) To become angry.

d) To go home.

Del 3

Gjenkjenn og velg ordet som gir mest mening i setningen. Velg **ett** av alternativene nedenfor. Velg alternativet (a, b, c eller d) som du mener gir mest mening i setningen.

19.

She stared at the flower _____ on the wall.

a) Template

b) Stem

c) Leaf

d) Pattern

20.

A lot of people were disappointed and _____ by the court’s decision.

a) Upset

b) Thrilled

c) Happy

d) Pleased

21.

The Police department reported a _____ in the investigation.

a) Blossom

b) Inversion

c) Breakthrough

d) Beak

22.

She brushes her dog's _____ every day in order to keep it clean.

a) Fur

b) Moore

c) Neck

d) Paw

23.

She still looked sick, with dark circles under her eyes and _____ skin.

a) Male

b) Matt

c) Pale

d) Dark

24.

They are going to show many famous old paintings at the _____.

a) Theater

b) School

c) Mall

d) Gallery

25.

Freedom of speech is important in _____.

a) Football

b) Reality shows

c) Politics

d) Death

Appendix 3 – Questionnaire

Undersøkelse om oppvarmingsaktiviteter

Hensikten med denne undersøkelsen er å få informasjon om din opplevelse om bruk av oppvarmingsaktiviteter i engelskundervisningen.

1) <u>Forklar kort, med egne ord, hva en oppvarmingsaktivitet er:</u>

Alle punktene nedenfor henviser til din **mening om påstandene (din opplevelse)**

Hver påstand følges av fem tall, 1,2,3,4,5 og hvert tall har denne betydningen:

1 – betyr at «jeg **er helt uenig**».

2 – betyr at «jeg **er litt uenig**».

3 – betyr at «jeg er **verken enig eller uenig**». (Nøytral)

4 – betyr at «jeg **er litt enig**».

5 – betyr at «jeg **er helt enig**».

Etter at du har lest påstanden, sett ring rundt det tallet (1,2,3,4 eller 5) som du syns er mest riktig for deg.
Merk at det er ingen riktige eller gale svar til noen av disse påstandene.

	Påstand	*Veldig uenig*				*Veldig enig*
2	*Jeg vet hva oppvarmingsaktiviteter knyttet til undervisning er.*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*

3	*Jeg er kjent med oppvarmingsaktiviteter i engelskfaget.*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
4	*Oppvarmingsaktiviteter gir meg en «myk» start på timen.*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
5	*Oppvarmingsaktiviteter hjelper meg med å mentalt bytte fra norsk til engelsk språk.*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
6	*Oppvarmingsaktiviteter er bra fordi jeg får samarbeide med andre.*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
7	*Oppvarmingsaktiviteter gjør meg bedre i engelsk.*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
8	*Jeg føler jeg husker innhold, ord og tekst bedre når vi har tilknyttede oppvarmingsaktiviteter.*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
9	*Oppvarmingsaktiviteter gjør det lettere for meg å nå målene for timen.*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
10	*Jeg synes at oppvarmingsaktiviteter gjør undervisningen mer spennende.*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
11	*Oppvarmingsaktiviteter gjør det slik at jeg føler det er mindre stressende å snakke engelsk.*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
12	*Jeg føler at jeg får et bedre læringsutbytte når vi har oppvarmingsaktiviteter.*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
13	*Jeg synes det er artig med oppvarmingsaktiviteter.*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*

Hvis du har andre kommentarer kan du gjerne skrive det her: