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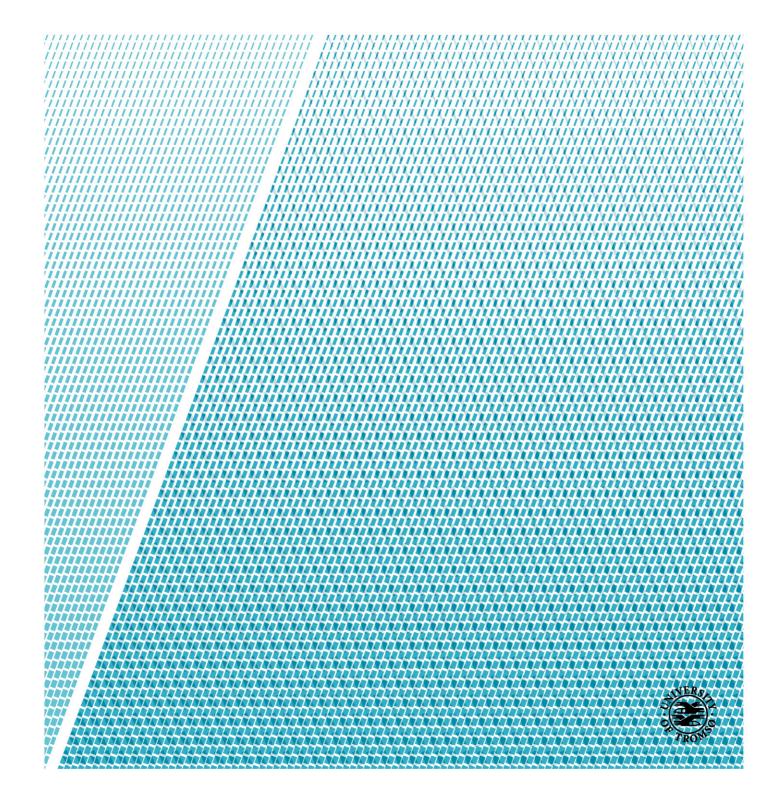Faculty of Humanities, Social Science and Education

# "To find yourself, think for yourself"

*The concept of autonomy and its manifestation: a qualitative documentary study of the Norwegian national core curriculum and the English subject curriculum.*

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Tim André Rajala

# Abstract

This study is based on a qualitative document analysis of the core curriculum and English subject curriculum. The motivation of this study was to contribute to the field of autonomy in language learning in Norway. As such, the aim was to gain insight into the curricula's promotion of learner autonomy. Consequently, two research questions emerged: how does autonomy materialise and what characteristics are prominent in the Norwegian national core curriculum and; how does the Subject renewal ("fagfornyelsen") and the English subject give opportunities to foster autonomy? The findings indicate that autonomy could be seen as explicitly and implicitly present within the curricula. Likewise, they also suggest there could be opportunities for autonomy to be fostered in the English subject by giving learners the ability to take control over certain aspects of their learning. Additionally, the findings suggest that *reflection* and *identity* were the prominent characteristics of autonomy in the curricula and; autonomy could be linked to critical thinking and deep learning ("dybdelæring"). Finally, some concerns were raised towards misconceptions that could arise from the curricula such as autonomy being synonymous with independence or it being a stable state not affected by outside factors.

# Sammendrag

Denne studien er basert på en kvalitativ dokumentanalyse av Fagfornyelsen. Formålet med oppgaven har vært å belyse autonomi i et læreplanperspektiv. Det har blitt undersøkt hvordan Fagfornyelsen legger føringer for, og om det er muligheter for å promotere elevautonomi i det engelske klasserommet. Som følge av dette, så har det kommet frem to forskningsspørsmål: hvordan oppstår autonomi og hvilke av dens karakteristikker er fremtredende i læreplanen og; hvordan gir Fagfornyelsen og engelskfaget muligheter for å fremme elevautonomi? Motivasjonen for oppgaven har vært å bidra til forskning innad elevautonomi i språklæring. Gjennom funnene kommer det fram at elevautonomi kan bli sett som eksplisitt og implisitt tilstede i læreplanen i enkelte tilfeller. Det antydes også til muligheter for å fremme elevautonomi i engelskfaget med å gi elever mulighet til å ta kontroll over spesifikke aspekter i læring. I tillegg så kommer det frem av funnene at det er indikasjoner på at *refleksjon* og *identitet* er de fremtredende karakteristikker av elevautonomi i læreplanen. Funnene gir også antydning til at elevautonomi kan bli relatert til kritisk tenking og dybdelæring. Avslutningsvis så har det blitt rettet oppmerksomhet på potensielle misoppfatninger om elevautonomi som for eksempel at elevautonomi er det samme som selvstendighet eller at det er en stabil tilstand som ikke er påvirket av ytre faktorer i oppgaven.

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# List of abbreviations

*ESL – English second language*

*LLS – Language learning strategies*

*NDEAT – The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training*

*ZPD – Zone of Proximal Development*

# 1   Introduction

The title of this thesis is taken from Socrates (Goodreads, 2020), who argued: "To find yourself, think for yourself". By this he touches upon the main theme of this project, which is autonomy. The interest in autonomy in language learning comes from the fact that teachers need to prepare learners for a changing society and a more complex world. Linked to this is an increasing need for individuals to manage and cope with the complexity by thinking and acting from their own selves; e.g. the complexity of social media and how to manage and cope with the information derived from it (e.g., Instagram and body image; Elvebakk, Engebretsen and Walseth, 2018). It is therefore an interest of this study to find out how to pursue such a goal. This is also politically fronted in the Official Norwegian Reports (NOU 2015:8), *The school of the Future.* The report notes how education must contribute to the development of learners' knowledge and competence so that they may partake in a growing knowledge demanding society. Simultaneously, schools need to support learners' personal development in addition to their development of identity. The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (NDEAT) (2020) equally maintains how important this is by referring to the interdisciplinary topics[1] and the growing challenges of society. Aviram (1993, p. 420), for example, notes how autonomy is a "central pillar of democracy", which makes it relevant for strengthening the democracy. Moreover, The Student Survey[2] finds that some learners did not feel they have been prepared for higher education as the upper-secondary schools have not prepared them when it came to critical thinking and independent learning (Bakken, Pedersen, Wiggen and Øygarden, 2019, p. 2). Autonomy is then, based on the reasoning above, relevant for an in-depth study in a master's project. Equally, Raya and Vieira (2015, p. 19), note how learners' ability to manage their learning, i.e. being autonomous, can be enhanced by fostering their critical thinking and help them make informed choices. Importantly, the English subject, according to the NDEAT (2019a, p. 2), is seen as a central subject for helping learners with their identity development, communication and cultural understanding. Likewise, the subject need to prepare them for a social and working life where English is needed. Consequently, the interest of this study is to explore how the English subject can help learners to achieve the goals set by the curricula.

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[1] Health and life skills, democracy and citizenship, and sustainable development (NDEAT, 2018)
[2] The Student Survey (studiebarometeret.no) is a survey of the Norwegian students' satisfaction in higher education, which is done by NOKUT on the behalf of the NDEAT.

## 1.1 Why write about learner autonomy in English language learning?

This field of research's relevance towards the Norwegian education, comes from "fagfornyelsen" (hereby referred to 'subject renewal'), where a newfound focus on learners developing abilities to think critically, be reflective, have confidence to be inquiring and to be creative is apparent (NDEAT, 2018). Additionally, the Subject renewal needs to set parameters in which "dybdelæring"[3] (henceforth called 'deep learning') can prosper as well as contribute to a better consistency within subjects in general (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015-2016). What English teachers need to prepare learners to meet, are the standards set by the society when it comes to work and further education in which English language proficiency is also seen as a criterion (NDEAT, 2011; 2019a, p. 2). Consequently, a focus on the fostering of autonomy could be a solution to meet the proposed challenges: Candy (1991, p. 459-466), for example, describes more than 100 different competencies associated with the autonomous learner in 13 categories. Among the categories, the ability to be reflective, critical[4], creative, independent, interdependent, and responsible are highlighted. Furthermore, he lists, what this study believes to be, qualities needed in deep learning such as knowledge about how to seek and retrieve information as well as knowledge about the learning process.

A contribution to the interest of this theme stems from Britt Karin Utvær (2018, p. 144, 148). She notes how the degree of students' aspirations and their experience with autonomy, competence, sense of belonging and motivation affect their ability to complete or drop out of the upper-secondary course. She argues that those learners who keep on studying, all show a much higher feeling of being autonomous. In contrast, those learners who have chosen to drop out, all show feelings of being overruled and pressured by others, Conclusively, she notes in her study that learners who experienced having the opportunity to make independent choices are more inclined to grow as a person, learn to know one's self and accept who they are. An understanding then, is that they are able to think for themselves and thus able to find themselves. Equally, Lamb (2011) argues that an increase in teacher control affects learners' identity and autonomy negatively. Therefore, by looking back at Socrates' quote (Goodreads, 2020), if learners are to "find themselves", teachers need to try and help students to "think for

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[3] Deep learning is defined as to gradually develop knowledge and lasting understanding of concepts, methods and contexts within subjects and between different subjects (this study's translation; NDEAT, 2019c, p.1).
[4] The author uses logical/analytical, but this study sees it synonymously with being critical (Candy, 1991, p. 460).

themselves" by encouraging and fostering them to be autonomous while simultaneously letting go of teacher control.

## 1.2 Research Question

In regard to the overview given above, this study's aim is to give a detailed look into the concept of autonomy. The interest then, is to find out if the curricula do promote learner control. Likewise, it is also of interest to see if some characteristics such as identity, critical thinking, deep learning and reflection are linked to autonomy and if some of them are more prominent than others in the curricula. Thus, a look at how the concept of learner autonomy is propagated in Subject renewal is important. The reasoning behind this is; (i) with new curricula on the horizon, it is of interest to understand what it will promote and focus on; (ii) have a clear understanding what part of the concept is and is not within the curricula. As such, the two research questions of this project will be:

(i)     How does autonomy materialise and what characteristics are prominent in the Norwegian national core curriculum?

(ii)    How does the Subject renewal ("fagfornyelsen") and the English subject give opportunities to foster autonomy?

Subject renewal is a governmental document which gives policies that must be followed by those bound by it. It could be, as an example, to achieve a specific kind of goal or the content in which pupils must learn. It is within these parameters where teachers are able to express their professionality; i.e. choosing the method of teaching or management related to teaching in a classroom. As a result, the interest lies in trying to gain further understanding of autonomy and its applicability in the Subject renewal. However, as this is an English didactical master's thesis, the relevance would be to look at the English subject curriculum in addition to the core curriculum. The reasoning being that the core curriculum is an integrated part of the Norwegian national curricula and thus governs the subject curricula (NDEAT, 2019b). Likewise, the focus will also be on the lower-secondary school, thus what learners are supposed to have achieved after year ten. With the research question in mind, two research objectives have emerged:

1. If autonomy is connected to the values and principles of the core curriculum and;
2. To find out if autonomy can be fostered within the English competence aims.

### 1.2.1 Literature review

In choosing the theme for this project, a literature review was conducted in Google Scholar. The aim was to find studies done in the field of autonomy in language learning within the context of Norway. The search was done in both Norwegian and English; the first search words chosen were "elevautonomi", then "learner autonomy in Norwegian context", followed by "autonomy in Norway". However, it was an abrupt realisation that the amount of research conducted was lacking. It would seem that the progress of autonomy has not reached the same momentum as in other countries (Benson, 2011). However, there were some studies done concerning autonomy in language learning, which is relevant to this project:

Halvor Knaldre (2015), who did an interpretive qualitative document analysis of two Norwegian national curricula (K06 and L97) to see how the concept was promoted. He noted that L97 curriculum had a more of an explicit approach while LK06 curriculum showed more of an open approach in which the responsibility lies within the teacher to interpret how to facilitate autonomy in language learning. Lastly, Marlene Vestvik (2020) noted, in her study of Norwegian EFL teachers' facilitation of learner autonomy, how the facilitation of autonomy was focused too late. The teachers had started to promote autonomy on the last year of upper secondary school (vg3), which she reasoned was way too late; conversely, this was because some of the teachers had trouble letting the learners be in control noting the emotional maturity as reason of the learners experiencing more teacher control.

Furthermore, another contribution comes from Rita Gjørven and Svein Johansen (2006) in their study of French foreign language learners in lower secondary school. They looked at learner autonomy and language strategies in their study, which consisted of Norwegian students in a French language class. They concluded that communication strategies were an integrated part of learners use of learning strategies in foreign language, but the use of it did not necessarily entail the promotion of autonomy.

Lastly, Turid Trebbi (2008), citing the Council of Europe *Experts' Report*, indicated in her paper that the progress towards learner autonomy was diminished as teachers would fall upon their already established pedagogical practices when faced with insecurities. This was partly credited to the lack of didactic and linguistic competence of Norwegian language teachers at the time in addition to the discrepancies posed by the National Common Core Curriculum. An example of such discrepancies, according to Trebbi, rested within the combination of

transmission of knowledge and learner self-direction; i.e. learners should "… build up their knowledge, generate their skills and evolve their attitudes largely by themselves…" in contrast to the module of study who must "… identify what the learners should be familiar with, in what order and at which level…" (2008, p. 49). She also noted that the "double-binding" strategy shown, did not highlight what autonomy was all about, and thus did not contribute to innovation in promoting it. She concluded that the greatest obstacles in innovation within this field comes from the teachers' attitudes and beliefs.

In regard to Trebbi (2008), one consideration to have was that, if progress within autonomy was to be possible, a clear and unambiguous promotion of it was necessary. As a result, the main goal of this project was to contribute to the field of autonomy in language learning by giving insight into its implementation and promotion within the Subject renewal.

## 1.3   Limitations

While a more in depth look at this thesis' limitations will be explored in section 4.6, the research done is based on a document analysis of the Norwegian National curricula ("fagfornyelsen"). Likewise, by asking *how* and not *whether or not*, or *to what extent* when conducting this study, this study presupposes that autonomy is indeed present in the curricula. As a result, this study's predispositions about learner autonomy might have affected the choice of research question, methods of data collection as well as the analytical process used.

## 1.4   Outline

Chapter 2 will investigate what a curriculum is, its function as well as the Subject renewal will be given. Then, in chapter 3, autonomy and how it can be understood and applied to the context of the English subject will be discussed. Additionally, chapter 4 will concern itself with the methodological consideration of this study and its trustworthiness. Furthermore, in chapter 5, the findings will be presented and then discussed with relevant theory in chapter 6. Lastly, chapter 7 will give a summary of this study's findings.

## 2  The curricula

As this study concerns itself with autonomy and its relations to the core and English subject curricula, it is preferrable to have an understanding of what constitutes a curriculum, what its functions are, and what the Subject renewal consists of; i.e. the curricula are what set the parameters for the possible promotion of autonomy in the English subject. Likewise, an understanding of critical thinking and deep learning is necessary as they must be promoted in the English subject (NDEAT, 2019a; see section 1.1).

### 2.1  The understanding of a curriculum

The official policies proposed by the Norwegian national curricula govern the content within schools as well as the management of schools and classrooms. Moreover, the curricula give information about the goals and activities of each subject within different grades, and also the allocated time of each subject. Even though the government controls most of what is in the curricula, the details of the policies may vary (Imsen, 2016, p. 265-266).

How then do one define a curriculum? According to Stenhouses (1975, p. 4), he sees a curriculum as "… an attempt to communicate the essential principles and features of an educational proposal in such a form that it is open to critical scrutiny and capable of effective translation into practice." There are several implications to this definition: (i) it is a communicative aspect in which people in and outside of the educational system make use of, and thus get insight into the workings of an educational institution; (ii) the incentives proposed must be able to be implemented in practice. As such, the curricula must be made so that schools and teachers are able to understand its messages and as a result can be applied in an educational setting (Imsen, 2016, p. 266-267).

### 2.2  The curricula's functions

According to Gundem (1990), a curriculum possesses different functions based on the social context. Those functions are reflective, communicative and controlling. A curriculum's *reflective function* comes from the fact that it is an image of the society's values, i.e. what the society deems as important, useful, necessary and suitable. As a consequence, education contributes to the development of the society's values. The importance, then, would be on what kind of pedagogical and political view and conceptions that are passed onto the

curricula in regard to education, knowledge, learning, teaching and the general individual and societal views. The curriculum's *communicative function* concerns itself with giving information about in addition to communicate the values and principles which are represented in the curriculum. In this sense, the curriculum becomes a link between school and society. This is done by the curriculum providing what kind of subjects, courses and methods that are within the contents of education. The last function, the curriculum's *controlling function* is related to the curriculum as a policy document; it is the curriculum that controls and oversees what happens in the classroom. As a result, it is necessary to look at the written curriculum in concordance with what is happening in the classroom (Gundem, 1990, pp. 33-35).

## 2.3   The subject renewal

The subject renewal consists mainly of two parts: the core curriculum and subject curricula. The core curriculum encompasses all of the subject curricula and gives a detailed explanation of what kind of values and principles primary and secondary education and training should have as its fundament (NDEAT, 2019b, p. 1). Furthermore, this, in addition to the subject curricula, also has the status as a regulation (NDEAT, 2018, p. 2).

Moreover, the subject curricula are formulated in the form of competence aims. The concept of competence, which is rooted in the curricula, has changed since LK06 and now prioritises the understanding and ability of reflection and critical thinking. One main point proposed within the curricula is the reinforced focus on deep learning. As a consequence of this focus, the idea of deep learning has reduced the amount of competence aims in addition to making them more open to interpretation (NDEAT, 2019b, p. 2).

## 2.4   The policies of critical thinking

The importance of critical thinking was already established in Ludvigsen selection's official Norwegian report *the School of the Future* (NOU, 2015: 8). The report maintained that, in the school of the future, of all the competences which will be needed, critical thinking and problem solving was seen as an essential competence. What the report reasoned was that this competence entailed "… the ability to assess claims, arguments and evidence from various sources in complex and unknown situations". Additionally, because of digitalisation and

expanding access to information, it maintained that this competence is more relevant and important now than it was before (NOU, 2015:8, p. 35).

Moving onwards to the Subject renewal, the NDEAT (2018) describes critical thinking[5] and ethical awareness as two criteria in which learning in different contexts can happen. In the core curriculum, the importance of these two concepts are noted in its core value: "School shall help pupils to be inquisitive and ask questions, develop … critical thinking and act with ethical awareness." Critical thinking then, maintains that learners should be able to apply "… reason in an inquisitive and systematic way…" within different circumstances and in the process "… help the pupils to develop good judgment" (NDEAT, 2018, pp. 6-7).

Consequently, schools need to make sure learners develop the necessary communicational skills to be able to partake in discourses as well as being able to express themselves; it is an important factor in making oneself understood. Therefore, being able to think critically makes learners more suited to handle different aspects of society and democracy. That is, through thinking critically and reflecting, learners should be able to cope with disagreements and cultivate their attitudes and ethical judgement (NDEAT, 2018, pp. 9-11).

## 2.5   The policies of deep learning

As stated in the introductory chapter, the subject curricula need to make sure that deep learning[5] can be fostered. This is because of the changes within society and working life spurred by the technological advances in addition to attainment of new knowledge. To cope with the changes to come, the society needs learners who are able to reflect and think critically (NDEAT, 2019b, p.2). With this reasoning, reflection and critical thinking can be seen as linked to deep learning; i.e., the definition of deep learning according to NDEAT is that of a gradual development of knowledge and lifelong understanding of concepts, methods and context in subject and within different subject areas (2019c, p. 1). Accordingly, when learners have achieved a deeper learning, they will have an ability to understand contexts as well as use the knowledge in different situations. Additionally, deep learning is also about making learners aware and able to reflect upon their own learning processes (NDEAT, 2019c). Lastly, deep learning is not seen as going in-depth in everything; i.e. to be able to go

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[5] It is understood by this study that critical thinking and deep learning have an extensive theoretical basis, which this policy is based upon. The scope of this study, however, allows only for a look at their policy.

in-depth within individual subjects presupposes that learners have the opportunity to make choices (NOU, 2015:8, p. 41).

In the core curriculum, deep learning is important for learners so they can, over time, master different types of challenges within subjects by themselves and with others. Likewise, it maintains that education shall give the learners "… a good foundation for understanding themselves, others and the world, and for making good choices in life" (NDEAT, 2018, pp. 9-10). Moreover, deep learning also promotes learners to be inquiring, exploring and experimenting. Then, to be able to promote deep learning, schools need to keep in mind that learners are diverse and thus learn at different paces and stages. What this results in, is that this type of learning demands knowledge of how learners learn and what their pre-existing knowledges are (NDEAT, 2018, pp. 7-16).

# 3 Autonomy in language learning

In trying to understand the concept autonomy and its place within the English subject, it is preferrable to gain a holistic understanding of it first. Importantly, this study relies heavily upon Phil Benson's (2011) definition of autonomy and his three *dimensions of control*, which will be fully explored and explained later in section 3.3. Moreover, a summary of autonomy in ESL learning followed by a discussion of how critical thinking and deep learning can be related to it will be given in section 3.4. Regardless, this chapter will start by giving an overview of the concept by first looking at its origins, misconceptions and definitions before it is applied to the context of ESL learning.

## 3.1 The concept of autonomy's origin and emergence

Within the two upcoming subsections, a succinct look at the concept of autonomy's origin by looking briefly at its philosophical source, some prominent figures' view on it and its link to the theory of learning. Lastly, a brief overview of its emergence and development in education will be given.

### 3.1.1 The origins of the concept

The notion of autonomy is firstly a philosophical concept concerned with the individual in relation to the society. Its source comes from an ancient Greek word denoting the conquered cities right to self-govern. However, its meaning has gradually extended to refer to the individual's rights; e.g. it has been argued by Dearden (1975) that Socrates applied the concept of autonomy to the individual person. Nevertheless, the notion of autonomy in learning could be argued to have roots within the Eastern and Western mentality (Huang and Benson, 2013).

Furthermore, the idea of autonomy in learning has also been expressed favourably by some influential figures in history. John Lock, for example, notes how teachers should not "… teach all that is knowable…" but rather set learners "… in the right way of knowing and improving [themselves]" (Locke, 2001, p. 195). Likewise, the Czech teacher and philosopher John Amos Comenius, claims that the goal of teaching would be to "… find a method of instruction by which our teachers teach less, but learners may learn more" (Keatinge, 1896, p. 156).

Equally, the idea of autonomy could also be linked to the theory of learning proposed by Lev Vygotsky: The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) which notes the distance between the learner's actual level as determined by their independent problem solving to their potential level as determined by their problem solving in interaction with others (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). Or as Vygotsky expresses it, "… what the child is able to do in collaboration today he will be able to do independently tomorrow" (Vygotsky, 1987, p. 211). The understanding is that the goal is for learners to achieve independence; i.e. the goal of learning is autonomy, and the process to achieve it is through the interaction with others (Little, 2018).

### 3.1.2   The concept of autonomy's emergence in education

According to Gremmo and Riley (1995), there was a growing demand of foreign languages in addition to an increase in the population of schools and universities in the 1960s. Likewise, an increasing interest in minority rights were observed, which directly influenced Europe's development of adult education. These reasons, consequently, manifested themselves in the establishment of the Council of Europe's Modern Languages Project in 1971 which the concept of autonomy had been given a crucial part in the overall framework of the Council's work (Gremmo and Riley, 1995).

An outcome of this was the founding of the *Centre de Recherches et d'Applications en Langues* (CRAPEL), "which rapidly became a focal point for research and practice in the field." (Benson, 2011, p. 9). This was because of its founder, Yves Châlon[6] had "… set in motion a series of projects implementing and investigating "autonomy" and "self-direction" …" (Gremmo and Riley, 1995, p. 153). The goal of the projects was to give opportunities of lifelong learning to adults and the CRAPEL's approach was developed with inspirations stemming from the proposals of the emerging field of adult self-directed learning. A consequence of this was that autonomy "… was seen as a natural product of the practice of self-directed learning, or learning in which the objectives, progress and evaluation of learning are determined by the learners themselves." (Benson, 2011, p. 10).

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[6] He is, by many, considered to be the father of autonomy in language learning and was the leader of CRAPEL until his death in 1972. It was then passed on to Henri Holec (Benson, 2011).

A consequence stemming from the overly focus on self-directed learning, which went through the 1970s and 1980s, was the notion of autonomy being closely related to individualisation. The concern of meeting the needs of individual learners made it so autonomy and individualisation overlapped; the self-directed learning at CRAPEL was in a sense individualisation as the needs of the learners were determined and acted upon by themselves. As a result of this and by the late 1980s, autonomy started to show signs of identity crisis; it was maintained by Holec that autonomy should be seen as a capacity of the learners. However, others started to make note of it as learners working on their own without the presence of teachers as well as the context of a classroom. The end of this identity crisis arrived when practitioners started to experiment with the idea of autonomy in classroom situations (e.g. English classrooms; Dam, 1995). The focus then shifted from complete independence towards interdependence as researchers started to give arguments towards collaboration in social context (Benson, 2011, pp. 13-15).

## 3.2 The definition of autonomy in ESL learning

Having a succinct and fundamental understanding of autonomy and its origins is preferred when trying to apply it to the context of ESL learning. However, there are still some problems and misconceptions that must be considered before autonomy can be defined in the context of ESL learning. Therefore, the four upcoming subsections will first concern themselves with the problematic nature of trying to define autonomy followed by Little's (1991) five misconceptions of it. Furthermore, Holec's (1981), Little's (1991) and Benson's (2011) definitions of autonomy will be looked at while relating them to the idea of control followed by a discussion of identity and its place in autonomy.

### 3.2.1 The problematic nature of autonomy

Conversely, defining autonomy in language learning is not as clear as one might prefer; Benson (2011) argues that conversations about autonomy is "… often characterised by misconceptions about the nature of the concept and its implementation." (p. 1). For example, Carol J. Everhard (2018) points out that in trying to understand autonomy or attempting to investigate its possibilities, one of the hindrances is the term's multiple manifestations (i.e. self-directed learning, independent learning, etc.), which describe the same thing. This is further complicated when references to autonomy are made, but the meaning of it might

differ depending on the person's understanding of it (Everhard, 2018). Likewise, Benson (2007, p. 21), notes how the conceptualisation has been modified to fit in with broader developments in learning theory such as, educational practice, but simultaneously being neglected in the process: the problem, he argues, is that the work that has been done was lacking in detail "… in order to save space for references from fields that are relevant to, but not directly concerned with autonomy in language education." (2007, p. 22). Furthermore, another problem of defining it lies in the plethora "… of abilities and capacities that could be listed under the heading of autonomy" (Palfreyman and Benson, 2019, p. 664; see Candy, 1991).

The problems listed contributes to the difficulty in interpreting and choosing which definition to use in an ESL context. Nevertheless, if autonomy is to be fostered in an English second language (ESL) classroom, it is important to know what one is supposed to foster (Palfreyman and Benson, 2019). Thus, Little's (1991) misconceptions in the next section should be considered before trying to apply autonomy to ESL learning.

### 3.2.2   Little's five misconceptions of autonomy

According to Little (1991), there is an assumption of autonomy being "… synonymous with self-instruction; that it is essentially a matter of deciding to learn without a teacher" (p.3). This assumption, where it is seen as the total abdication of teachers' control and initiative, lies two misconception underpinning the assumption: (1) teachers are redundant because of autonomous learners; (2) any form of intervention from the teachers may hinder learners' attainment of autonomy.

Little's (1991) third misconception which emerges in the context of classroom learning, is the idea that autonomy "… is something teachers do to their learners; in other words, that it is a new methodology." (p. 3). He maintains that this is not entirely incorrect, noting how learners probably will not become autonomous if there is no encouragement from teachers.

The fourth misconception, by Little, regards how autonomy can be seen as a "… single, easily described behaviour." (1991, pp. 3-4). He argues that there is truth in the fact that autonomy can be observed through learners' behaviour. However, it can take on a plethora of different forms, depending on factors such as age, learners' progression, etc. In other words, the manifestation of autonomy can show itself in numerous different ways.

The fifth misconception, according to Little, concerns itself with the mistaken belief that "…
autonomy is a steady state achieved by certain learners" (1991, p. 4). Autonomy, he argues, is
something that learners have to earn and the permanence of it cannot be guaranteed.
Additionally, he notes, a learner being autonomous in one area may fail to be so in another.

In Little's (1991) misconceptions, the two first points differentiate between the term
autonomy and independence pointing out that they are distinct from one another; third point
can be used as a caution towards pedagogical incentives that are promoted in the disguise of
"learning" and; the two last points highlights how autonomy may manifest itself in different
ways and to changing degrees depending on the learners and context (Palfreyman and
Benson, 2019, p. 664).  Lastly, there is also the problematic nature of the fourth
misconception, that is, its description: it is preferable to have some clear descriptions toward
learner autonomy to make it easier to promote as well as observe (Benson, 2011).

Nonetheless, to promote autonomy in an ESL classroom, it is important to consider Little's
(1991) misconceptions. Thus, in the upcoming section, a discussion of autonomy and how it
can be related to control and ESL learning will be looked at starting with the definition given
by Holec (1981).


### 3.2.3   The dimensions of autonomy

Holec, describes autonomy in language learning as "the ability to take charge of one's own
learning" (1981, p. 3). This, he sees as an ability that is not inborne, and thus acquired
naturally or by formal learning. Furthermore, he maintains that taking charge of learning is
"… to have, and to hold, the responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of this
learning" (Holec, 1981, p.3). Therefore, according to Holec, autonomous foreign language
learners would able to; (i) determine their learning objectives; (ii) define the contents and
progression; (iii) select the methods and techniques to be used; (iv) monitor the process of
language acquisition and; (v) the evaluation of what has been learned (Holec, 1981).

One factor to be aware of, in Holec's (1981) definition, according to Benson (2011), is how
taking charge of one's own learning is explained as having the capacity to make decisions at
different stages of the learning process; i.e. the ability to lead the development of their own

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learning by dictating the most important decisions related to its management and organisation. What Holec's definition covers then, are the central areas of the learning process where the autonomous learner can be expected to exercise control. However, what his definition is not adequately covering, is the characteristics of underlying cognitive capacities present in effective self-management of learning (Benson, 2011, pp. 59-60).

Conversely, Benson (2011) reasons that a psychological dimension is added to autonomy by Little's (1991) definition of autonomy; Little sees autonomy as a capacity "… for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action. It presupposes, but also entails that the learner will develop a particular kind of psychological relation to the process and content of his learning …" (1991, p.4). This definition focuses more on the control over cognitive processes which underlies effective self-management of learning (Benson, 2011).

However, while Holec' (1981) and Little's (1991) definitions supplement each other, they still lack something; the definitions cover two important dimensions of autonomy, but neglected the third dimension, which concerns the control over content (Benson, 2011, p. 60). As a result, Benson's (2011, p. 58) definition of autonomy in language learning is described as "… the capacity to take control of one's own learning …." Additionally, Benson (2011) makes note of the three dimensions where learners can exercise control, which are learning management, cognitive processing and control over content. Conversely, the reason to have a preference for *control* is that it may be linked to other areas of language learning theory (Huang and Benson, 2013). Conclusively, Benson reasons that regardless of the vastness in trying to describe autonomy, it is of importance in general learning situations to have some form of definition that is observable and understandable; i.e. by having an understanding of autonomy, it may be clearly promoted (2011; see section 3.2.1).

In regard to the English subject, Benson's (2011) definition may be understood as learners being able to take control over their ESL learning. The notion of control then, touches upon the motivation for this study: in regard to control and autonomy, as mentioned in the introduction, some Norwegian students are more inclined to complete their upper-secondary course and "find themselves" when they feel autonomous; i.e. they are feeling more in control. Equally, Lamb (2011) argues that autonomy and identity, which are intertwined, both are sensitive to increase in teacher control (see section 1.1). Accordingly, a look at identity

and autonomy will be given in the upcoming section before exploring Benson's (2011) three dimensions of control in section 3.3.

### 3.2.4 Identity and autonomy in an ESL classroom

NDEAT notes that the English subject is central in learners' identity development (2019a). Additionally, Lamb (2011) suggests that control is important in autonomy and identity. Therefore, promoting autonomy in an ESL classroom should not be done because of motivational intentions or shaping the identity of learners in fixed ways; it should be done in such a way that teachers help learners achieve their potential "… to be the persons they want to become and do the things they value in a healthy way" (Ushioda, 2011, p. 230). The understanding is that Ushioda (2011) sees language as being a medium for learners to self-express, communicate and access resources and information. Therefore, the English language, for example, would not be seen as a simple item which is added to the learners' skill set. Instead, it would be seen as a tool that gives learners the possibility "… to expand and express [their] identity or sense of self in new and interesting ways…" (Ushioda, 2011, p. 228).

Consequently, when teachers encourage and create opportunities for learners to communicate as themselves, through the use of English language as a medium, they might feel more involved and motivated; i.e. learners are more likely to use the language as well as engage themselves in the process of learning (Ushioda, 2011). In autonomy then, identity could be argued to be highly relevant; "… classroom practices that promote autonomy encourage students to develop and express their own personal and valued identities through the language they are learning" (Ushioda, 2011, p. 228).

Moreover, it is of importance to note how much teachers, in the ESL classroom, can affect their learners through the amount of control being exercised. Lamb (2011) stipulates three suggestions for teachers; (i) the creation of an environment where learners are able to have some control over their learning, which might be able to engage their identities as learners; (ii) not all of learners' identities will lead to autonomy, thus such identities need nurturing through suitable forms of learner training; (iii) to protect the learners' identities as responsible and able to take charge of their learning, teachers need to deal with external

constraints not by increasing the amount of control but by including learners in finding a solution (Lamb, 2011, pp. 79-80).

In summation, Based on Lamb (2011) and Ushioda (2011), it could be argued that if learners are to use the language as a medium to express themselves, i.e. to develop their language identities, they need to have opportunities to take control over their ESL learning. Therefore, moving on to the next section, a more detailed look will be given on Benson's dimension of control so that it may be promoted in the ESL classroom (2011)

### 3.3 Exploring control in language learner autonomy

In this section, an in-depth look at Benson's (2011) three dimensions of learner control, learning management, cognitive processing and control over content will be given in addition to how they can be applied to ESL learning. The primary focus, in their respective subsections, then will be on *language learning strategies* (LLS) in English learning management, *reflection* in cognitive processing, and control over content in ESL learning.

### 3.3.1 Control over learning management

In trying to understand learning management within an ESL classroom, a look at learning management as defined by Benson is preferable: he describes control over learning management in the terms of "... behaviours involved in the planning, organisation and evaluation of learning" (2011, p. 92). Succinctly put, it is the observable behaviour that matters. He further argues that the behaviours concerning this type of control mainly focuses on what learners are able to do, but not the mental capacities that causes these abilities. As such, learning management is understood as the underlying cognitive and attitudinal competences of observable behaviour where learning strategies play an important role. In other words, an autonomous ESL learner is understood as having the capacity to consciously use LLS to take control over their learning (Benson, 2011, p. 97).

Therefore, in the interest of LLS that might be used in an ESL classroom, the focus will be on the social and affective strategies proposed by Oxford (1990): the social and affective strategies concern themselves with the actions done by the learners to control some factors of the ESL learning situation linked to self and others. Additionally, the strategies also related to

the attitudes concerning the language as an object of learning learners possess. Furthermore, social strategies are seen as behavioural and through the interactions with others create opportunities for learning. Contrariwise, affective strategies are seen as cognitive in nature with a behavioural element and self-motivational dimension (Benson, 2011, p. 98).

In regard to the social strategies, there are three main strategies proposed by Oxford; (i) to ask questions, which entails to ask for correction, clarification or verification; (ii) to cooperate with others, which includes the cooperation with peers, and proficient users of a new language, and; (iii) to emphasize with others, which includes increasing cultural understanding and become more aware of the thoughts and feelings of others (1990, p. 21).

Additionally, the three main affective strategies proposed by Oxford are: (i) to lower anxiety by using techniques such as meditation and/or deep breathing, use music or laughter; (ii) to encourage oneself by the use of positive statements, wisely taking risks or rewarding oneself and; (iii) to take one's emotional temperature, which includes to listen to one's body, write a learning diary, use a checklist or discuss one's feelings with others (1990, p. 21).

However, in regard to LLS and autonomy, Gjørven and Johansen (2006, p. 223) note that communication strategies are an integral part of learning strategies in foreign language, however using them are not equal to attaining autonomy. Likewise, Little (1999, p. 23) adds to this discussion by noting; (i) the explicit and conscious nature of strategies are a fallacy; (ii) it can only be taught in a limited way and; (iii) strategies do not equal autonomy. Lastly, Benson (2011, p. 99) makes a note of how LLS and their static origin from questionnaire omit the idea in which strategy use is seen as a creative and strategic effort from the learner. Regardless, examples of how LLS could be used in an ESL classroom will be given in section 6.2, which some of the affective and social strategies will be illustrated.

### 3.3.2   Control over cognitive processing

In the previous section, learning management is seen as the underlying cognitive competences of observable behaviours. Control over cognitive processing, however, is purely cognitive and concerns itself with control over the processes which governs learning management and content. In an ESL learning context, Benson's (2011) definition of control

over cognitive processes could be understood as the capacity to take control over certain processes that are essential to language learning management (Benson, 2011, pp. 100, 112). One such cognitive process is identified by Benson (2011) as *reflection,* which will be explored below:

*Reflection* is, in autonomous language learning, arguably an important and fundamental component: the autonomous learner is one who shows capability of reflection when it is needed in the learning process in addition to take action according to the results (Benson, 2011, p. 109; Reinders, 2010). Moreover, citing Kohonen (1992), Benson reasons that experience which has been reflected upon will result in the full potential of learning. Therefore, reflection's role is important to the process of linking theoretical concepts to the individual's frame of reference, which must be experienced meaningfully on a subjective emotional level. Accordingly, the "… process of learning is seen as the recycling of experience at deeper levels of understanding and interpretation. This view entails the idea of lifelong learning." (as cited in Benson, 2011, p. 107). Likewise, Candy (1991, p. 389) notes that if a sense of personal control is to be created, learners need to be able to recognise the connection between strategy use and its outcome.

Furthermore, John Dewey sees reflection as important in learning; reflection is understood as the process in which established knowledges are questioned as a consequence of new information. Additionally, Dewey sees reflection as a voluntary and conscious effort (2011, p. 5). The ramifications of this, according to Rodgers (2002, p. 864), is that reflection "…can be practiced, assessed, and perfected."

Finally, Dam (1995) encourages learners to frequently evaluate their progress as individuals and as a part of the class. To her, evaluation (reflection) of the learning process is important for learners to develop autonomy (Benson, 2011; Dam, 1995; 2009). Accordingly, an example of how reflection could be fostered in an ESL classroom will be given in section 6.2. This example will be based on the works of Dam (2009) who makes use of logbooks to foster autonomy. The use of logbooks is understood as a tool in which teachers and learners are a part of and, if introduced correctly, could lead to students becoming more autonomous (Dam, 2009).

### 3.3.3  Control over learning content

Control over learning content is understood as the *what* and *why* of learning management. Likewise, this dimension of control is seen as crucial to autonomy. The reason, according to Benson (2011), is because their learning cannot be fully self-directed if learners are only given control over the methodological aspect, but not the contents of their learning. Likewise, this dimension could be understood as important in fostering learners' sense of autonomy and identity. Consequently, the implications in an ESL classroom could be that learners need be given control over their language learning content if the goals are to let them be fully self-directed and if their English language identity is to be fostered (Benson, 2011; see section 3.2.4).

Kenny (1993, p. 440), for example, argues that autonomy entails more than just allowing choices in learning situations, it must also allow and encourage learners to express themselves by defining the work they wish to do. Concerning the ESL classroom, according to Benson (2011), the control over content implies a capacity of the learner to reflect upon the broad learning purposes and their connection to the acquisition of the English language. That is, the determination of the context of experience in which learning will take place is also a determination of the content's linguistical aspect to be learned (Benson, 2011).

In regard to the English subject, the understanding is that it should give opportunities to cultivate learners' capacities, in discussions about their language learning, to participate, negotiate for their right to self-determine, and take part in improving the English subject curriculum (Benson, 2011). Or as Kenny (1993, p. 440) reasons "… the curriculum becomes instead *a way of organizing what the learners want to do"* (Author's emphasis).

Contrarily, Raya and Vieira (2015, p. 19) proposes a counterpoint by noting that control over learning content is "… hardly applicable in the school context, where teaching is usually determined by national policies and curricula…". This argument is used against Holec's (1981; see section 3.2.3) definition of autonomy but is applicable in this discussion as it touches upon the problematic nature of controlling content. Raya and Vieira further argue that autonomy entails "… the capacity and willingness to respond creatively to our environment" (2015, p. 19). That is, they note there are both an individual and social aspect to it (e.g., ZPD and autonomy; see section 3.1.1). Therefore, one needs to have in mind the social dimension of autonomy where respect for others, interdependence, co-operation, etc.,

are needed. Control then, is seen by the authors as a part of collective decision-making which does not necessarily exclude external pressures, influences, or instructions to act (Raya and Vieira, 2015).

## 3.4    Critical thinking and deep learning within ESL learning autonomy

In this final section, a summary of how autonomy could be seen in the context of ESL learning will be given. Then, an exploration of how NDEAT (2018)'s understanding of critical thinking and deep learning could be linked to autonomy will be discussed.

In regard to Benson's (2011) definition of autonomy, an autonomous English language learner could be understood as one who is capable of taking control over their language learning by; (i) using LLS to take control over ESL learning management; (ii) being able to reflect in an English context and thus taking control over their cognitive processing and; (iii) taking some control over the contents within an ESL classroom and using the English language as a medium to express who they are (see section 3.3; 3.2.4).

Consequently, there are several implications that could emerge from deep learning and critical thinking, as understood in chapter 2, which could be linked to Benson's (2011) definition of control: (i) reflection's place within the curricula could be linked to the understanding of Benson's notion of control over cognitive processing, i.e. learners need to be able to reflect and know what they are supposed to reflect upon. Likewise, David Little (1991; see section 3.3.2) sees autonomous learners as capable of critical reflection, which this study understands as a combination of critical thinking and reflection[7]; (ii) the use of knowledge in different contexts implies the dimension of control over content; i.e. their pre-existing knowledge (i.e. English language proficiency) could dictate how deep learning progresses as well as their understanding and use of language; (iii) the diversity of the learners as well as mastering challenges related to others could link it to LLS within control over learning management. The understanding is that when deep learning has been achieved in the English subject, it could be seen as learners using the English language as a medium/tool for expressing and attaining new knowledge independently and in interaction

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[7] He defines an autonomous learner as one who has the "… capacity to reflect critically on the learning process, evaluate his progress, and if necessary make adjustments to his learning strategies" (Little, 1991, p. 52).

with others. The understanding is that deep learning entails an awareness and reflection upon learners' learning, which the three dimensions of control could give (see section 2.4; 2.5; 3.3).

# 4 The methodological considerations of this study

In this chapter, the goal is to give a structured and clear overview over this project's methodological consideration followed by a look into the hermeneutics tradition. Moreover, an exploration of this projects qualitative nature is given before document analysis, the data gathering process as well as the analytical process are detailed. Lastly, the trustworthiness of this project as well as its ethical considerations are explored.

## 4.1 The philosophical assumption of this study

This study is based on a social constructivist understanding, as introduced by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckman (1966), in which reality is socially created. The assumption is that knowledge is constructed socially, and language follows certain specific rules, which shape how one understands the world; i.e. language highlights certain aspects while neglecting others. Furthermore, the knowledge constructed in a community are affected by social, cultural and political aspects. Consequently, the values, truths and reality created and understood by the community are accepted and sustained by the people within. Lastly, policies emerge from the accepted knowledge of the community, thus the notions of power and privilege become organised. These ideas, which are socially constructed, will seem to be static and permanent if not examined (Berger and Luckman, 1966). In an epistemological sense, the idea is to try and study how humans interpret and construct reality. The documents, therefore, would be affected by the presupposed understanding (e.g. prejudices and interpretations of autonomy) this study brings to the examination process.

Therefore, the goal is to study the perspectives originating from the core and English subject curricula. As such, it is important to infer and then place them in a wider context. Moreover, this way of doing research has its roots in a hermeneutics interpretation (Widén, 2016, p. 178). Consequently, all of the interpretations done, will be in some form affected by this study's perception of reality. As such, the ideas of autonomy in ESL learning discussed in chapter 3, will be the theoretical basis of this study (see section 3.4).

Another aspect, which needs consideration, is this study's neutrality. As a result of this study's subjective basis, neutrality, which a positivistic approach would prefer, is not possible (Tjora, 2018). As this study's perspective and background affect the research as well as the phenomenon under study, it is crucial to make sure the credibility is within scientific

standards. As a consequence, it is of interest to be transparent with the assumptions and opinions of this study. Likewise, it is important to give reasons for the choices made in the process in addition to being prepared to change the study's understanding when faced with new information. Thus, in an interpretive approach, a qualitative research strategy is preferred. The goals of this study are to contribute to the understanding and knowledge of autonomy in ESL learning and to see how it is promoted within the chosen curricula. As a result, the use of document analysis as a method is ideal; it is in the interaction between the researcher and the written text an understanding is formed (Thagaard, 2013). Through document analysis, the aim is to read, understand and create meaning from the studied texts (Widén, 2016).

## 4.2    Hermeneutic interpretation

According to Kvarv (2014, p. 73), hermeneutic is about the creation of meaning by interpreting and understanding text. Seen in a wider context, Kvalsvik (1990, p. 67) reason that it could be seen as ascertaining the understanding and inferring of the connoted (symbolic) human activity. Furthermore, this understanding has its basis in that we have a presupposed understanding of what is connoted in the culture before the interpretive work has begun. In regard to this study, it means that there are certain expectations of the phenomenon in question which will have an effect on the analytical process. Equally, this includes the theoretical standing as well as personal attitudes and experience held by the researcher (Kvalsvik, 1990).

The goal of this study is to infer autonomy and its place within the core and English subject curriculum. Therefore, the method in hermeneutics which Kvalsvik (1990, p. 68) defines as general hermeneutics was preferred; it has been necessary to look holistically at the curricula as well as its segments. Moreover, to understand the English competence aims, it was required to see them within and separate of the core curriculum. Simultaneously, the working process was intertwined with inferring and looking at relevant theories and research in autonomy.

## 4.3    Qualitative research

Snape and Spencer (2003, p. 2) mention that a precise definition of qualitative research is rather challenging; the term is, as they put it "… used as an overarching category, covering a

wide range of approaches and methods found within different research disciplines."
Conversely, Strauss and Corbin try to define it by highlighting what it is not:

> "By the term "qualitative research" we mean any types of research that produces findings not arrived by statistical procedures or other means of quantification (Strauss and Corbin as cited in Snape and Spencer, 2003, p. 3).

Consequently, as the goal is to understand a social phenomenon (i.e. autonomy) through document analysis, the term can be described as a "… deep understanding of a social setting or activity as viewed from the perspective of the research participants. This approach implies an emphasis on exploration, discovery, and description" (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2008, pp.7-8). As a result, through the analysis of the core and English subject curricula and exploring research and theory concerning autonomy in language learning, a deeper understanding is achieved of the concept, which might not have been achieved otherwise. Lastly, Thagaard (2013, p. 22) notes that in qualitative research, a "thick description" as in description that contains interpretations of the phenomenon in question is necessary.

## 4.4  Research method, data collection and the analytical process

Within the three upcoming subsections, the chosen research method, document analysis, will be described followed by an insight into data collection and analytical process. As such, a look into document analysis as described by Leseth and Tellmann (2018) will be explored in the upcoming subsection.

### 4.4.1  Document analysis

The characteristic of document studies is the analysis of texts, which exists regardless of or with no relation to the research project. Additionally, this method gives support for how one can use and interpret other texts as a source in research (Leseth and Tellmann, 2018, p. 107). By systematically looking at the core and English subject curricula, the goal has been to find evidence of autonomy within the curricula by using document analysis through a qualitative content analysis. Furthermore, the contents have been refined, the data coded and categorised and the findings defined (appendix 1, 2). Lastly, the findings have been discussed in relation to the theoretical background of this study (see chapter 6).

### 4.4.2 Data collection

Before gathering data, it was necessary to make preparations and to have a clear goal which entailed choosing a theme, the types of texts as well as gain access (if needed) to the materials (Grønmo, 2016, p. 176-177). In regard to this thesis, autonomy in language learning was the selected theme. Resultingly, a look at the core and English subject curricula was needed. However, gaining access to the curricula was not necessary as they were freely available.

Furthermore, to see if there was any basis to assume autonomy was apparent in the core and English subject curricula, the study had to examine both of them. Therefore, everything of importance was marked and noted. Lastly, in this stage of the process, it was important to be critical and contextual as the documents were assessed. Thus, a look at their relevance, authenticity and trustworthiness was necessary (Grønmo, 2016).

*Relevance* was understood as the information different texts might give, and thus what documents was relevant for a particular study (Grønmo, 2016). In this study, the documents were chosen based on the research questions as the goal of the study was to look at how autonomy could be promoted (Lynggaard, 2012). Thus, the English subject and the core curriculum were of interest because the competence aims are the main factor that dictates the workings in an ESL classroom. Equally, it was also necessary to look at the core curriculum in relation to the competence aims as it described the values and principles, which must be followed (NDEAT, 2019b).

What about the documents' *authenticity and trustworthiness*? This study inquired about the documents' origin as well as if they were written with the right intentions to ascertain its authenticity (Grønmo, 2016). More specifically, the core and English subject curricula was assessed to be both trustworthy and authentic as there was no reason to doubt their origin nor the intentions of the NDEAT.

In regard to the documents *representativeness and meaning,* according to Grønmo (2016), contextual assessment of them was needed; questions were asked to ascertain who the core and English subject curricula were supposed to represent, the author's intention, and how they were received. Accordingly, because the curricula were conveyed from a political and national level, it was reasonably to believe that those individuals who had written it

represented the NDEAT. Likewise, the curricula's meaning was to give information of principles, guidance and guides with the receivers of the documents being those responsible for education, e.g. teachers and schools (NDEAT, 2018).

Lastly, following Leseth and Tellmann (2018) suggestions, the goals of data gathering were to *choose and register content* what was relevant for the research questions. Additionally, the relevant data had to be *categorised*. Within this process, it was normal to switch between data gathering and analysis; the different parts of the contents was assessed and interpreted with the research question in mind in addition to within the parts themselves (Grønmo, 2016). At the start of this study, there was an idea of what to look for in regard to autonomy within the core and English subject curricula. Consequently, a detailed look at the English competence aims and their relevance to this project was needed. As a result, almost all of the competence aims for the tenth grade were deemed more or less relevant to answer the research questions (appendix 2). Equally, there were also parts in the core curriculum, which was relevant to autonomy. Lastly, a scheme was made with codes and categories which is seen as part of the analytical process (appendix 1).

### 4.4.3 The analytical process

According to Anker (2020), analysis entails a segmentation of data into easily manageable pieces. This understanding is linked to the process of choosing and structuring the data material after its collection. Likewise, all of the work towards disregarding and keeping data are a part of the analytical process. Moreover, the process would include the ongoing work with the data material in which connections are inferred and discussed with the help of relevant theory. Within this understanding of the analysis, all ongoing work on the material which one tries to infer meaning would be seen as part of the process. Consequently, the analysis starts when the theme is chosen and lasts until the last parts of the writing process is done (Anker, 2020, p. 21).

Furthermore, the use of Tjora's (2018) stepwise-deductive-inductive method (SDI-method) will be used. The SDI-method entails a stepwise approach from the raw data to the development of concepts of theories, which happens within two processes: the inductive process goes from data to theory and is linked to the analytical strategies in use. On the other hand, the deductive process goes from theory to data where the quality of the data is checked

by going back to the theory (Tjora, 2018, p. 16-18). Equally, her method corresponds to the hermeneutical approach as the process shifts between looking at the macro and micro level (see section 4.2).

Tjora (2010) details six different sub-processes in the inductive processing. The first sub-process is the *creation of empirical data* and concerns itself with the data gathering process. The next process is called *editing of raw data* and is usually linked to the transcribing and printing of field notes (Tjora, 2010). For this study, however, this stage is irrelevant. Regardless, in the first subprocess, according to Anker (2020), there is sometimes a need to use notes as a tool in the ongoing work. However, they are not necessarily needed when the project is done (Anker, 2020). For this study, when reading and re-reading the documents at the start of this project as well as all of the notes taken are understood as being within this phase. As a result, a holistic outlook of the texts is achieved.

Moreover, Tjora (2010) describes the third subprocess as *coding* and it is within this stage the work with the data material is closely done and terms used are originate from within it. Additionally, the goal is to create codes in the form of words and expression that describes the material. The following fourth subprocess, is called *categorising* which consists of grouping the relevant codes together into general categories (Tjora, 2010). However, Anker (2020) consolidates those two processes and maintains that this process entails a systematic work with the data material. Regardless, in this study, the *coding and categorising* process is started when the scheme in appendix 1 is created; it is considered to be the basis of the analytical work done in this study. Additionally, the codes that are created became: what is the meaning of the competence aims?; different forms of control; identity, critical thinking and reflection; implicit and explicit.

The fifth subprocess, *concept development* is the stage of the process where the goal is to describe general tendencies in the data material and define the findings (Tjora, 2010). Conversely, it is in this stage where Anker (2020) notes the necessity of finding patterns, tension and contexts in the data. It is within the coding and categorising process the patterns and links within the data material are inferred by the study. Accordingly, there are possible opportunities for the promotion of autonomy within the competence aims (appendix 2).

Lastly, the last subprocess, *discussion of concepts, use of theories* is where the ongoing empirical work is conducted while simultaneously considering the data and theory (Tjora, 2010, p. 161). In this study, the discussion process is understood as emerging when a discourse of the findings is given in relation to theory with the intention of answering the research questions. The last additional process is to *develop a theory* (Tjora, 2010) however, this process is redundant as this study has no intentions of creating a theory.

## 4.5    The study's trustworthiness

In this section, the aim is to illustrate this study's trustworthiness. Therefore, in the three approaching subsections, a look into this project's reliability and validity will be given followed by a look at its transferability.

### 4.5.1    Reliability

Reliability can be linked to how trustworthy a study is. This entails researchers critically assessing their research to find out if it has been done in a consistent and trustworthy way (Thagaard, 2013, p. 187). In trying to make this project as reliable as possible, all of the steps and choices have been discussed and reflected upon. Thus, by trying to be as transparent as possible about the research design and process, this study has tried to describe, in as much detail as possible, the analytical method as well as the research strategies used in hopes to illuminate every step taken. As a result, this gives the reader a chance to assess the results' value in addition to the quality of the research (Thagaard, 2013, p. 188).

Additionally, within reliability there are usually an external and internal aspects to consider. *External reliability* is linked to the questions regarding a research project's replicability; in other words, can it be carried out in a different situation by another person? According to Thagaard (2013), replicability of qualitative research is rather difficult to attain; the one interpreting the data gathered is the person(s) conducting the study. However, there is an advantage to the use of document analysis compared to observation and interview; i.e. there is no reactivity. With information being in a written form, the sources are not affected by the analysis nor the means of data gathering. Likewise, because of the absence of a researcher in the field of study, the potential distortion caused by behaviours, attitudes, and feelings will not occur (Bowen, 2009; Grønmo, 2016).

In regard to this study, the documents are official and readily available for anyone. Additionally, all references to the core curriculum, in chapter 5, are given the page number, section number and what paragraph it is taken from; if desirable, it could be easier for readers to find them. As a result, the reliability and transparentness of this study should not be diminished. However, because this study has translated the English competence aims[8], the reliability might be diminished as a consequence; this study's assumptions of autonomy might have affected how the competence aims were translated. Likewise, in being only one who interprets and chooses the texts in this study, the perspective of this study will pose a weakness; it is only one interpretation given. Regardless, to what degree this weakness disrupts this project will be discussed in the next section.

### 4.5.2   Validity

The term validity concern itself with to what degree the research's results are valid, and how the data material is interpreted. In assessing validity, a look into what degree there are a correlation between what the researcher had intention to research and what is actually being researched (Krumsvik, 2014, p. 151). Additionally, within this term there are two sub-groups, internal and external validity. *Internal validity* focuses on to what degree there is consistence between the findings of the researcher and the theoretical framework. In other words, do the results represent reality? *External validity* has its focus towards a study's transferability. In other words, if the results can be transferred to other contexts (Thagaard, 2013, p. 204-205). In regard to the study's transferability, it will be discussed in the upcoming section.

Consequently, in hopes of trying to strengthen the internal validity of this project, a critical approach to the analytical process is needed as well as to try and justify the project's conclusions. In regard to this study's perspective being a weakness, Grønmo (2016, p. 180) points out how a narrow perspective gives a biased and polarised understanding; i.e. some crucial information and interpretations might be lost. To try and avoid these pitfalls, a broad and extensive look into relevant theory and research regarding autonomy is utilised. However, with research within autonomy in the Norwegian context being so scarce, it is not possible to compare the results with similar studies. Furthermore, this study's theoretical

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[8] As of October 2020, an official English translation of the English subject curriculum was not readily available.

standing and perspectives have been given in hope of being transparent, so readers themselves can judge the results and interpretation done in this project. Regardless, the final say in this project is being done by this study, so there can never be any guarantee of the validity's strength.

### 4.5.3 Transferability

The generalizability or transferability might be linked to which degree the findings can be transferred to other contexts. An important goal of qualitative research is that individual studies do have a general relevance which means the findings and results can be used by others (Thagaard, 2013). However, in qualitative studies, there are difficulties of generalizing them, because they are often presented within a determined context in which the study is being conducted in (Tjora, 2018). Regarding this study, the findings are related to the chosen documents and as such, are diminished in their transferability towards other documents. Conversely, this study might be highly relevant within education, or more specifically, schools; these are official documents which governs the inner workings of education and this study shows one way of interpreting them (see chapter 2). Likewise, this study might be relevant to other subjects related to the English language or language learning in general.

### 4.6 Research ethics

There are some ethical dilemmas faced by a researched when conducting a study. Leseth and Tellmann (2018) discuss the researchers' ethical oath which concerns with the principles to create authentic knowledge, while on the other hand take the necessary steps to protect the research object, be it animate or inanimate. With the focus being on the core and English subject curricula, the protection of privacy is not necessary. Likewise, as the curricula are government publications, there have been reasons to scrutinise and be critical of the published curricula (see chapter 2). However, there are still some reasons to be sensible and cautious as the documents do, to some extent, represent the teachers' profession.

Lastly, according to Leseth and Tellmann (2018), all scientific researches must abide by an overarching ethical vow, which is to find the truth. Equally, the professional ethical stance of scientific research is to secure the research's quality and peculiarity, thus maintaining its trustworthiness. To make this study as transparent as possible, all of the steps and choices

taken have been detailed as much as possible; the results will in some way, or another have been affected by the subjectivity of this study.

# 5   The findings of the analysis

Through this chapter, a detailed look at the analytical process as well as the findings will be given. However, before going forwards with the findings of this study, a reiteration of the research questions is in order:

 

    (i)       How does autonomy materialise and what characteristics are present in the Norwegian national core curriculum?

    (ii)     How does the Subject renewal ("fagfornyelsen") and the English subject give opportunities to foster autonomy?

 

As such, a content analysis of the 10$^{th}$ grade competence aims for the English subject as well as the core curriculum is conducted. Through analysing and interpreting the values and principles in the core curriculum in relation to the English competence aims, the research objects are; (i) to see if the core curriculum did promote the concept of autonomy and; (ii) if it can be fostered within the parameters set by the English competence aims. Conclusively, the main findings are presented in the following overview:

- There are indications of autonomy being promoted directly and indirectly within the competence aims and the core curriculum.
- It is possible to promote autonomy within the parameters set by the competence aims in the English subject.
- Critical thinking and deep learning could be a part of being an autonomous learner.

 

## 5.1   Autonomy's explicit manifestation within the English competence aims

In reading and re-reading the Norwegian national core curriculum and English subject curriculum, all of the instances where autonomy is *directly* addressed became apparent. Further in the analytical process, a more detailed look at the competence aims is also conducted (appendix 1). The results indicate that explicit mentioning of learners taking control or being autonomous is not apparent in the competence aims, but they are in the core curriculum. Furthermore, as the core curriculum governs the subject curricula, the English subject curriculum must be understood in the context of the core curriculum (see section 2.3). Nevertheless, it could be argued that the English competence aims do address the three dimensions of control, in section 3.3, by making note of learning strategies, reflection, and learner choice, as seen in the table below:

Learning strategies in learning management:

- Use a variety of *strategies in language learning*, text creation and communication

Reflection in cognitive processing:

- Read, interpret and *reflect* upon English fiction, including teen literature
- Describe and *reflect* upon the role of the English language in Norway and the world
- Describe and *reflect* upon the condition of minorities in the English-speaking world and in Norway

Learner choice in control over content:

- Read, discuss and convey content from different types of texts, including *chosen* texts
- Explore and convey content within English-speaking cultural expressions from different media connected to *one's own interest*

*Table 1 English competence aims that could directly address autonomy. Gathered from 10th grade in Subject renewal (this study's translation; NDEAT, 2019a).*

Table 1 shows that in the 10th grade, there is only one competence aim that directly addresses control over learning management. The strategies that learners need to use must be applicable to language learning, text creation and communication. What specific kinds of strategies, on the other hand, are not mentioned, e.g. social or affective, etc. This way of formulating that specific aim opens up to the possibility of plethora of choices for learners to manage their learning within the English subject. Likewise, because communication is mentioned, it opens up for specific LLS within discourse. Therefore, in this stage it is expected of learners to be able to use strategies suited for different goals and situations.

Within control over cognitive processes, there are three competence aims that are believed to directly address it by making a note of the learners' ability to be reflective in table 1. The first competence aim looks at the learners' ability to reflect upon what they have read in English fiction and teen-literature. The order of the words might indicate that after learners have read and interpreted the chosen literature, they should reflect upon them. Likewise, in the second and third one, learners need to describe and then reflect. Because of reflection is mentioned, this could be understood as a link to learners' control over cognitive processing; i.e. they need to be able to reflect upon what they have read, interpreted or described.

Control over learning content is, as seen in table 1, rather sparsely noted in the competence aims. At this stage of their learning process, learners should be able to read, discuss and convey texts that include their chosen ones. The wording and order of certain words could indicate that their chosen texts are not the main focus of this competence as their ability concerns the texts in general with their own texts being at best equal. The last time the competence aims mention learners' control over content is when they should explore and convey content linked to their own interest. However, this aim could be interpreted as learners having chosen a theme, which is linked to their interest, but the specific contents of it could be chosen by the teachers.

## 5.2   Autonomy's explicit manifestation in the core curriculum

How is autonomy expressed and the aspects of control promoted in the core curriculum? In the section *learning to learn*, it is noted that: "School shall help the pupils to reflect on their own learning, understand their own learning processes and acquire knowledge independently" (NDEAT, 2018, pp. 12-13, section 2.4, para. 1)[9]. Reflection is the characteristic of autonomy which is expressed here. Likewise, reflection then, could indicate as leading to the development towards independence. This is complemented by "… reflecting on learning, both their own and others', the pupils can gradually develop an awareness of their own learning processes" (NDEAT, 2018, p. 13, section 2.4, para. 3). The understanding is that reflection could be seen as an important characteristic of learners' awareness of their learning process which leads to: "Understanding their own learning processes and their development in subjects will contribute to the pupils' independence and sense of mastering (NDEAT, 2018, p. 13, section 2.4, para. 2). Reflection could be implied to be the method in which learners can attain independence.

Equally, NDEAT expresses how teaching and training "… shall fuel the pupils' motivation, promote good attitudes and learning strategies, and form the basis for lifelong learning" (2018, p. 13, section 2.4, para. 2). In this example, an indication of learning strategies being part of their vision of learners being motivated and able to attain lifelong learning. As such, there are indications of learning management being promoted in the curriculum.

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[9] The section and paragraph numbers are included because of this study's reliability (see section 4.5.1).

Furthermore, control over learning content is believed to emerge within this example: "… the teachers shall support and guide the pupils so they will be able to set their own goals, choose appropriate approaches and assess their own development" (NDEAT, 2018, p. 18, section 3.2, para.. 7). The belief is that the learners are the primary actor with the teacher having a supporting role. Within this example, an argument could be made of learners taking control over content in the form of their own personal goals. Likewise, in the section *Democracy and participation*, the NDEAT argues: "A democratic society is based on the idea that all citizens have equal rights and opportunities to participate in the decision-making process" (2018, p. 9, section 1.6, para. 4). A potential implication of the word *opportunities* and *participation* could be that of learners being able to voice their opinions and thus partake in deciding content of their learning. This is further strengthened when the curriculum notes: "They [learners] must gain experience and practise different forms of democratic participation in the day-to-day work with their subjects …" (NDEAT, 2018, p. 9, section 1.6 para. 5). One interpretation could be that learners should be able to voice their opinion of the learning process in the classroom. The examples indicate thus that participation and opportunity for the learners to experience being part of the deciding process is important. Additionally, that control over content is present in the curriculum.

Lastly, identity and language as a tool is believed to manifest themselves within the NDEAT's (2018) principle in which:

> "The teaching and training shall ensure that the pupils are confident in their language proficiency, that they develop their language identity and that they are able to use language to think, create meaning, communicate and connect with others." (NDEAT, 2018, p. 5, section 1.2, para. 4).

Additionally, identity is further noted in "School shall support the development of each person's identity, make the pupils confident in who they are… (NDEAT, 2018, p. 6, section 1.2, para. 6). These examples indicate the promotion of learners' language proficiency, identity and language as a tool. Likewise, language as a tool is further implied in this example: "All pupils shall experience that being proficient in a number of languages is a resource, both in school and society at large." (NDEAT, 2018, p. 6, section 1.2, para. 4). Seeing language as a resource might give the impression of language as means to achieve something.

## 5.3   Autonomy's implicit manifestation in the core and English subject curricula

As noted above, autonomy in language learning could be argued to be addressed directly with characteristics such as identity, reflection, language as a tool and independent learning. Moving on, the interest lies within finding implicit manifestations of autonomy within the curricula. In the analytical work, all of the competence aims from year 10 have been looked at. Additionally, all the competence aims that are seen as relevant for this study have been selected. What is of interest are specific competence aims in which autonomy could be promoted. This work has also looked at certain verbs to see which are presented in those aims that might facilitate the fostering of autonomy and its different aspects. Of the 19 competence aims, all of them could to a certain degree support autonomy (appendix 1, 2).

Having the opportunity for learner control in all of the competence aims, gives an indication of autonomy's prominence within the curriculum. Most of them could support learners being *reflective* and *critical*, use *learning strategies* and take *control over content*. Likewise, the verbs opening up for autonomy are mostly communicative in nature such as *convey, discuss, express, ask,* and *describe*[10] with the exceptions of *explore*, which can be done with others or independently. An understanding then, is that the affective and social strategies, i.e. control over learning management, are predetermined when the communicative verbs are present.

To summarise this section about the direct and indirect addressing of autonomy, the most important findings are thus: firstly, there are indications of autonomy, with its dimensions of control, being directly and indirectly promoted a few times in the English competence aims as well as the core curriculum. Moreover, the few times autonomy is mentioned in the competence aims, it is not explicit, as it is addressed within the core curriculum. Additionally, in the core curriculum, there are suggestions of principles in which learner control is exemplified. Therefore, by this study's interpretation, autonomy is present when there are opportunities for learners to take control and/or take responsibility. Lastly, *reflection* and *identity* are indicated to be the prominent characteristics of autonomy within the curricula.

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[10] The assumption is that describing is done in the presence of others, i.e. they describe what they have learned to whomever.

### 5.4 The potential opportunities for autonomy in the English competence aims

In the analytical process, this study has researched and tried to find the essence of each of the 19 competence aims in the English subject (appendix 1, 2). In this stage, multiple ways to look at how learners might take control over their learning have emerged. However, after having looked closely at the competence aims, this study has decided to focus on 5 competence aims, which this study believes to best illustrates the opportunities for autonomy and deep learning. The criteria of choosing them are; (i) they must have a communicative part, e.g. describe, explore, convey, etc.; (ii) they must have a cognitive part where learners can apply their reflective and critical abilities and lastly; (iii) a part where learners have the possibility to develop their language identity.

Therefore, in the following subsections, some of the competence aims are used as examples to look at how they could give opportunities to foster autonomy. In trying to make the analytical process structured and transparent, the selected examples are divided into three parts in which highlights how one might interpret the opportunities for each aspect of control.

### 5.4.1 Opportunities related to texts

| Read, | discuss and convey | content from different types of texts, including chosen texts (NDEAT, 2019a, p. 8). |
|---|---|---|

The understanding of the main intention of this example is that learners need to gain an understanding of what they have read so that they may contribute to a discourse. Additionally, this example suggests three parts of the competence aim which are of interest to the fostering of autonomy. The first part, *read,* indicates that the learners have the opportunity to reflect upon what they have read and be critical of it. This could be done independently or with others. The second part, *discuss and convey,* suggests opportunities for communication, which opens up for learners to be able to manage their learning by making use of affective and social strategies; an understanding is that to be able to discuss, they need to express their meaning or contents in addition to listen to others with their opinion on the subject. The last part, *chosen texts,* could be linked to control over content and opens up opportunities for learners to choose the contents of their learning in regard to the types of texts, its theme, etc. By choosing their own texts, an argument could be that it gives learners a chance to develop their language identity. In regard to deep learning, this example indicates

possibilities for learners to use language as medium to express themselves as well as attaining new knowledge.

### 5.4.2 Opportunities related to the role of English

| Describe | and reflect upon | the role of the English language in Norway and the world (NDEAT, 2019a, p. 8). |
|----------|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

The main intention of the competence aim is believed to be of learners gaining an understanding and awareness of the English language as a tool/medium for communication in the world and; its prominence in different aspects of daily life in the world and Norway. Furthermore, this example also suggests three parts where opportunities to foster autonomy are present. As such, the first part, *describe*, indicates the communicative aspect and opens up for learners to make use of learning strategies when describing the contents to others. The second part, *reflect*, explicitly notes that they need to reflect which also implies being critical of the content they wish to describe. The third part focuses on the role of English language, which indicates an opportunity for learners to gain awareness and knowledge of language's uses. Likewise, it is indicated that they can take control over content by deciding for themselves or together what specific focus they want within it. Additionally, it could also open up for them to reflect upon the language as a medium to express oneself and as a consequence link it to their language identity as language users. In regard to deep learning, having an awareness of the English language's role might contribute to their understanding of its function in attaining knowledge from different parts of the world.

### 5.4.3 Opportunities related to English language and culture

| Explore | and describe | way of life, mentality, communicational patterns and diversity in the English-speaking world (NDEAT, 2019a, p. 8). |
|---------|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|         |              | some similarities and differences between English and other languages the student has knowledge of and use it in one's own language learning (NDEAT, 2019a, p. 8). |

In the above examples, the study understands the main intentions to be firstly, learners gaining an understanding of the diversity of the world as well as gain an insight into different perspectives; secondly, they need to have an understanding of the English language and their own to find information that might useful in their language learning. Within the first part, *explore,* the implication is that there is possibility for learners to reflect and be critical of the contents they are exposed to independently or with others; i.e. to find similarities and differences of languages, they need to be able to reflect upon and be critical of them. An understanding is that, to gain insight into other aspects of the English-speaking world, they need to be critical and reflective to discern what is of importance and not. The second part, *describe*, is understood as linked to communication. Then, to describe to others might give learners opportunities to use learning strategies to manage their discourse. The last part concerning content, suggests opportunities for learners to choose what aspects, e.g. way of life and mentality they wish to explore in-depth. Equally, learners could explore certain aspects of language they find interesting or what they, with the teachers, decide are necessary to understand.

In regard to identity, by exposing and exploring different aspects they might find new ways to express themselves which contributes to their identity as language learners/users. Additionally, by having the possibility to be exposed to different variations and uses of the English language, they could be stimulated to find new uses of it. Equally, in seeing the English language compared to their pre-existing knowledge might foster new ways to understand and learn language. Therefore, deep learning, in this example, could be argued as emerging from the results of understanding how language and its uses adapts in different contexts.

### 5.4.4   Opportunities related to one's own interest

| Explore | and convey | content within English-speaking cultural expressions from different media connected to one's own interests (NDEAT, 2019a, p. 8). |
|---------|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|

In this example, the understanding is that learners' interests are at the centre. One way of understanding this, is that they should be able to be reflective and critical when choosing what to explore and convey in addition to use the English language to express their interests.

Within the first part, e*xplore,* could, as seen in the aforementioned examples, be linked to learners' reflection and critical thinking in the form of seeing their interest as an aspect of learning. While *explore* opens up for both independent and collaborative approach, this example indicates opportunities for learners to independently explore their interest in an inquisitive, reflective and critical way. To be able to express their interest, it is implied a need to use affective and social strategies when they try to *convey* the contents. Moreover, as mentioned in section 5.1.1, it is within this example learners can explicitly control the content of language learning. This example could also give learners a possibility to express and develop their language identities as it gives them an opportunity to find something of interest and make it their own. Lastly, deep learning could be argued to be fundamental in this example; by using English language as a medium to express themselves and attain knowledge, they may gain a deep understanding of how language can be used in different contexts outside of the classroom.

To summarise, this section indicates that there are opportunities for learners to take control over their learning within the competence aims. In all of the examples chosen, learners could be able to use social and affective strategies when faced with a communicative task. Likewise, an argument could be made of reflection and critical thinking being seen as a fundamental characteristic in all of the aforementioned examples. Lastly, control over content is indicated to be exercised in varied of ways. Most notably, the aforementioned competence aims could be argued to give learners the possibility to express themselves by using the English language as a medium, thus might open up for the possibility of developing their identity.

## 5.5   Critical thinking and deep learning

The understanding is that critical thinking and deep learning are both deeply entwined within the core and English subject curricula in addition to being part of autonomy (see section 2; 3.4). This is also indicated in the examples used above. Moreover, critical thinking is argued to be linked to reflection and is understood as necessary for learners to reflect (NDEAT, 2018). Similarly, deep learning could be achieved when they have opportunity to take control: it could be seen as learners being able to take control over different aspects of learning and apply them for different challenges they might experience (see section 3.4). Likewise, having the understanding of language as a medium where knowledge can be

explored, attained and expressed could give learners an incentive to use it as a tool to achieve the goals they and society set for them; it allows them to express who they are as an individual (see section 3.2.4; 3.3.3).

# 6  Discussion

In this chapter, the two first sections will discuss the relevant results so that the following research questions can be answered:

(i) How does autonomy materialise and what characteristics are prominent in the Norwegian national core curriculum?

(ii) How does the Subject renewal ("fagfornyelsen") and the English subject give opportunities to foster autonomy?

Therefore, a discussion of autonomy and this study's interpretation of how it manifests itself within the core curriculum will be given. Afterwards, the possible opportunities for promoting it within the English competence aims are explored. Furthermore, in section 6.3, this study will discuss critical thinking and deep learning and their role within autonomy in language learning. Lastly, a reiteration of possible limitations of this study will be detailed in section 6.4.

## 6.1  Autonomy and the values and principles of the core curriculum

In exploring autonomy within the curricula, a reiteration of how autonomy can be seen in ESL learning is necessary. Before that, however, it is important to succinctly make note of how autonomy can manifest itself in different ways and it is noted by Little (1991) how seeing it as a single or simple behaviour is a fallacy. Likewise, there is a plethora of different competencies related to autonomy in learning, which might be problematic; it is preferable to have a clear understanding of it so it might be fostered (see section 3.2.1; 3.2.2). Therefore, Benson (2011) aims to remedy that by defining autonomy, as understood in the context of the ESL learning, as a capacity by the learners to take control over their language learning by; (i) the use of LLS to manage their learning; (ii) the use of reflection to control cognitive processing and; (iii) controlling some of the contents of ESL learning (see section 3.4). Consequently, the interest in this section then, is to see how autonomy emerge within the core and English subject curricula starting the English competence aims.

### 6.1.1  The three dimensions of control in the English subject

Autonomy and its three dimensions of control could be argued to be directly addressed in some of the English competence aims: learning management in the terms of LLS could be noted in this example: use a variety of strategies in language learning, text creation and

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communication (NDEAT, 2019a, p. 8). *Use*, *strategies, language learning* and *communication* are the keywords which could be inferred as directly addressing learning management; i.e. learners should be able to make use of strategies in those situations. An example that could illustrate control over cognitive processing is shown in the following competence aim: describe and reflect upon the role of the English language in Norway and the world (NDEAT, 2019a, p. 8). *Reflect* is the keyword which could be argued to directly address the need to take control over cognitive processing. Moreover, control over content could be assumed to be directly addressed in the following example: read, discuss and convey contents form different types of texts, including chosen texts (NDEAT, 2019a, p. 8). *Chosen texts* are the key words in which one might infer an opportunity for learners to take control. Equally, learners would need to be able to *discuss* and *convey* contents (in this case, self-chosen). Indirectly, this example could give an opportunity for learners to use social or affective strategies by Oxford (1991) to manage their learning.

Additionally, reflection might come into play by learners assessing which strategy to use to achieve their desired outcome, and possibly take some control over the learning process. Reflection then, according to Candy (1991), would lead to personal control, because they know the outcomes of different strategies and thus are able to use them in the appropriate situations (see section 3.3.2). What the selected competence aims could be argued to illustrate then, are the dimensions of control being explicit and implicit apparent in the English subject curriculum. Accordingly, this could be understood as learners being given the opportunity to take control over their learning management, cognitive processing and learning content in the ESL classroom. What the aforementioned examples could indicate then, is that the English subject curriculum gives opportunities for promoting autonomy within the classroom.

### 6.1.2   Reflection and LLS within the core and English subject curricula

In section 5.2, about explicit promotion of autonomy, the core curriculum highlights the importance of reflection on oneself and others as a means of learners understanding their learning processes and thus becoming more independent (NDEAT, 2018). This could be understood as the core curriculum promoting autonomy through ZPD proposed by Vygotsky (1987); through the interaction with others, learners could achieve independence and thus become autonomous (Little, 2018; see section 3.1.1). In regard to reflection, its importance in learners taking control over their cognitive processing is argued by Benson (2011) who notes

that an autonomous learner is one who is capable of reflecting at the right time and then acting upon the results within the learning process. Likewise, he argues that the experience which is recycled at deeper levels of understanding and interpretation promotes lifelong learning (see section 3.3.2). Equally, the core curriculum notes, how education should "… form the basis for lifelong learning" (NDEAT, 2018, p. 13). It could be then argued that the core curriculum shares the same understanding of reflection and its importance in learning; i.e. through reflection, lifelong learning might be achieved. This characteristic could also be inferred within the English competence aims (see section 5.1; 5.4).

With reference to LLS, Benson's (2011) considers them as an important part of learning management; they help learners to take control over themselves and their behaviour towards others in a discourse. The core curriculum notes, for example, the importance of promoting learning strategies which should help with motivation and lifelong learning (NDEAT, 2018). This could be linked to Oxford's (1990) affective strategies, which are linked to learners' motivation or self-management (see section 3.3.1). The use of social strategies by Oxford (1990) to manage their interaction could be argued through the English subject curriculum's core element *language learning*[11], which promote the use of LLS, and; the competence aim concerning learners use of a variety of strategies in communication (NDEAT, 2019a, pp. 2, 8). As a result, one could make the argument that there are links between Benson's and the core curriculum's view on LLS.

### 6.1.3   Control over content and the English language

According to Kenny (1993), learners should be able to define their own work, i.e. set their own goals. Consequently, this could give learners an opportunity to take control over the contents of learning which is noted as crucial in learners being autonomous (Benson, 2011; see section 3.3.3). Equally, Benson (2011) believes learners need to have the opportunity to develop their capacity, in discourse about learning, to participate and negotiate for their right to self-determine. Moreover, both Lamb (2011) and Raya and Vieira (2015) maintain that what is important for autonomy and identity, is for learners to collaborate with teachers instead of increasing teacher control when faced with external pressure (see section 3.2.4; 3.3.3). The core curriculum, for example, maintains that learners are to be given opportunities

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[11] It is noted that language learning involves being able to use LLS (NDEAT, 2019a, p. 2).

to participate in decision-making as well as set their own goals (NDEAT, 2018; see section 5.2). This suggests a similarity between autonomy and the values and principles within the curriculum; i.e. importance of giving learners more control over content and partake in decision making.

In regard to identity, it can be seen as linked to the control over content; i.e. in taking control, learners could be able to express who they are within the learning context (see section 3.2.4). Ushioda (2011), for example, notes that to promote autonomy, the focus should be on helping learners to achieve their potential in becoming who they want to be and pursue goals in a healthy way. As a consequence, the encouragement and opportunities to use the English language could stimulate learners to communicate as themselves and consequently involve and motivate them to learn and use the language. Lastly, giving learners opportunities to develop and express their own identities through the language could contribute to them being autonomous (see section 3.2.4). In section 5.2, identity could be argued as prominent in the core curriculum; the education and training shall ensure that learners become confident, proficient language user in which their language identity is fostered, and language is used as a medium to express oneself (NDEAT, 2018). Equally, the English subject is regarded as a central subject in the development of identity and it is to contribute to learners' confidence, so that language may be used to communicate and form bonds with others (NDEAT, 2019a). This can be understood as incentives for teachers to encourage learners so that they may become confident in using the English language. Consequently, an argument could be made that there are some overlaps between Ushioda (2011) and the curricula's values and principles.


### 6.1.4   The prominence of identity and reflection

In regard to *identity* and *reflection'*s prominence, Everhard (2012; 2018), for example, notes how identity and reflection are seen as two constituent characteristics of autonomy. Therefore, one understanding as to why identity could be seen as prominent within the core and English subject curricula is because of its supposed importance: NDEAT notes that the English subject is central to identity development. Likewise, the core curriculum notes that education need to help learners develop their identities as well as language identities (2018; see section 5.2). Moreover, identity is argued by both Lamb (2011) and Ushioda (2011) to be crucial in autonomy; the English language can be seen as a medium for learners to express

themselves. Additionally, as noted by Utvær (2018) in the introduction, if learners feel constrained because of, for example, the increase in teacher control, it might compromise their identity and their sense of autonomy (see section 1.1; 3.2.4).

Equally, reflection could be argued to be important because of its appearance within deep learning, critical thinking and as a key to unlocking independence within knowledge attainment (NDEAT, 2018; 2019a; see section 5.2). Moreover, reflection could be understood as being important within the core and English subject curricula as well as in autonomy. Additionally, an autonomous ESL learner could be understood as able to reflect and make use of strategies, incorporate new information, and use the language as a tool to discuss the contents and experiences in language learning (Huttunen 2003; see section 3.3.2; 6.1.2). An argument then, could be made of *identity* and *reflection* being some of the prominent characteristics of autonomy within the core curriculum.

## 6.2    The opportunities of autonomy in the English classroom

In section 5.4, the selected English competence aims could imply opportunities for fostering autonomy in language learning. The focus within this section and its subsections then, is to look at what kind of opportunities there are for promoting autonomy within the selected competence aim in section 5.4.4:

> Explore and convey content within English-speaking cultural expressions from different media connected to one's own interests (NDEAT, 2019a, 8).

The competence aim could be argued to contain the possibility of every dimension of control: as mentioned in section 5.2, verbs with a communicative aspect such as *discuss*, *describe* and *convey* implies the opportunity to use LLS concerning self and others (see section 5.2) Likewise, *reflection* is necessary when choosing which strategy to use (see section 3.3.2). Lastly, *one's own interest* opens up for the possibility to take control over content (see section 3.3.3; 5.4.4). Lastly, the videogame Minecraft[12] will be used as an example to illustrate possible opportunities for autonomy.

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[12] Minecraft a videogame developed by Mojang (2020) and available at: minecraft.net

### 6.2.1 Opportunities for learning management

Before looking at opportunities for the use of learning strategies, one crucial assumption must be illuminated which is the conscious nature of strategies in language learning. To include LLS as a form of control presupposes that they possess a conscious nature (Benson, 2011; see section 3.3.1). However, the problem lies within their conscious nature or the lack of it; Little (1999) brings the argument that learning strategies and their explicitness and conscious nature are a fallacy; i.e. they are only taught in a limited way. Likewise, Gjørven and Johansen (2006) note that the use of strategies does not equal autonomy however, communication strategies are an integral part of strategy use in language learning, and consequently are still relevant.

Nevertheless, to illustrate how learners might manage their learning in an English classroom discourse, the example of a chosen interest for learners to explore will be the videogame Minecraft: affective strategies posed by Oxford (1990), for example, could give some starting points in which learners might take control over their own learning. The task might be for learners to create a castle within Minecraft and then convey the process of building it by using the English language. As a consequence, some might experience anxiety in using the language. In trying to lower it, they could use music, laughter or relaxation techniques; e.g. the game music could be played in the background to reduce their anxiety while they explain. Conversely, Macintyre notes that nervous students do not learn as quickly as relaxed students do, so helping them cope with anxiety could be important (1995). Furthermore, learners could use strategies such as making positive statements about themselves or their work and reward themselves when they have achieved their goals (see section 3.3.1). In their task, a reward they could give themselves, when they have achieved their goal, is to create whatever they desire or visit some of their peers' game worlds (assuming they see that as a reward).

Likewise, learners could make use of Oxford's (1990) social strategies such as asking questions, and to cooperate and emphasise with others; e.g. the task given is for learners to collaborate on the creation of a castle. In this task, they have the opportunity to ask questions related to the task such as what to gather and how they can contribute or ask clarifying questions if something is unclear about the instructions given on the task. Equally, learners could make use of their peers when collaborating on the castle by delegating what each are responsible for; they then have opportunities to emphasise with their peers' thoughts and feelings regarding the development of the castle; e.g., if someone prefers to gather materials,

their responsibility could be that or they have thoughts about the castle's design, etc.. Lastly, learners could collaborate with proficient users of the English language when trying to convey what they have made (Oxford, 1990; see section 3.3.1). In regard to control, Candy (1991), for example, notes how being aware of strategy use and its outcome contributes to their personal control. As such, helping learners to find out which strategy suits their purpose could help foster their autonomy (see section 3.3.2).

### 6.2.2 Opportunities for reflection

What opportunities are there for reflection within the example in section 5.4.4? In exploring their own interest (e.g. Minecraft) either by themselves or with others, learners could have the possibility to reflect by the use of logbooks: Dam (2009), for example, notes how logbooks can be used to foster autonomy by giving learners an opportunity to evaluate (i.e. reflect) upon different aspects related to learning (see section 3.3.2). In their logbooks, learners could write down the task they had and how they have completed it; e.g. they might have collaborated with others in creating a castle. Furthermore, they could evaluate the task at the end of a lesson; they might not be ready to convey their creation and thus might need to practice at home, which could open up for reflection on their allocation of time—did their focus deviate from the task? Lastly, learners could, for example, write down if there were any difficulty posed by using videogame terminology in their explanation of certain game mechanics to others. According to Dam, the use of logbook gives insight into the ongoing work and process of the learner (i.e. documentation of the work) which could give opportunities for learners to reflect on their work. Likewise, logbooks are seen as a tool for the teacher to be more acquainted with their learners and give feedback (Dam, 2009). Additionally, teacher might give learners some advice on how to proceed in the next lesson. Consequently, according to Dewey (2011) learners have an opportunity then to reflect on the new information (feedback) and incorporate it (see section 3.3.3).

### 6.2.3 Opportunity for control over content and identity development

In regard to control over content, the competence aim in this section indicates opportunities for learners to take control over the content, because they can explore something connected to their own interests such as videogames (see section 3.3.3; 5.4.4). However, this could also be interpreted as not necessarily entail control; the theme (e.g. Minecraft) could be chosen by

the learners, but the relevant content could be teacher controlled: the chosen activity could be for learners to convey their creations within Minecraft by using the English language as a medium. The focus could then be on certain grammatical features (e.g. plural nouns) or on explaining how the English language can be used to communicate with others in the game. Consequently, both the language's grammar and its role in communication could be the focus of a lesson. Then, does the selected competence aim truly give learners full control over learning? One point that must be noted, comes from Raya and Vieira (2015) who highlights the problematic nature of control over content. In a school context, they argue that control over content is hardly applicable as there are still some policies that must be followed, either nationally or locally. Moreover, there is a social dimension to autonomy, so control must be considered as a collective decision-making which does not necessary entail a freedom from external pressure; while exploring their interest in Minecraft, they might need to be assessed, for example, in their understanding of the English language's role in communication or its grammatical features. Regardless, the example could illustrate how learners might take part in the decision-making process, which NDEAT (2018) maintains they should, by proposing the use of Minecraft as a tool or instrument in exploring the English language and the teacher then deciding on the specific contents in a particular lesson (see section 3.3.3; 5.1; 5.4.4; 6.1.3).

Moreover, in having the possibility to follow their own interests suggests a possibility for them to be authentically self-directed (Benson, 2011; see section 3.3.3). Likewise, this could also give the possibility for learners to initiate and defined for themselves what they want to do; i.e. if some learners like Minecraft, they could have the opportunity to express who they are and what they think by using the English language as a medium (Kenny 1993; see section 3.3.3).

Conclusively, by following Lamb's (2011) suggestions, the competence aim in section 5.4.4 could be argued to give the possibility of; (i) an English learning environment where learners have some control, thus could contribute to their language identities; (ii) an opportunity for teachers to observe their learners (i.e. through the use of logbooks) to see if their identities are linked to autonomy and if not, help them by, for example, introducing affective LLS if they struggle with anxiety and; (iii) a chance to deal with external pressure without resorting to increasing teacher control, but by including learners in finding a solution. Finally, in relation to identity, the competence aim could be understood as giving opportunities for

learners to express who they want to become through using English language as a medium; i.e. if they are a "gamer", they have a chance to communicate as themselves when exploring, for example, Minecraft by the use of videogame specific terminology (Dam, 2009; see section 3.2.4; 3.3.1; 3.3.2; 3.3.3).

## 6.3 Critical thinking and deep learning within autonomy

In this section, critical thinking and deep learning will be in focus: in the core curriculum, critical thinking, deep learning and the topic of democracy and citizenship are values and principles which could be applicable to the concept of learner autonomy. Democracy and citizenship, for example, could be seen as highly relevant to the concept of autonomy because of its focus on learner participation and decision-making (see section 5.2; 6.1.3). However, with the scope of this study in mind, it has been omitted. Lastly, critical thinking could be linked to reflection. Likewise, deep learning could be linked to the notion of language as a tool and as the ability to take control over different dimensions of learning (see section 2.4; 2.5; 3.4; 5.4). Thus, the upcoming section will concern itself with critical thinking and autonomy before deep learning and autonomy are discussed.

### 6.3.1 Critical thinking and autonomy

According to NDEAT, school must aid learners to be inquisitive, curious and develop critical thinking. Succinctly, critical thinking should help learners be able to develop good judgment (2018, pp. 6-7). Reflection and critical thinking could be argued as being entwined together and the English language as a tool for fostering them: for example, Benson (2011) notes how autonomous learners are those who are capable of reflecting at the appropriate time in the process of learning and then able to act upon the results. This might be understood as learners having developed the ability to make good judgements and use the language when needed (see section 3.2.4; 3.3.2). Likewise, when learners need to select the appropriate strategy to take control over learning management, Candy (1991) notes how learners need to recognise the strategy use and its outcome. In this sense, the choosing of LLS could be understood as the learners' judgment of what the situation demands, be it to cope with anxiety, seek out proficient language users, etc. Moreover, within control over language learning content, critical thinking, in the capacity to make good judgments, could imply learners being able to evaluate their holistic learning purposes and thus their relationship to the acquisition of the English language (see section 3.3.3). Finally, when promoting autonomy in the form of

fostering learners' development of the person they want to become, Ushioda (2011) makes a note of learners doing so in a healthy way, which could indicate them being able to make good judgments (see section 3.2.4).

### 6.3.2   Deep learning and autonomy

Since reflection and critical thinking could be seen as a part of the learners' own learning, they might be understood as crucial within deep learning (see section 2.5). According to NDEAT (2018, p. 12), deep learning is important for learners' ability to apply knowledge and skills in different subjects individually and in interaction to others. Within this definition, the understanding is that learners need to control certain aspects; i.e. deep learning could be linked to part of autonomy in ESL learning. In relation to the English language, it could be interpreted as learners being able to use the language as a tool to attain a deep understanding of a given subject (see section 3.4). Equally, the NDEAT (2018) also notes the ability to inquire, explore and experiment as important in deep learning. Ushioda (2011) sees language as a medium for self-expression, communication and accessing information and resources (see section 3.2.4). Likewise, the *emancipatory level* of reflection by Huttunen (2003) notes how learners are able to gain new insights while reflecting and use language as a tool for learning. Within this understanding, deep learning could be seen as possible when learners are able to use and understand the English language as a medium/tool as well as take control over their learning processes (Huttunen, 2003; see section 3.2.4; 3.3; 3.4).

Lastly, it must be noted that linking autonomy with deep learning and critical thinking might create misconceptions towards the concept. Firstly, a misconception could emerge from the notion of autonomy as something teachers do to learners, i.e. that it is a pedagogical incentive teacher must introduce and use upon their students. Secondly, deep learning, as it is noted in the curriculum, could imply a permanence, something learners achieve and then make use of. It is thus necessary to reiterate that autonomy is something they have to earn and there is no guarantee to its permanence (Little, 1991; see section 2.5; 3.2.1; 3.2.2).

### 6.4   Limitations of this study

While a more in-depth look at this thesis' limitations has been explored in section 4.5, a reiteration is still necessary; (i) the study's scope has limited a more detailed and extensive

look at autonomy and its relation to the Norwegian national curricula; (ii) the chosen method and the lack of data from other sources (i.e. triangulation) limits this study and its generalizability and; (iii) the researcher's skill and experience as well as the limited insight into literature might hinder other perspectives or interpretations that could have been inferred or better suited for this study. Lastly, this study has translated the English competence aims, thus the assumptions of this study might have affected the translations (see section 4.5).

# 7   Summary

In this thesis, the goal is to explore, with the use of document analysis, on how the Norwegian national core curriculum and Subject renewal promote learner autonomy and if there are opportunities to foster it within the English subject. As a result, the following research questions are introduced:

    (i)  How does autonomy materialise and what characteristics are prominent in the Norwegian national core curriculum?

    (ii) How does the Subject renewal ("fagfornyelsen") and the English subject give opportunities to foster autonomy?

Consequently, two research objectives have emerged: (i) if autonomy is connected to the values and principles of the core curriculum and; (ii) to find out if autonomy can be fostered within the English competence aims. A summary of the findings will be given below:

There are indications of autonomy as a capacity to take control of learning being promoted within the Norwegian national core curriculum. Moreover, because the core curriculum governs the subject curricula, it is reasonable to assume that the values and principles are applicable to the English subject. In the core curriculum, autonomy could be argued to be directly and indirectly addressed by references made towards learners attaining abilities to reflect, use learning strategies, partake in decision-making and to be given the opportunity to set their own goals. Consequently, the references could be reasoned to correspond with the different dimensions of learner control explored in this study. Based on this reasoning, it could be noted that there are indications of autonomy, as it is understood in this study, and the core curriculum sharing the same values and principles. Therefore, one could infer that autonomy is promoted within the curricula.

Accordingly, autonomous learners can be understood as having the capacity to take control over their ESL learning. Furthermore, the findings suggest that the English subject is capable of promoting autonomy. To illustrate some possibilities for learners to take control, the videogame Minecraft has been used as an example, which also could illustrate a chosen interest: a possible task for learners is to convey what they have created by using the English language. This could give opportunities for them to manage their learning by using affective

and social strategies by Oxford (1990). Moreover, the use of logbooks as proposed by Dam (2009) could give opportunities for learners to take control over their cognitive process by reflecting upon their lesson. Lastly, by exploring their interests in the ESL classroom, learners may have the possibility to express themselves, reflect, and take some control over the content.

Furthermore, there are some indications of characteristics such as reflection and identity being prominent within the curricula: reflection is argued to be both explicitly and implicitly apparent in the competence aims. Equally, identity is reasoned to be important in the core curriculum and the English subject curriculum; the English subject is stated as central for identity development. Lastly, identity could be argued to be important within autonomy and control over content; learners' language identity might be affected by the amount of control learners have in relation to the teachers' control.

Moreover, critical thinking and deep learning could also be argued to be a part of being an autonomous learner. One understanding is that reflection in relation to critical thinking could be indicated as necessary; therefore, both could be argued to be linked to autonomy. Equally, deep learning could be linked to the autonomous learner and control over learning; the use of language as a tool/medium to attain knowledge and interact with others.

Conversely, there are also some possible sources of misconceptions within the core curriculum, which might affect how autonomy is interpreted by teachers. Firstly, independence might give the assumption of an autonomous learner being self-instructed thus, making teachers redundant and their intervention is seen as a hindrance towards autonomy. Secondly, autonomy being linked to deep learning might give the impression of it as a permanent attained state.

Lastly, this study has not researched *whether or not* and *to what extent* learner autonomy is present in the curricula. As a consequence, there is an assumption of the concept being apparent which might have affected the results of this study. With the scope and limitations of this study in mind, further research is needed to see if it is in practice possible to promote autonomy. Additionally, a look into learners' as well as teachers' attitude, belief and experience could be of great contribution to the field of autonomy in language learning.

In summary, it could be argued that the core curriculum and its values and principles align with the concept of autonomy proposed by Benson (2011). Likewise, the English subject is believed to give opportunities for learners to attain autonomy. Therefore, it is up to the schools and teachers to make sure that learners are able to take control over their learning. This, of course, assumes the necessary understanding of how autonomy can be fostered within the classroom; as mentioned in the introduction, teachers need to help learners "think for themselves" so that they may be autonomous and able to 'find themselves'. Or as Socrates notes: "To find yourself, think for yourself" (Goodreads, 2020).

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# Appendix

## Appendix 1: Analysis of the English competence aims

| Ref. | Competence aims | What is the meaning of the competence aims? | Different forms of control | Identity, critical thinking and reflection | Implicit and explicit |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SR.10.1* | Use a variety of strategies in language learning, text creation and communication. | A student should be able to make use of their strategies Understanding of what strategy suits the context Could be in the content they have chosen | Learning management Cognitive processing | Opportunity to use their own made strategies as well as introduces ones. Critical of what strategies work | Explicit: variety of strategies |
| SR.10.2 | Use different digital resources and other aids in language learning, text creation and cooperation. | The ability to make use of resources available to them | Learning management Cognitive processing Control over content | Reflect and be critical of what kind of resources to use and they have Opportunities to manage learning | Implicit: critical of what digital resources to use |
| SR.10.3 | Use central patterns for pronunciation in communication. | Understand and make use as well as pronunciation of central patterns in communication | Learning management Cognitive processing Control over content | Affective and social strategies in communication. Critical and reflective of what are central patterns in UK English vs American. Their choice of "central patterns" or in agreement with teacher. | Implicit |
| SR.10.4 | Listen to and understand words and expressions in different variations of English. | To be able to listen and understand different dialects and accents | Learning management Cognitive processing Control over content | Learners with different background; reflective and critical to understand what they say. Decide what they want to listen to. Reflect upon what they have heard to differentiate it. | Implicit |
| SR.10.5 | Express oneself with fluency and coherence with a varied vocabulary and idiomatic expression differentiated for purpose, receiver and situations. | The ability to express one's self. | Learning management Cognitive processing Control over content | Reflection and critical thinking: what to say to whom. Also need to adapt based on situation, so they are able to choose what fits their goal showing their identity as a language learner. | Implicit |
| SR.10.6 | Ask questions and follow up with input in dialog about different subjects suited for different purposes, receivers and situations. | Need to be able to regulate themselves when speaking to others. Affective and social strategies. | Cognitive processing Learning management | Reflective and critical of the information gained from dialog; use language to express. Can choose the subject of discussion | Implicit |
| SR.10.7 | Explore and describe some similarities and differences between English and other languages the student has knowledge of and use it in one's own language learning. | Use the resources within; identity | Learning management Cognitive processing Learning content | Use their experience and language as a tool. Need to be critical of the information; reflective to find similarities. Their identity as a language user. | Implicit |
| SR.10.8 | Use knowledge about word classes and sentence structures in one's own work with oral and written texts. | Metalingual knowledge | Control over content Cognitive processing Learning management | Reflective and critical to be able to correct. Opportunity to express with their language and knowledge of it | Implicit |
| SR.10.9 | Follow rules for spelling, word formation, verb forms, sentence structure and text structure. | Metalingual knowledge | Cognitive processing | Critical of their own work; reflective and implement strategies to check what is wrong or not. Opportunities to manage their own learning. | Implicit |
| SR.10.10 | Read, discuss and convey content from different types of texts, including chosen texts. | Express oneself; identity. Communicate with others | Learning management Cognitive processing Control over content | Texts in which they are able to express themselves through. Identity creation in through texts | Implicit Explicit |
| SR.10.11 | Read, interpret and reflect upon English fiction, including teen literature. | Understand when reading what to look for when interpreting and then reflect upon it. | Cognitive processing Content control | Let them choose texts, that they identify with. Manage their learning to finish books. Reflection is needed. | Explicit: reflect |
| SR.10.12 | Read non-fiction and assess how trustworthy the cited sources are. | To understand the intentions of the writer | Cognitive processing Control over content | They can choose non-fiction and must reflect | Implicit: critical of the sources used. |

| | | | | | and be critical upon the authors intentions. | |
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| SR.10.13 | Use sources critically and accountably. | Need to be able to reflect | Cognitive processing Control over content | | Reflect on how one makes sure the sources are legitimate. Make us of a chosen reference style. To express how they were critical. | Explicit: critical. |
| SR.10.14 | Write formal and informal texts, including coherent, with structure and coherent that describes, narrates and reflects differentiated purpose, receiver and situation | Understand how to write for the chosen audience, purpose, etc. | Cognitive processing Control over content | | Opportunities to be critical and reflective; express one's self; using language to express meaning | Implicit: their own choice of text as long as it is formal and informal. Must reflect and be critical of what types of text are needed. |
| SR.10.15 | Refine one's own texts based on the feedback and knowledge about language. | Reflection, metalinguistic knowledge. | Cognitive processing Control over content | | Opportunities to be critical and reflective of one's own work; listen to others and decide what is needed and not. | Implicit |
| SR.10.16 | Describe and reflect upon the role of the English language in Norway and the world. | Metalinguistic reflection. Reflect of language as tool. Its use and their use of it | Cognitive reflection Control over content Learning management | | Reflect upon their own use of language as a tool to communicate. Critical of its uses. Express one's use and how it fits in. | Explicit |
| SR.10.17 | Describe and reflect upon the condition of minorities in the English-speaking world and in Norway. | Cultural and social understanding. | Learning management Control over content Cognitive processing | | Insight into others' situations; reflect and be critical of the majority as well as minority. Express their thoughts. Decide what they find interesting and express it. Identity, in the form of who they are. Other students as resources regardless of their background | Explicit |
| SR.10.18 | Explore and describe way of life, mentality, communicational patterns and diversity in the English-speaking world. | Achieve an understanding of others and being able to describe what is deemed important. | Cognitive processing Control over content Learning management | | Opportunity to look at one's self in relation to others. Identity based on what they find that might suite them. Express their thought to others. Identity by knowing different way of expression and that there are room for variety of language "characters" | implicit |
| SR.10.19 | Explore and convey content within English-speaking cultural expressions from different media connected to one's own interests. | They have full control to choose what they | Learning management Cognitive processing Control over content | | Express themselves with their own interest in the English language. Reflect and be critical of what they want to convey. | Explicit: their own interest: explore and convey. |

*SR: Subject renewal, 10: 10th grade, 1: competence aim 1.(Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019a)

# Appendix 2: Opportunities for control

| Competence aim | Interpretation of competence aim | Opportunities for autonomy |
|---|---|---|
| Use a variety of strategies in language learning, text creation and communication. | They should be able to make use of strategies to learn language, communicate and create texts. This entails an understanding of when to use specific strategies. Communication then, implies affection and social strategies. 'use' implies they are aware of strategies. | Learners need to be critical and reflective when choosing what strategies suits the purpose chosen. In communication they need to make use of learning strategies to control their learning management. Likewise, it is up to them to choose what strategies, thus controlling the contents of strategies. |
| Use different digital resources and other aids in language learning, text creation and cooperation. | Main intention is for learners to be aware of and use resources that are available and when needed in their learning, creation and cooperation. | Need to reflect and be critical of what resources suit their needs. They can choose themselves what resources and aids they want to use. |
| Use central patterns for pronunciation in communication. | The understanding of this, is that learners should be able to understand what central patterns in the selected accent or dialect of English to use when communicating. | Learners need to reflect and be critical of what central patterns to use when communicating. They also need to manage their learning, thus making use of learning strategies. They are also able to control what kind of accent or dialect these central patterns should emerge from. |
| Listen to and understand words and expressions in different variations of English. | The understanding of this, is that when confronted by a variation of English, i.e. dialect or accent, they should be able to discern words and expressions and know their meaning. | Reflection could be needed to discern where some words and expression comes from. Likewise, critical thinking is needed to know what might of use in formal/informal. Learning strategies in a discourse situation.<br>The can control content by choosing which variations of English is used. |
| Express oneself with fluency and coherence with a varied vocabulary and idiomatic expression differentiated for purpose, receiver and situations. | They should be able to adapt to the context when communicating and make themselves understood. | They need to be reflective and critical on how they express themselves in a chosen context.<br>They should also make use of social and affective strategies.<br>The context in which they express themselves could be chosen, so they have an opportunity to control the content.<br>*Express* presupposes they have a place to do so, i.e. authentic and practical situations |
| Ask questions and follow up with input in dialog about different subjects suited for different purposes, receivers and situations. | Communication is central here, with learners being able to pay attention and contribute to the discourse.<br><br>They have controlled their processes within learning | Reflection and critical thinking are important for asking relevant and inquiring questions.<br>Learning strategies since they are in a form of communication.<br>The contents can be decided as long as it opens up for a discussion of some sort. |
| Explore and describe some similarities and differences between English and other languages the student has knowledge of and use it in one's own language learning. | Make use of their pre-existing knowledge about language as a resource for learning. | Reflect and be critical towards what works and does not when transferring knowledge from one language to another. Describe implies communication, so the use of learning strategies is possible.<br>Their knowledge sets the parameters of the learning content; they get an opportunity to control it. |

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| Use knowledge about word classes and sentence structures in one's own work with oral and written texts. | The understanding is that they need to use their understanding of grammatical structures and apply it to their work. | They need to be critical of their own work and reflect upon what need to be revised, etc. Managing their learning in a discourse opens up for communication strategies. Their own work gives them an opportunity to control content; i.e. is the work chosen by them. |
| Follow rules for spelling, word formation, verb forms, sentence structure and text structure. | They should have an understanding of grammar and its application. | Critical and reflective of what rules to follow; i.e. UK vs American grammatical rules. Rules which are apply in communication as well. Thus, gives learners opportunity to make use of communication strategies. They can follow grammatical rules in within their chosen content. |
| Read, discuss and convey content from different types of texts, including chosen texts. | They should be able to start a discourse about a given texts. Meaning that they should be able to listen and follow up with questions as well as receive feedback. They need to cope with others might have different opinions. | Reflective and critical of what kind of information is relevant to convey or discuss. They need to be able to communicate, thus opens up for them to take control over learning management. |
| Read, interpret and reflect upon English fiction, including teen literature. | The understanding of this, is that a learner should be able to read, then interpret and lastly reflect upon what he/she has read. | Reflection is mentioned explicitly; however, they can still be critical to the characters in a novel, etc. They can use affective strategies to manage their learning. I.e. encouraging themselves to finish reading a text, etc. They can control the content by choosing which fiction to read. |
| Read non-fiction and assess how trustworthy the cited sources are. | They should be able to read non-fiction and understand if the sources cited can be trusted. E.g. If the sources cited in a text comes from a reputable publication. Presupposes they already are able to manage their learning | Reflective and critical thinking are necessary to differentiate bad sources from good ones. Affective strategies can be used by the learner to encourage oneself after assessing the sources. Control over content can be learners choosing the texts to be scrutinized. |
| Use sources critically and accountably. | Using a relevant citation style. Understanding what criteria to follow when choosing source; i.e. peer-reviewed, which publication. | Need to be able to reflect and be critical of the sources chosen. Social strategies to ask others for help in determining the credibility of the sources. Control over content would show itself with learners choosing their own preferred style of citation. |
| Write formal and informal texts, including coherent, with structure and coherent that describes, narrates and reflects differentiated purpose, receiver and situation | They should have the understanding of when to make use of the different literary styles suited for the intention. | Reflect and be critical of what form of writing suits the purpose. Managing themselves could be necessary, so affective strategies could be used. Learners could control what to write, or the theme, receiver, situation, etc. |
| Refine one's own texts based on the feedback and knowledge about language. | Use language as a tool to refine work. Need to be able to listen to feedback and make use of it. | Reflect and be critical of the feedback received and reflect upon how to use language to refine one's text. |

| | | Affective and social strategies might be used to cope with feedback. Control over content in this sense could be seen as deciding what text they want feedback on, or it could be work within a chosen theme. |
|---|---|---|
| <u>Describe and reflect upon the role of the English language in Norway and the world.</u> | Learners need an understanding of the English language to be able to describe and reflect upon its role. | Reflect upon their own use of language as a tool to communicate as well as critical of its uses. Learning strategies can be learned as a way to use the language. I.e. social strategies can help when communicating; affective strategies can be used to regulate oneself. |
| Describe and reflect upon the condition of minorities in the English-speaking world and in Norway. | An understanding of minorities and their condition is needed to be able to describe their situation in addition to reflecting on it. | Insight into others' situations; reflect and be critical of the majority as well as minority. Express their thoughts. Make use of learning strategies when describing. Control over content: Decide what they find interesting and express it. |
| <u>Explore and describe way of life, mentality, communicational patterns and diversity in the English-speaking world.</u> | Learners should gain an understanding of the diversity of the English-speaking world. | Opportunity to look at one's self in relation to others. Identity based on what they find that might suite them. Express their thought to others. Identity by knowing different way of expression and that there are room for variety of language "characters" |
| <u>Explore and convey content within English-speaking cultural expressions from different media connected to one's own interests.</u> | Learners interest are at the centre here. They should explore and then convey something they find interesting within the parameters of English. | Express themselves with their own interest in the English language. Reflect and be critical of what they want to convey. Learning strategies can be used. Control over content is explicit as this aim is connected to learners' own interest. |

(Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019a)