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The impact of Extramural English on Norwegian lower secondary school students' English vocabulary and grammar.

A quantitative study on how much English Norwegian teenagers learn outside the classroom.

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Abstract

This thesis aims to explore the relationship between Norwegian lower secondary school students' exposure to English outside of school and their proficiency in general English vocabulary and grammar. Sundqvist (2009) first introduced the term *extramural English*, which refers to learning English without any degree of deliberate intention to acquire it.

This quantitative study investigates three key variables: the participants' English grades, their scores on a test made to measure their general English proficiency, and their screen time on the social media platform TikTok. Norwegian teenagers of 2024 spend considerable amounts of time on TikTok, and the platform is therefore included as a separate variable. In addition to the key variables, several activities leading to exposure to English outside of school are considered separate variables. The variables are correlated in different correlation analyses to determine whether there are any strong relationships between the students' extramural English habits and their English proficiency.

Surprisingly, the study finds no strong positive correlations between the key variables. This suggests that spending a significant amount of time on extramural English activities does not necessarily translate to higher scores on general English vocabulary and grammar or better English grades in school. These findings challenge the assumption that extramural English activities directly and positively impact students' English proficiency and academic performance.

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1 Introduction

Norway's citizens are exposed to a significant amount of English in their daily lives (Richards, 2015), contributing to their "very high proficiency" levels in the language, according to Wordsrated (2023). In this thesis, I use the term *extramural English* to describe the phenomenon of learning English outside of the classroom. The term was first introduced by Sundqvist (2009) and shares many of the same properties as out-of-school English, which will be further explained in later sections. Exposure to a foreign language outside of the classroom contributes to the language learning process, as it reinforces the language already learned in the English teaching classroom. Plenty of research has been done on the effect of out-of-school or extramural English and its impact on the language of young learners of English. There are studies looking at the effects of different types of exposure to English, such as reading, watching television with or without subtitles (d'Ydewalle & Van de Poel, 1999; Koolstra & Beentjes, 1999), listening to music, gaming (Peterson, 2010; Ryu, 2013), as well as social media (Istifci & UCAR, 2021; Zourou, 2012). Social media is considered a prominent example of out-of-school English exposure. TikTok, a popular social media platform, was launched in 2018 and quickly became widely popular. Consequently, the impact of TikTok on language learners has emerged as a possible new area of research within extramural English.

This study aims to explore the extramural English activity habits of 13-14-year-old Norwegian students learning English and assess whether these activities affect their English vocabulary and grammar proficiency. The study centers on how much time students spend engaging in English-language activities outside of school. The participants of the study are 33 students from a lower secondary school in Tromsø, all aged 13-14 and foreign language learners of English. Given the influence of TikTok on children at this age, this study will specifically investigate the participants' TikTok habits. The data are collected through a questionnaire that includes questions targeting the students' exposure to English outside of school. It also includes a general English test meant to measure their general proficiency in English vocabulary and grammar. A quantitative analysis was conducted, focusing on three key variables: the students' English proficiency, their exposure to extramural English or out-of-school English activities, and their TikTok habits. More specifically, the study investigates whether there is a relationship between Norwegian lower secondary school students' exposure

to English outside of school and their proficiency in general English vocabulary and grammar. The students' English grades will also be considered and used as a separate variable in the correlational analyses between the key variables. The results show that the participants' least popular extramural English activity is reading English books, while the most popular ones are listening to music and watching English media like television, series, movies, and YouTube. The results show that there are no strong positive correlations between the key variables, meaning that if the students spend a lot of time on extramural English activities, it does not mean that they score high on the general English test or that they have a higher English grade in school.

Young Norwegian learners of English, in the case of this study, aged around 13-14, are exposed to vast amounts of English outside of school. New terms like “TikTok celebrity,” “TikToker,” and “TikTok influencer” are frequently used among users of the platform. People build careers around their brand on TikTok. The platform has a massive power of influence, especially among the young users of the platform. Although there is an age limit of 13 years old to use the platform, many children start using it even earlier. One of the many things TikTok significantly impacts is the users' language, especially the young, like the students at a lower secondary school. This includes vocabulary, grammar, and slang, as most language is casual. Because of the vast number of English speakers worldwide, considerable amounts of the content on the platform are in English. Since English is spoken by 1.46 billion people, which is almost one in five people (Wordsrated, 2023), many of the creators make content in English to reach as many people as possible. Consequently, the users are exposed to a massive amount of English input, both written and oral, due to captions, written text on the videos, and, last but not least, the comment sections beneath the videos.

TikTok is a short video-creating platform where music, sounds, and vlogs are published, featuring music, mimicking, humor, dancing, and creativity like crafting, baking, food, interior, fashion, etc. However, TikTok differs from previously used video platforms like YouTube because the videos can only be up to three minutes long, and most videos are under one minute short. It also has a *for-you* page that serves the user's videos within the user's area of interest through an easily influenced algorithm. The *for-you* page is global and, therefore, includes many English videos, music, and sounds. The page is also endless, and you only swipe on the screen to the following video. Since most videos are under one minute short, you

can go through several hundred videos in a couple of hours, and a high percentage of them are in English.

As previously mentioned, TikTok has a very easily influenced algorithm that serves the users with videos within their areas of interest, based on videos the user interacts with, through re-watching, liking, sharing with other users, or commenting. This system leads to a very repetitive *for-you* page with a lot of input repetition. In the world of TikTok, there is a term for videos, sounds, dances, clothes, and makeup that has become very popular on the platform and is “viral”. If something on TikTok goes viral, it occurs regularly on the *for-you* page until it is not viral anymore. This causes repetition of English input, and repetition of comprehensible input leads users to acquire the language (Ghazi-Saidi & Ansaldo, 2017) in these videos. With all of this considered, TikTok is a highly relevant research topic because of how much time the young generation of today spends on the social media platform.

As an employee of a lower secondary school in Tromsø for the past three years, I have a personal interest in this subject matter. I am intrigued by the topic of extramural English and how young students learn English outside of the classroom. I have asked my students several times about their social media habits, mainly because of the vast differences from when I was their age. When we talk about their habits, they often talk about TikTok and how much time they spend on the platform. They proceed to talk about how they use three, four, five, six, seven, and even eight hours on the platform in one day. The school also has a mobile-free policy, meaning they hand in their phones at the beginning of the day and get them back after school. The school day ends at 14.30, which means that if they go to bed between 23.00 and midnight, they spend many, if not most, of their waking hours on their phones, scrolling on TikTok. When talking to them about it, I often thought about how much of the content they receive on the platform is in English and the amount of language input they receive.

2 Background

In this thesis, I will use the term extramural English, first introduced by Sundqvist (2009), to refer to exposure to English outside of school settings. Many terms are used to describe the concept, and Sundqvist (2009) previously used the term *extramural input in English* before changing it to *extramural exposure to input in English*. However, these terms did not include the concept of output, and she realized how exposure often has negative collocations and implies that there is passivity. For that reason, she decided on *extramural English* because it includes both input and output of English (Sundqvist, 2009). This thesis will focus on extramural English activities that include both input and output of English, and that is why the term extramural English is suitable.

According to Sundqvist's (2009) definition of extramural English, there is no degree of deliberate intention to acquire English, even though it is by no means excluded from the concept of extramural English. What is important is, therefore, that the learner is in contact with or involved with English outside of the English classroom walls. To exemplify, she uses the case of a learner who encounters a foreigner, leading to a conversation in English. The conversation is an example of an extramural English activity that the learner did not know would happen before it did. Within Sundqvist's (2009) definition, there is a focus on unintentional learning, i.e., accidental learning of information without the intention of remembering it. The contact or involvement in extramural English activities is generally voluntary from the learner. However, there is also a possibility that the learner is engaging in extramural English activities from the pressure of, for example, peers or parents. Even though this study will focus on unintentional learning of language through extramural English, it is important not to exclude the possibility of extramural English not only being unintentional for language learning. This is important because this study does not differ between unintentional and intentional extramural English activity exposure; it only focuses on the extramural English habits of the participants, meaning the amount of exposure to English the participants experience.

However, this study will focus on the types of extramural English activities where there is no deliberate intention to acquire English. TikTok is a perfect example of such an extramural English activity. One of the apparent advantages of language learning through TikTok is the amount of language input the users get exposed to. Krashen's (1982) well-known second

language acquisition theory, the *Monitor Model* from the 1970s, consists of five main hypotheses. One of them is the *Input Hypothesis*, often called the *Comprehensible Input Theory*, which states that the most effective way to increase competence in the learner's second language is through exposure to comprehensible input. According to the hypothesis, we develop our language skills by encountering input a little beyond our current proficiency level. We utilize both the context of the input and our non-linguistic knowledge to comprehend the structure of unfamiliar language (Krashen, 1982). The hypothesis tries to answer one of the most critical questions in second language acquisition: *how do we acquire language?* Krashen (1982) discusses the importance of knowing how language learners move from one stage of acquisition to the next.

Another one of the five hypotheses within the *Monitor Model* is the *Natural Order Hypothesis*. It was found that the acquisition of grammatical structures develops in a predictable order. Learners of languages tend to acquire some grammatical structures of the language early and others later. Although the agreement among individual learners of language is not always 100 percent, Krashen (1982) suggests that there are apparent, statistically significant similarities in the order in which they acquire language features. He raised the question of how the learner moves from *i* (representing the learner's current proficiency) to *i + 1*, the next level. Krashen (1982) proceeds to explain how the *input hypothesis* claims that the learner needs to understand the *i + 1* stage, but by “understand,” he means that the learner is focused on the meaning of the exposure and not the form. Consequently, we acquire language that contains structure a little beyond our current stage. To help us understand, we use more than just our linguistic competence. We also use «context, our knowledge of the world, our extra-linguistic information to help us understand language directed at us» (Krashen, 1982).

Several previous studies conducted in countries where English is a foreign language have shown that young learners of English spend a lot of time on extramural English activities (Leona et al., 2021). This exposure might even lead the young language learners to acquire a basic command of English, even before they are introduced to it in a formal classroom setting. The effect of extramural English exposure on young learners' English performance depends on different factors, one of which is the accessibility of the English language. It depends on the type of extramural English exposure as well as the intensity of the exposure (Leona et al., 2021). In their recent study, Leona et al. (2021) cite the act of watching television as a prime

example of a language-learning opportunity. This mode of learning is not only highly accessible but also motivating. Additionally, watching TV is a multimodal experience, as it incorporates both visual and oral components. Furthermore, the intensity of the exposure to English input during television viewing is notably high, rendering it an effective tool for language acquisition.

As I will discuss in the following two sections, studies have shown that exposure through entertaining media, such as listening to music, watching TV shows, and playing video games, as well as the use of social media like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, does show positive relations between these types of extramural English entertaining media exposure and English vocabulary knowledge, reading and listening comprehension, translation skills, writing abilities, and speaking skills (De Wilde et al., 2020).

2.1 Social media as an Extramural English activity

Social media take up a significant amount of time in most people's daily lives, including young language learners in Norway. It has been observed that young learners in northern European countries, such as Finland, Norway, and Denmark, show good listening skills and are very often close to being fluent in English as opposed to people in other bigger European countries, such as Portugal and Italy (Richards, 2015).

This study will focus on TikTok as an extramural English activity for exposure to English. Fewer and fewer young learners of English in Norway watch TV. Their attention has moved on to their phones. However, the social media app TikTok does draw many similarities to watching TV. Richards (2015) discusses six factors that can contribute to language learning, which are also highly relevant to the use of TikTok and, therefore, appropriate to the current study. The first is *accessibility*; the learner can use TikTok at any time, due to their mobile phones. The second factor mentioned is the intensity of exposure; the learners spend extended periods of time watching it, which leads to excellent input exposure. It is also *motivational* and *flexible*: watching TV and TikTok is entertaining media and is, therefore, likely to be an enjoyable extramural English activity for young learners of English. It is also flexible in that the viewers choose how they want to watch TV/TikTok, showing or hiding subtitles and repeated viewing of scenes, which is highly relevant for TikTok use. Both extramural English activities, watching TV and using TikTok, are also *multimodal*, offering input in several forms, orthographically, aurally, and, of course, visually, leading to making the input even

more comprehensible. The last factor he presents is to *notice gaps*: the idea is that by watching television, the learners get exposed to English in informal social interaction situations and can notice gaps in their knowledge from classroom-based settings (Richards, 2015). All these factors that, according to Richards (2015), make watching TV a beneficial out-of-school learning activity are also highly relevant to the use of TikTok. The most significant difference between watching TV and using TikTok is the length of the videos the learners are exposed to, which can function as reinforcing in all the factors listed above, in the sense of TikTok being even more accessible, flexible, multimodal, and, last but not least, intense when it comes to exposure of language input.

Lee (2023) conducted a study to provide insight into creative uses of platforms not designed for language learning and teaching as resources for these specific purposes. The study highlights the role of the user to pick up resources and find ways to use them for learning. She says that it is not just about action but more about being creative, meaning that there is less focus on what the platforms offer but more of how the learners chose to apply these affordances into learning. According to Lee (2023), new features are included in both the social media *Instagram* and *TikTok* that are unique from other earlier platforms like Facebook. Especially the features related to image sharing. She says the following;

The new features enable multimodal communication within mobile applications through instantaneous participation in content creation and sharing, which implicates the current phenomenon of social networking in the shift towards image-based social media (Lee, 2023).

According to Lee (2023), social media platforms with new features that differ from earlier platforms seem to lean more towards image-based social media and rely on the user's creativity over only action.

2.2 *Other Extramural English activities*

Although this thesis will focus on the use of TikTok when it comes to learning English through extramural English activities, it is important to consider other activities that can influence the acquisition of English language skills in young learners. We cannot see the effects of social media and TikTok without considering other extramural English activities. This means other extramural English activities like reading English books, news, or articles, but also listening to music, and last but not least, gaming, in which the communication

happens in English. Sundqvist (2009) found that not a single student answered that they read English books daily, and reading newspapers was even more uncommon, and the same was true for comics. Since Sundqvist's (2009) study was conducted 15 years ago, it is safe to say that society has evolved in terms of social media use and technology since then.

2.3 Previously done research

Many studies have examined whether social media and other extramural English activities like gaming, reading, and watching television influence young English language learners' vocabulary and grammar. Since TikTok is a relatively new social media platform, limited research has explored its impact on young English language learners. In this section, I present a selected overview of previously conducted research on the impact of extramural English, with a particular focus on the effect of TikTok on language learners.

2.3.1 Studies investigating the effect of Extramural English

Leona et al. (2021) conducted a study investigating the relationship between different types of extramural English exposure and young English language learners' English performance and whether motivational factors mediate this relationship. The study was performed in the Netherlands, and the participants were 298 Dutch fourth graders (aged 9-10 years old). Their sources of extramural English exposure were entertaining media, family, friends, and formal reading. The study was part of a longitudinal project that focused on the English language acquisition by young Dutch English language learners from 4th to 6th grade. The participants answered two questionnaires, one about their exposure to extramural English and another questionnaire that assessed the young English language learners' motivation to learn English. The researchers hypothesized that "different types of extramural English exposure predict young English language learners oral and written English receptive vocabulary knowledge, and that motivational factors act as mediators" (p.01). The study did not include TikTok as a social medium but states that many young English language learners spend a significant amount of time on extramural English activities. They found that these young English language learners benefit from high exposure to English even before formal English education begins, by acquiring a basic command of English. Based on the results, the researchers recommend that language teachers of today make more use of the positive contributions of extramural English exposure to the learners' English proficiency, as extramural English exposure through entertaining media and family is predictive of young English language learners' vocabulary knowledge. (Leona et al., 2021).

When it comes to gender and extramural English, several studies have found that boys tend to play more video games and have heavier exposure to English media than girls. Rød & Calafato (2023) looked at to what extent the extramural English, external attributions, self-efficacy, and gender of students learning English as a foreign language predicted their English foreign language learning outcomes. They found that students with high self-efficacy tend to seek out and take the opportunities to practice English inside and outside the classroom. Their study consisted of 42 students in a Norwegian upper-secondary school. Their data collection involved a mixed-methods approach but with more emphasis on quantitative data. The data on the participants' extramural English, external attributions, and self-efficacy were collected through a questionnaire and language diaries. At the same time, their learning outcomes were measured through a language proficiency test, mock exam, and receptive and productive vocabulary tests. Rød & Calafato (2023) found that gender differences were present. Male participants credited gaming and YouTube for their proficiency, unlike the female participants. However, they did not find a significant difference in the amount of exposure to extramural English between the female and the male participants. The outcomes also revealed that male and female participants had similar receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge levels. In general, the participants scored better on the receptive vocabulary test than on the productive vocabulary test, which is no surprise considering that language reception is more manageable than production for foreign language learners (Rød & Calafato, 2023).

Although extramural English is often associated with language reception, as we will see in this section, there are also studies investigating the effect of extramural English on language production. Olsson (2012) looked at extramural English's impact on 16-year-old Swedish students' writing proficiency. She used a questionnaire and language diaries to gather information about the students' extramural contact with English and other relevant background information like English grades and the number of English lessons (hours) per week. The 37 participants also produced two texts, a letter/e-mail and a newspaper article. The results of her study showed that extramural English exposure is a factor that may indeed promote the students' writing proficiency. She discusses how the high proficiency in English writing among the students with high exposure to extramural English, as shown in the results of her study, can be explained by the amount of English input, as it is broad. This means that they acquire a considerable amount of English naturally, in an out-of-school setting, which affects the students' writing proficiency (Olsson, 2012).

As discussed in Chapter 2.1, watching television is an extramural English activity that shares properties similar to TikTok. Koolstra & Beentjes (1999) conducted a study in which they wanted to know whether Dutch children in fourth and sixth grade learn English words through watching television with an English soundtrack and Dutch subtitles. The study had 246 participants, of which 125 were boys and the remaining 121 were girls. The participants came from three different primary schools in Rotterdam, Netherlands. Koolstra & Beentjes' (1999) had the hypothesis that "Dutch children learn English words from a subtitled English-spoken television program". The researchers separated the participants into three different experimental conditions to test the hypothesis. The primary condition, in which the children watched a subtitles program, was compared with two other conditions: an experimental condition in which the children watched the same television program, only without the Dutch subtitles, and one last control condition in which the children watched a Dutch television program. Before the experiment, the children completed an English target vocabulary test, a multiple-choice test that asked for the Dutch translation of 35 English target words from the television program. The study results indicated that young children can acquire some elements of a foreign or second language by watching subtitled television programs. They found that the children who watched the subtitled English programs scored higher in proficiency on the vocabulary scores than those who watched the Dutch television program. Although language learning was stronger in the condition of the children that watched the English program with Dutch subtitles, they also found vocabulary acquisition in the condition in which the children watched the English-spoken television program without the subtitles. They concluded that information in subtitled English-spoken television programs consisting of three different elements constitutes a context from which the Dutch children are able to pick up the meaning of several of the English words. The three elements served by the English-spoken television programs are 1) English words that can be heard 2) the Dutch translation of these words that can be read, 3) and the meaning of the words that are supported by the visual elements of the television program (Koolstra & Beentjes, 1999).

Schurz et al. (2022) also looked at the role and effect of extramural English. Their study is based on interview data from lower-secondary English teachers from France, Austria, and Sweden. They wanted to investigate language learning teachers' perception of the potential for language learning in their learners' extramural English habits. They did the study cross-nationally, which had never been examined before, and the study participants were 20 teachers, of which seven were from France, six from Austria, and seven from Sweden. The

interviews were conducted in 2019-2020. The researchers found that lower secondary students in Sweden seemed to use extramural English most extensively. In Sweden, extramural English seemed to be used by all the students, in contrast to the students in Austria and France, where the students that used extramural English appeared to be the exception and not the rule. The researchers also discussed the differences in extramural English use between subtitling and dubbing countries, meaning that speakers of minor languages that are not widely spoken (Swedish, Finnish, Norwegian) do not have the same access to dubbed foreign-language content, as opposed to speakers of more widely spoken languages (German, Spanish, French). One of the four research questions of their study was regarding the effect of extramural English on language learning, and they found that the general attitude towards the impact of extramural English on language learning was positive. However, only the Swedish teachers believed strongly in the benefits of extramural English on grammar learning, while all three groups generally agreed that extramural English could benefit vocabulary learning (Schurz et al., 2022).

2.3.2 *Studies investigating the effect of Social Media*

Since TikTok is an entertaining medium and a social media platform, the effect of social media on language learning is highly relevant. Istifci & UCAR (2021) did “a review of research on the use of social media in language teaching and learning”. They looked at the use of popular social media platforms in language teaching and learning and reviewed 23 articles published between the years 2016 and 2020. Their study aims to provide valuable insight for researchers, teachers, and learners of language. They scanned *CALL*, a highly respectable top-tier journal ranking database for articles investigating the use of social media by language learners and teachers as a tool for second or foreign language instruction. They ended up with 23 articles that met their selection criteria. The publication countries differed a lot, but none included countries and participants from Scandinavia. They included articles from countries like China, Taiwan, Turkey, Spain, Belgium, and the USA, among others (Istifci & UCAR, 2021). Most of the studies did mixed-method research designs, and the participants were university students. The type of social media platform that most studies focused on was *Facebook* and, after that, *WeChat*. In all of the articles the researchers reviewed, social media is recognized as a tool that can be utilized for various gains on the part of language learners, and they reported positive findings regarding the use of social media in language teaching and learning. *Facebook* was the most used social media platform concerning language learning throughout the reviews. Although there were no significant findings in terms of lexical

richness and grammatical accuracy, it improved writing fluency. The study suggested that Facebook could promote foreign language writing (Istifci & UCAR, 2021).

Al Arif (2019) conducted a study to examine students' perceptions of the advantages of using social media for English language learning. The study participants were 67 students from Jambi University in Indonesia, and all of them answered a questionnaire. Ten out of these participants were interviewed as well. The social media most used by his study participants was *Instagram*, and the researcher used a survey and semi-structured interview to collect data. Al Arif (2019) found that students often use social media for English language learning, including *Instagram*, *YouTube*, and *Facebook*. They use social media at home, and this is where the learning happens, when they are exposed to English input. The students themselves believe that social media plays an essential role in improving their English. (Al Arif, 2019).

Since 2018, TikTok has quickly become one of the world's most popular social media platforms. Xiuwen & Razali (2021) looked at the potential of using TikTok for international undergraduate Chinese students outside the language learning classroom. The idea was to improve their English communication competence and to increase their interest in speaking English. Additionally, they presented a possible approach to utilize TikTok in language learning. For the students to use the possible language tool, the researchers suggest an innovative educational teaching instruction. It consists of three steps: 1; becoming familiar with the tool, 2; watching authentic samples, and 3; creating self-recorded videos using the English language. They concluded that the utilization of TikTok in school could become a “push-power” to engage the students in their academic study and that English language teachers should pay attention to the potential use of TikTok inside and outside of the classroom (Xiuwen & Razali, 2021).

2.4 Summary

There are studies investigating both the possibilities regarding the utilization of extramural English for language learning (Istifci & UCAR, 2021; Xiuwen & Razali, 2021), but there are also studies that look directly into the effect of extramural English, for example from the use of different platforms of social media, but also reading, gaming, etc. (Koolstra & Beentjes, 1999; Leona et al., 2021; Rød & Calafato, 2023). Several different methods are being used to collect data. Mixed methods seem to be a regular practice in the specific field of research.

Questionnaires are popular, as are language diaries and English vocabulary proficiency tests. The studies that investigate the participants' perception of language learning through extramural English activities tend to focus more on qualitative methods to collect data, as it makes it possible to explore their attitudes toward the effect of extramural English (Al Arif, 2019; Istifici & UCAR, 2021; Schurz et al., 2022).

When it comes to the participants included in previous studies conducted on the effect of extramural English, the participants are typically students. There does not seem to be a standard age limit for the students, as there are studies conducted with students from primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary school, as well as undergraduate students attending universities. Leona et al. (2021) used Dutch school children aged from nine to ten years old (primary school), Rød & Calafato (2023) had students from a Norwegian upper secondary school, while Al Arif (2019) and Xiuwen & Razali (2021) used undergraduate students from Indonesia and China. There are also studies investigating the language teachers' perceptions of language learning through extramural English, like Schurz et al.'s (2022) study, and therefore have English teachers as their participants. All the studies presented in this section concluded with positive findings regarding the effect of extramural English on language learning. Istifici & UCAR's (2021) said,

“it seems that social media will continue to attract the attention of researchers, teachers, and learners as new platforms for language teaching and learning in the years to come, and further research will be needed as long as social media keeps changing various aspects of our lives, including how we teach and learn languages” (p. 485).

Although TikTok was released in 2018 and quickly became popular, many studies conducted after its release do not include TikTok as a separate extramural English activity. English vocabulary acquisition is a property that often gets associated with extramural English. There is disagreement on which properties get acquired through involvement in extramural English activities. Leona et al. (2021) concluded that young learners benefit from the exposure that comes with extramural English and can acquire a basic command of English without the researchers mentioning specific properties of the language. Rød & Calafato (2023) found that, in general, all the upper secondary school students in Norway develop better receptive than productive proficiency, meaning that the learners understand more than they tend to produce. Koolstra & Beentjes (1999) found that the participants learned English vocabulary while

watching an English television program with subtitles in the participants' language. Schurz et al. (2022) found general positive attitudes toward the effect of extramural English from teachers from France, Austria, and Sweden. They also found the teachers' opinions on what property of English was acquired. The Swedish saw benefits both within grammar and vocabulary acquisition, as opposed to the teachers from the other two countries who only saw possible benefits within vocabulary acquisition. Other studies found that the use of extramural English and social media can be recognized as a tool for various gains in learning English (Istifci & UCAR, 2021), and Xiuwen & Razali (2021) see the use of TikTok as an extramural English activity that can function as a "push power" to further engage the students in language learning.

2.5 Research questions (RQ) and predictions:

We live in a period in which technology, our phones, and social media play a big part in our everyday lives—more than ever before. A lot of the content on our phones is delivered to us in English, leading to daily input of the language. Extramural English activities include every interaction with English outside of a constructed English teaching classroom and the input we receive through the Internet and social media.

Many of the studies that look at the effect of extramural or out-of-school English on language learners omit TikTok on the list of extramural English activities that the participants spend time on (Al Arif, 2019; Istifci & UCAR, 2021; Leona et al., 2021; Rød & Calafato, 2023), despite the fact that they were conducted after TikTok was launched in 2018. Although *TikTok and language learning* have been a relatively new area of research, plenty of research has been done on the subject. As presented in the previous section, there are studies investigating the effects of extramural English on language learning. These studies primarily investigate how the participants learn English by being exposed to English through language input and further investigate their learning outcomes based on the acquisition of the specific input. In the current study, I want to investigate whether this distinction can already be seen among the participants. I want to see whether there are correlations between the participants' extramural activity habits and their already-acquired English vocabulary and grammar proficiency.

With all of this considered, the three main research questions of this study are:

1. *How much time do students of the lower secondary school in Norway spend on TikTok, compared to other extramural English activities?*
2. *Is there a correlation between the number of hours each pupil spends on TikTok and their general English vocabulary and grammar?*
3. *Is there a correlation between the students' English grades and their general English vocabulary and grammar, and is there a connection concerning their extramural English activity habits?*

It has previously been found that extramural English and extramural English activities play a crucial role in vocabulary acquisition (Sundqvist, 2009). However, I want to learn how this plays a role in school. Is there a correlation between the children who spend a lot of time on extramural English activities and their accomplishments in English in school settings?

I predict the outcome of the three research questions to be that 1) *the students spend more time on extramural English activities like social media, TikTok, watching English series and movies, and listening to English music, as opposed to reading and communicating in English.* I also predict that 2) there is a correlation between time spent on extramural English activities and the results of the general English vocabulary and grammar test. Lastly, I predict that 3) there is a correlation between the students' English grades and their results on the general English test testing their general vocabulary and grammar proficiency.

3 Methodology

To collect data, I used a questionnaire that I developed in *nettskjema.no*. The questionnaire includes questions regarding the students' extramural English activity habits and a 25-question general English test. A couple of weeks before testing the main group, I conducted a pilot test with 15 participants. In this section, I present my methodology, including the choice of participants, questionnaire, English test, and statistical analysis.

3.1 Participants

Since I have worked at a local lower secondary school in Tromsø for the last three years, it was convenient to carry out the survey at this school. Therefore, I am familiar with the students and did the survey in one of my Spanish classes.

A total of 56 students (aged 13-14) participated in the study. All the participants are in eighth grade, and the tests were carried out during foreign language classes. I chose to use students from foreign language classes because they all have the same number of English lessons weekly. If the study had been conducted in an English class or any other subject, there most likely would have been students with different amounts of weekly English lessons. This is because the students that do not participate in foreign language classes are a part of "in-depth English" (*Engelsk fordypning*) and have two extra classes of English per week. By conducting the survey in Spanish lessons, all the students have the same baseline regarding hours of English instruction in school settings.

15 out of the 56 participants were part of a pilot test carried out before testing the main group. After excluding the pilot participants, the sample consisted of 41 students. Eight additional students were excluded from the final sample to eliminate the possibility of reading and/or writing difficulties leading to language barriers that could possibly affect the results, as these eight students answered "yes" when asked if they had reading and/or writing difficulties.

3.2 *The questionnaire and the “General English Test”*

The questionnaire was designed to provide information about the participants' exposure to English and includes extramural English activities relevant to the study. It consisted of two separate parts. The first part focused on the participants' extramural English habits, and the second part was a test meant to indicate the participants' general English proficiency through vocabulary and grammar.

The students answered a questionnaire comprised of 33 questions, made at the online resource *nettskjema.no*. When I developed the first part of the questionnaire, I used Sundqvist's (2009) study as a starting point, as she also investigated the participants of her study's extramural English habits. Her questionnaire included several extramural English activities that I included in the current study. She included watching English television, movies, and series, reading news articles and books, and listening to English music. I included all of these extramural English activities, and since I also focus on TikTok, I chose to include a question about TikTok use as well. In addition to extra focus on TikTok, I also included the students' habits of reading other English media than books. Sundqvist (2009) had an additional focus on the socio-economic status of the participants of her study, such as their parents' education or living situation, etc. I did not use the parts of her questionnaire that included socioeconomic status questions because it is irrelevant to the current study.

The initial eight questions of the questionnaire of the current study are centered around the students' extramural English activity, with one particularly focused on using TikTok. In advance of answering the questionnaire, the students were asked to check their screen time on TikTok, which is precisely measured within their phone settings every week and shows the mean amount of time spent on the platform per day. Furthermore, the students were tasked with providing their English grades from the previous semester. The remaining 25 questions were exercises designed to evaluate the students' overall English vocabulary and grammar proficiency (Attachment 1).

The first part of the questionnaire is in Norwegian (see Example 1) because it reduces the possibility of language barriers affecting the results when it comes to the students not understanding or misreading the questions. Removing possible language barriers can also help to try and keep the students concentrated for as long as possible, as I know that students

of their age tend to lose interest rather quickly. The tasks for the English test are taken from *Cambridge English: English Language Assessment* (Assessment, 2024). The test was tested in a pilot to check whether it could be used to differ the students in English grammar and vocabulary proficiency. The pilot will be further discussed in the following section. Since the questionnaire does not require confidential or personal information and cannot be traced back to the specific students, they did not need approval from their parents or legal guardians.

Example 1 shows one of the questions regarding the participants' habits with extramural English. The question addresses four different statements of habits of extramural English activities, which are "I watch English TV, series, movies, YouTube", "I listen to English music", "I play videogames in English (gaming)" and "I speak (communicate) in English". They were asked to choose the alternative that suited them the best based on how much time they believed they spent on the different activities. The other options are "daily", "a couple times a week", "a couple times a month" or "never or almost never."

Example 2 shows one of the tasks on the general English test, where the participants were asked to choose the alternative that best answered the question. The 25 tasks either asked the participants to answer questions like "what color will you paint the children's bedroom?" or to choose the missing word (see Attachment 1).

Example 1: One of the questions in the first part of the questionnaire.

Trykk på alternativet som stemmer mest

	Daglig	Noen ganger i uken	Noen ganger i måneden	Aldri eller nesten aldri
Jeg ser på engelsk TV, serier, film, Youtube *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jeg hører på engelsk musikk *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jeg spiller (gamer) på engelsk *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jeg snakker engelsk *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Example 2: One of the tasks from the general English test, in the second part of the questionnaire.

"What colour will you paint the children's bedroom?" *

I hope it was right.

We can't decide.

It wasn't very difficult.

To see whether TikTok influences young English learners' language, we need to consider other extramural English activities as well. If these are not considered, we would not be able to use the data because we would not know whether it is TikTok that affects the outcome or if it is reading, gaming, or communicating in English. Therefore, the questionnaire not only includes TikTok as the only extramural English activity that plays a role in English proficiency but also reading English books and media like news, articles, etc., watching English TV, series, and YouTube, and gaming. All these variables need to be considered to see if TikTok alone influences students' English vocabulary and grammar proficiency.

3.3 Pilot

Before testing the main group, I ran a pilot survey with 15 students fitting into the same criteria as the main group, meaning they have the same number of English lessons weekly and are all in eighth grade (aged 13-14). This was to see if the students' results on the general English test differed enough from each other for the results to be statistically significant. I found that the answers differed and that the test was difficult enough for this specific age group. The pilot was done to check several things in the test work. There also needed to be a variation in the number of hours the students spend on TikTok to make it possible to see any relationships between the key variables of the study. I conducted the pilot to identify problems before implanting the complete survey and to see whether it captured the

information it was made to measure. Since there were no problems related to the survey and the outcomes exhibited sufficient variation for the variables to be correlated, no significant alterations were implemented to the questionnaire.

After completing the testing of the pilot and the main group, I was left with 56 answers, with the pilot group comprising 15 and the main group comprising 41. The pilot participants are not included in the main analysis.

3.4 Correlation analysis

I used the free statistics program *Jasp* to analyze the data from the questionnaire. The data from the survey mainly include three variables: the students' test results, their time spent on extramural English activities, and the students' English grades, which are measured on a scale from one to six, where six is the highest grade possible. To answer research questions 2 and 3, I had to find correlations between the variables. In this chapter, I present the results from the questionnaire, as well as the correlations between the three key variables and the correlations between the other variables.

To answer the research questions, I did a correlation analysis. Correlation analysis can be used to examine the relationship between two variables. Since the three variables will not be correlated all in one correlation, it is suitable for the current study. There are several types of correlation coefficients, and this study will use Spearman. I chose to use the Spearman rank correlation coefficient because it measured the concordance between two variables, and the only condition to satisfy to be able to use it is that each of the variables is ordinal (Byström, 1973), which they are in the case of this study. A correlation coefficient (r) is found between the variables and can range between 1 and -1. A high correlation coefficient (r) value indicates a strong relationship between the two variables (Dornyei, 2007). This means that if a participant scores high in one of the variables, it is very likely that the participant also scores high on the other variable, contrary to a correlation coefficient close to zero, which indicates statistical insignificance. If the correlation coefficient is zero, it indicates that there is no correlation between the two variables at all.

Research question 1 does not need a correlation analysis as it only includes one variable, as opposed to research questions 2 and 3. To answer research question 2, I performed a

correlation analysis with two variables, the students' screen time on TikTok and their test results on the general English test included in the questionnaire. To answer research question 3, I also used their test results but correlated them with their English grades to see if the test results in any way can function as representative of their English vocabulary and grammar proficiency (according to the results from the general English test). The results from the correlation analysis will be further discussed in the discussion section (sections 5.2 and 5.3).

4 Findings and results

The survey was answered by 56 participants, 15 of whom was a part of the pilot survey, and 8 additional participants were excluded because they answered yes to the question of whether they have reading and/or writing difficulties or not. This means that the main analysis includes a total of 33 participants.

Since this thesis is a quantitative study, all the data in the analysis must be numbers. In the question of how many hours the students spend on TikTok per day they choose between the alternatives; “I don’t use TikTok”, “under 1 hour”, “between 1-3 hours”, “between 3-6 hours”, “between 6-8 hours” and “more than 8 hours”. The alternatives had to be converted into numbers to make the correlational analysis possible. It starts at 1, which equals “I don’t use TikTok”, and continues in the above order until 6, which equals “more than 8 hours”. In this chapter I present the findings and results from the survey, including descriptive statistics and correlation analyses between the different variables.

4.1 Descriptive statistics

One question within the questionnaire asks the participants whether they have reading and/or writing difficulties. It is a yes or no question, and 8 of the participants answered “yes.” This question was included to allow the study to exclude these students if they significantly affected the statistics.

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics for the whole group of students, including students with and without reading and/or writing difficulties. According to the statistics, the mean score of correct answers on the general English test of this group is around 15.5 points out of 22 possible. The mean of the students’ English grades is around 4, and the mean of their screen time on TikTok shows 3.3, which means that in general, the students spend something between 2 and 4 hours on TikTok per day.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics – the whole group, Pilot excluded

	Correct answers	English grade	Hours on TikTok
Valid	41	41	41
Mode	15.000 ^a	4.000 ^a	3.000 ^a
Mean	15.561	4.024	3.341
Std. Deviation	3.681	1.037	0.990
Minimum	6.000	1.000	1.000
Maximum	21.000	6.000	6.000

If we look at Table 2, we can see some differences from Table 1. It shows the same descriptive statistics for the participants' answers, but in Table 2, the students with reading and/or writing difficulties are excluded. The most significant difference between the two tables is the mean. The mean of the students' correct answers on the general English test is higher in Table 2 than in Table 1, meaning that the eight students with reading and/or writing difficulties significantly affected the mean of the whole group. For this reason, I excluded the results of the students with reading and/or writing difficulties. After removing these eight students, the main analysis is left with 33 answered surveys analyzed.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics – w/o reading and/or writing difficulties

	Correct answers	English grades	Screentime on TikTok
Valid	33	33	33
Mode	15.000 ^a	4.000 ^a	3.000 ^a
Mean	16.152	4.242	3.152
Std. Deviation	3.383	0.902	0.939
Variance	11.445	0.814	0.883
Minimum	6.000	1.000	1.000
Maximum	21.000	6.000	5.000

In Table 3 we can see the descriptive statistics for the eight students with reading and/or writing difficulties. Here, the differences between the group of eight students with reading and/or writing difficulties and the group excluding them are evident. These eight students have a significantly lower mean score of about 13 on the general English test than the mean of

16 in the main group. In addition to a lower mean, the grades were lower, and they had more screen time on TikTok.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics – reading and/or writing difficulties

	Correct answers	English grades	Screen time on TikTok
Valid	8	8	8
Mean	13.125	3.125	4.125
Std. Deviation	4.086	1.126	0.991
Minimum	7.000	1.000	3.000
Maximum	19.000	5.000	6.000

Very few students read in their spare time. To get a more exact number of students that don't read at all, the alternative "never or almost never" (*aldri eller nesten aldri*) could have been split into two options, "never" (*aldri*) and "almost never" (*nesten aldri*) (see Table 4 and Table 5). Table 4 shows the frequency of the students who read English books in their spare time. 29 of the 33 participants answered that they "never or almost never" read English books. Three of them answered "a couple times a month" (*noen ganger i måneden*) and only one student responded that they read "a couple times a week" (*noen ganger I uken*).

Table 4: Frequencies for "I read English book

	Frequency	Percentage
Aldri eller nesten aldri "never or almost never"	29	87.879
Noen ganger i måneden "a couple times a month"	3	9.091
Noen ganger i uken "a couple times a week"	1	3.030
Daglig "daily"	0	0.000
Total "in total"	33	100.000

According to this study, reading books is rare for Norwegian students aged 13-14. However, reading other English media is more common. When asked if participants read other English media like websites, song lyrics, news articles and other articles (Attachment 1), 10 of the participants answered "daily", which equals 30 percent. 13 answered "a couple times a week", six answered "a couple times a month" and only four participants answered that they read these sort of English media "never or almost never".

Table 5. Frequencies for "I read English media"

	Frequency	Percentage
Aldri eller nesten aldri "never or almost never"	4	12.121
Daglig "daily"	10	30.303
Noen ganger i uken "a couple times a week"	13	39.394
Noen ganger i måneden "a couple times a month"	6	18.182
Total "in total"	33	100.000

In addition to being asked about their reading habits, the participants were also questioned about their habits in playing video games (gaming)(Table 6), listening to music (Table 8), watching English television series, YouTube, and watching movies in English (Table 7). 54.5 percent of the students play video games in English daily, 84.8 percent watch English television, series, movies, or YouTube daily, and 69.6 percent listen to English music daily. Not a single student answered that they “never or almost never” watch English television, series, movies, or YouTube in English, only one participant responded that they “never or almost never” listens to English music, and four participants answered that they “never or almost never” play videogames in English.

Table 6: Frequencies for «I play videogames in English (gaming).»

	Frequency	Percentage
Aldri eller nesten aldri “never or almost never”	4	12.121
Daglig “daily”	18	54.545
Noen ganger i måneden “a couple times a month”	7	21.212
Noen ganger i uken “a couple times a week”	4	12.121
Total “in total”	33	100.000

Table 7: Frequencies for "I watch English TV, series, movies, YouTube"

	Frequency	Percentage
Aldri eller nesten aldri “never or almost never”	0	
Daglig “daily”	28	84.848
Noen ganger i måneden “a couple times a month”	2	6.061

Table 7: Frequencies for "I watch English TV, series, movies, YouTube"

	Frequency	Percentage
Noen ganger i uken "a couple times a week"	3	9.091
Total "in total"	33	100.000

Table 8: Frequencies for "I listen to English music"

	Frequency	Percentage
Aldri eller nesten aldri "never or almost never"	1	3.030
Daglig "daily"	23	69.697
Noen ganger i uken "a couple times a week"	9	27.273
Noen ganger I måneden "a couple times a month"	0	
Total "in total"	33	100.000

All the extramural English activities mentioned above mainly offer English language exposure through input, meaning that the learners tend to be passive and not produce output while involved in these activities. For that reason, the questionnaire also asks how much English the participants speak. Table 10 shows the descriptive statistics of how much English the participants speak, from "never or almost never" to "daily". Almost 40 percent of the participants answered that they speak English daily. 45 percent answered that they speak English "a couple times a week". 12 percent said they speak English "a couple times a month" and only one of the participants answered that they "never or almost never" speak English. This means that almost 85 percent of the participants produce English output "daily" or "a couple times a week", which is surprisingly high.

Table 9: Frequencies for “I speak English»

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Aldri eller nesten aldri “never or almost never”	1	3.030	3.030	3.030
Daglig “daily”	13	39.394	39.394	42.424
Noen ganger i måneden “a couple times a month”	4	12.121	12.121	54.545
Noen ganger i uken “a couple times a week”	15	45.455	45.455	100.000
Total “in total”	33	100.000		

To get some insight into the students’ point of view, they were also asked whether they believe they learn English through TikTok. It was a yes/no question (Attachment 1), in which 29 participants, which equals almost 88 percent, answered YES; they believe that they learn English through TikTok (Table 10).

Table 10: “Do you think you learn a lot of English through TikTok?”

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
JA “yes”	29	87.879	87.879	87.879
NEI “no”	4	12.121	12.121	100.000
Total “in total”	33	100.000		

Table 11 shows the result from the question regarding the students’ daily screen time on TikTok. According to the results, 48 percent of the participants spend 1-3 hours on the platform. 33 percent of the participants spend 3-6 hours on the platform. Just beneath 10 percent of the participants answered, “I don’t use TikTok,” and 6 percent responded that they use the platform “under one hour” daily. None of the participants used the platform “more than 8 hours” daily, and only one used it “between 6-8 hours” daily.

Table 11: Frequencies for Screen time on TikTok per day.

Screen time on TikTok	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
1 "I don't use TikTok"	3	9.091	9.091	9.091
2 "under one hour"	2	6.061	6.061	15.152
3 "between 1-3 hours"	16	48.485	48.485	63.636
4 "between 3-6 hours"	11	33.333	33.333	96.970
5 "between 6-8 hours"	1	3.030	3.030	100.000
6 "more than 8 hours"	0	0.000		
In total	33	100.000		

4.2 Correlations between variables

In this section, I will present the results of the correlations between the different variables.

This includes the three main variables: the participants' screen time on TikTok, their English grades, and their scores on the general English test. The other six extramural English activities will also be considered separate values to see if they are related to the students' general English vocabulary and grammar proficiency.

Table 12 shows a correlational matrix of the relationship between the two variables. The lower the correlation coefficient (r) value, the weaker the relationship between the two variables is (see section 3.4). The current value of (r) is 0.058, which is close to zero, meaning there is a weak correlation between the variables. For the results to be statistically significant, the p -value needs to be less than 0.05. According to the correlational matrix (Table 12), the p -value equals 0.750, meaning that the correlation between the two variables is too weak for the results to be significant.

Table 12: Spearman's Correlations

Variable		Screen time on TikTok	Correct answers
1. Screen time on TikTok	Spearman's r	—	—
	p-value	—	—
2. Correct answers	Spearman's r	0.058	—
	p-value	0.750	—

Table 13 shows the correlational matrix of two of the key variables: the students' test answers and their English grades. According to the matrix, the value of (r) is 0.226, which, in the range from -1 to 1, is close to zero. This indicates that the correlation between the two variables is weak. The matrix also shows that the p-value is above 0.05, meaning the results are not statistically significant. Thus, although the two variables have a slight positive correlation, the correlation is not strong enough to be statistically significant. In other words, there is no strong positive relationship between the two variables.

Table 13. Spearman's Correlations

Variable		Correct answers	English grade
1. Correct answers	Spearman's r	—	—
	p-value	—	—
2. English grade	Spearman's r	0.226	—
	p-value	0.206	—

The correlational matrix below (Table 14) shows the correlations between one of the key variables (the participants' results on the general English test) and the six other extramural English activities as separate variables. According to the matrix, none of the correlations between the test results and the other extramural English activities came out statistically significant, meaning there are no positive correlations strong enough between the variables for the results to be significant. Only three correlations came out statistically significant (marked in bold) since the p-value is beneath 0.05, but none of them includes one of the three key variables.

Table 14. Spearman's Correlations

Variable	Correct answers.	I listen to English music”	“I play videogames in English”	“I read English media”	“I watch English TV, series,etc.”	“I speak English”	“I read English books”
1. Correct answers	Spearman's r	—					
	p-value	—					
2. «I listen to English music”	Spearman's r	0.193	—				
	p-value	0.281	—				
3. “I play videogames in English”	Spearman's r	0.079	0.021	—			
	p-value	0.662	0.908	—			
4. “I read English media”	Spearman's r	0.254	0.383	0.405	—		
	p-value	0.154	0.028	0.019	—		
5. “I watch English TV, series, movies, etc.”	Spearman's r	-0.061	0.064	0.499	0.217	—	
	p-value	0.735	0.723	0.003	0.226	—	
6. “I speak English”	Spearman's r	-0.023	0.211	0.262	0.165	0.296	—
	p-value	0.899	0.238	0.141	0.358	0.095	—
7. “I read English books”	Spearman's r	-0.076	-0.130	-0.021	-0.142	0.156	0.013
	p-value	0.675	0.471	0.906	0.430	0.385	0.943

5 Discussion

This chapter will discuss the results presented in the previous chapter in relation to the research questions and further predictions. The answers to the research questions will be presented and answered chronologically. I found that my prediction of the first research question was correct. However, my predictions of the second and third research questions were incorrect. This chapter will answer my research questions and discuss possible changes that could be made to the current study to get different results.

Recall that my three research questions ask:

1. *How much time do students of the lower secondary school in Norway spend on TikTok, compared to other extramural English activities?*
2. *Is there a correlation between the number of hours each pupil spends on TikTok and their general English vocabulary and grammar?"*
3. *Is there a correlation between the students' English grades and their general English vocabulary and grammar, and is there a connection concerning their extramural English activity habits?"* (Chapter 2.5)

5.1 *The participants' extramural English habits (RQ1)*

With all of this considered, this study's three research questions and predictions can be discussed. The first research question was 1): *How much time do students of the lower secondary school in Norway spend on TikTok, compared to other extramural English activities?* I predicted that "the students spend more time on extramural English activities like social media, TikTok, watching English series and movies and listening to English music, as opposed to reading and communicating in English." (Chapter 2.5).

The results from the questionnaire show that the students spend between 2 to 4 hours on TikTok daily. This is the mean, and there is a big difference in the amount of time students spend on TikTok. Some of them answered "more than eight hours per day," and others answered, "less than an hour per day" or even "I don't use TikTok". Out of the total 33 participants, 16 responded that they spend between one to three hours on TikTok daily, and 11 out of 33 answered that they spend between three to six hours on TikTok daily. This means that 81 percent of the participants spend between one to six hours on TikTok daily. Only one participant answered that they spend between six to eight hours on TikTok daily,

and not a single student answered that they spend more than eight hours on TikTok daily (Table 11).

To see whether the students spend more time on TikTok than on other extramural English activities, the students' habits of the other extramural English activities must also be considered. According to the survey, almost 55 percent of the participants play English videogames daily (Table 6), nearly 85 percent watch English media like English television, series, movies, and YouTube (Table 7), and almost 70 percent answered that they listen to English music daily (Table 8).

When it comes to reading as an extramural English activity, there are far fewer participants that read, as opposed to participants that use TikTok and watch English television, series, movies, and YouTube daily. Very few students read, as almost 88 percent of the participants answered that they "never or almost never" read English books, and not one student responded that they read books daily (Table 4). The number of people reading other English media was, however, more. 30 percent read English media daily, and almost 40 percent read "a couple times a week" (Table 5)

84 percent of the participants answered that they use TikTok more than one hour daily, meaning that only 16 percent responded that they use TikTok "less than one hour" a day or that they don't use TikTok at all. Since the data of the students' extramural English activity habits was measured differently (screentime of TikTok measured in hours a day and the other activities measured in times a day/week/month), it is difficult to say something about how much more time the students spend on TikTok as opposed to listening to music etc. However, we know from the numbers that the students spend more time on TikTok than reading English books. The exact amount of time the students spend on reading other English media, listening to music, playing video games, etc. daily, is unknown. Still, it is possible to look at the percentage of students that interact with the extramural English activity daily.

Since only 3 participants answered that "I don't use TikTok", the 30 remaining participants are daily users of the app, meaning that 91 percent use TikTok daily (Table 11). According to the survey, the next most common extramural English activity is watching English television, series, movies, and YouTube, which 84 percent of the participants do daily. The third most common activity is listening to English music (69 percent) (Table 8), and the next is playing

English video games (54 percent) (Table 6). Surprisingly, the percentage of participants that speak English daily is relatively high, with 39 percent (Table 9). The two least common extramural English activities for the participants to spend time on daily are reading English media like websites, song lyrics, news articles, and other articles (30 percent) (Table 5) and reading English books (0 percent) (Table 4).

With all this considered, my prediction of the first research question was correct. The students spend more time on extramural English activities like social media and TikTok, watching English series and movies, and listening to English music, as opposed to reading and communicating in English. However, the number of students who communicate in English daily was surprisingly high. 13 out of 33 answered that they speak English daily. However, the survey does not say anything about the amount of language output or the quality of the output.

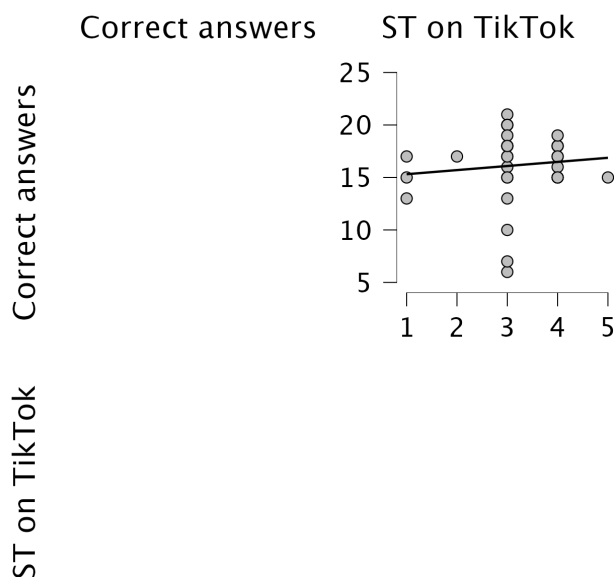
5.2 TikTok and general English vocabulary and grammar (RQ2)

Since we now know TikTok is the extramural English activity included in this study that the students, in general, spend the most time on, the discussion moves to whether this has a correlation to the other survey results. My second research question asks 2): *Is there a correlation between the number of hours each pupil spends on TikTok and their general English vocabulary and grammar proficiency?* I predicted there to be a correlation between the time spent on extramural English activities and the results of the general English vocabulary and grammar test.

To answer research question 2., I did a correlation analysis with two variables, the participants' screen time on TikTok and their number of correct answers on the general English test. The results are presented in Table 12, and I found that since the p-value equals 0.750, the correlation between the two variables is too weak for the results to be significant, meaning that the positive correlation found is not strong enough.

To illustrate the results more clearly, Figure 1 shows the results presented in Table 12. As shown by the graph, there is a weak positive correlation between the variables. However, the positive correlation is not strong enough to make the results statistically significant.

Figure 1. Scattergram: Screen time on TikTok & Correct Answers



The answer to research question 2 is, therefore, no. There is no significant correlation between the number of hours each student spends on TikTok and their English vocabulary and grammar proficiency, despite 88 percent of the participants answering that they believe they learn English using TikTok (Table 10). However, this does not mean that this is the case; it means that according to this specific model, conducted using results from the survey used in this study, there is no correlation between the two variables. Regarding possible reasons why the results did not come out statistically significant will be further discussed in sections 5.5 and 5.6.

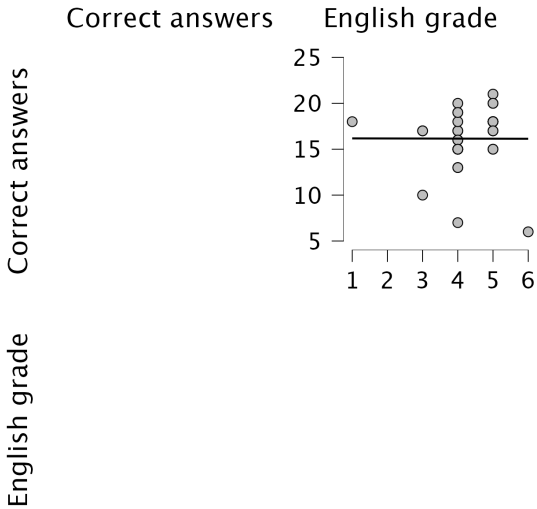
5.3 Grades and general English vocabulary and grammar (RQ3)

According to the results of this study, we now know there is no correlation between the participants' screen time on TikTok and their general English vocabulary and grammar proficiency in the test. The third and last research question was regarding the relationship between the participants' English grades and their general English test results. The third research question asks 3): *Is there a correlation between the students' English grades and their general English vocabulary and grammar, and is there a connection concerning their extramural English activity habits?*

Initially, I predicted there to be a correlation between the students' English grades and their results on the general English test. To find out whether there are any possible positive correlations, I performed a correlation analysis with two variables, which was the participants' English grades and their results on the general English test. For the correlation to be positive, the students with high scores on the test need to have high grades, and the students with low scores on the test need to have lower grades.

The scattergram below (Figure 2) illustrates the results presented in Table 13. As presented in the scattergram, there is little to no correlation between the two variables, as the correlation coefficient (r) value is 0.226 (see section 4.2). The answer to the third research question is, therefore no, there is no correlation between the participants' English grades and their general vocabulary and grammar proficiency (based on their results on the general English test). Here, it is also important to remind you that these results do not have to be representative of reality. These are results from the present study's data, collected through methods that have potential for improvement.

Figure 2. Scattergram: English Grades & Correct Answers



5.4 Other extramural activities and proficiency

Based on the results, we now know that there are no statistically significant positive correlations between the students' screentime on TikTok and their general vocabulary and grammar proficiency (based on their results from the general English test), and the same is

true for the correlations between the students' English grades and their general vocabulary and grammar proficiency. However, it is also essential to consider the effect of other extramural English activities. In this section, correlations between the students' test results on the general English test and all the extramural English activities will be discussed to see if any other activities affect the learner's English. Seven extramural English activities are investigated, including TikTok as a separate activity. The activities are presented in Table 14 and within the questions regarding extramural English activities in Attachment 1.

To be able to use the correlation coefficient Spearman's (r), all of the variables need to be ordinal, meaning that the values from the survey, including options in writing, need to be converted into numbers. The participants were asked about how much time they spend on the different activities, and all of the activities had the same options: "never or almost never", "a couple times a month", "a couple times a week", and "daily". The options were converted to numbers in chronological order from 1 "never or almost never" to 4 "daily".

The questionnaire investigated the students' habits concerning reading English books and other English media, like news, articles, song lyrics, websites, etc. Since 29 out of the total 33 participants answered that they "never or almost never" read English books (see Table 4), I will not include the correlation analysis results of the values from the question regarding reading English books. Contrary to the number of participants who read English books daily, a high percentage of the participants read other English media such as articles, news, song lyrics and websites "daily" and "a couple times a week". Ten students read English media daily, and 13 read it a couple times a week, making up about 70 percent of the group (see Table 5). The correlational matrix below shows only a slight positive correlation between the time the participants spend reading English media and their test scores on the general English test. However, the current value of the correlation coefficient (r) is 0.254 (presented as variable 7. in Table 14), which means that there is a weak positive correlation between the two variables. Still, the correlation is not strong enough to be statistically significant, since the p-value (0.154) is above 0.05. This means that according to this study, there are no statistically significant correlations between the amount of time the students spend reading either English books or other English written media and their test results on the general English test.

According to the study's findings, none of the correlation coefficients demonstrating statistically significant results involve the students' test scores on the general English test. In other words, there appears to be no correlation between the students' general English vocabulary and grammar proficiency and their extramural English habits, which refer to their exposure to English beyond the classroom. There are still some correlations that came out statistically significant that do not contribute to answering the research questions of the current study but are worth mentioning. The correlational matrix presented below (Table 14) shows the correlations between all the variables included in the study, except for the students' English grades. The correlation coefficients that came out statistically significant with a p-value under 0.05 are marked in bold font in Table 14. The strongest positive correlation is between the two variables of the students' habits of watching English television, series, movies, and YouTube (variable 5, Table 14) and the students' gaming habits. The current p-value is 0.003, telling us that the correlation is statistically significant. The correlation coefficient (r) for the same variables is 0.499, which tells us the correlation is positive, but the correlation is not very strong. As we know, the correlation coefficient (r) is found between the variables and can range between 1 and -1, and a high value of (r) indicates a strong relationship between the two variables (Dornyei, 2007). Since the value is somewhat high, or not very close to zero, it is likely that when the students score high on one of the variables, the students also score high on the other, i.e. the students that watch a lot of English media tend to spend a lot of time on gaming as well.

The second strongest positive correlation between the variables also includes the students' gaming habits as one of the variables. The p-value between their habits of listening to English music and their habits of reading English media like articles, news, websites, etc., is 0.028 and indicates that the results are statistically significant. The correlation coefficient is 0.383 (variable 4, Table 14), which tells us that the positive correlation is weaker than the two correlations of the students' gaming habits and watching English media like television, series, movies, etc. The third and last statistically significant correlation between the variables is found between the two variables of the students' gaming habits and reading English media other than books. The p-value is 0.019, and the correlation coefficient (r) is 0.405 (variable 4, Table 14), which in the range between -1 to 1 is a positive correlation, but not a very strong one.

Although these positive correlations are not highly relevant to the current study, they do indicate that there are positive correlations concerning the use of different extramural English activities.

5.5 Strengths and limitations to the current study

In terms of strengths and limitations, there are certain aspects of the methodology that I would have approached differently, given the opportunity. However, implementing such changes would have significantly altered the study as a whole and necessitated a complete restart of the data collection process from the point of discovery.

This study has both strengths and limitations. A significant strength is its inclusion of various extramural English activities, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of each activity's impact on test results. Through this approach, I can better identify which activities are most influential in shaping participant performance. Another strength is that the first part of the questionnaire was written in Norwegian. The first part of the questionnaire was the questions regarding the students' habits in terms of extramural English usage, as well as questions regarding their own point of view on learning English outside of school (see Attachment 1). This was done to eliminate the possibility of language barriers influencing the results. The pilot test conducted before testing the main group can also be considered a strength because it ensured that the "General English" test results were usable. In advance of the survey, the participants were asked to check their exact screen time on TikTok on their devices, a mean measured in hours/minutes daily. This is a strength because it makes the numbers very reliable.

There are also some limitations to this study and things I would have done differently if I were to do it again. Some of these limitations are minor, but there are also limitations that I believe significantly influence the survey results. One of the limitations that would have made a significant difference regarding the results if it were to be changed is the structure of the question regarding screen time on TikTok (Attachment 1), which will be discussed in the following section. Another possible limitation of the study is the age of the participants, combined with an anonymous online questionnaire. Since I know the students myself, I know how they can struggle with concentration and how many of them may not take this survey

seriously enough to take their time and answer honestly. Consequently, the results can come out differently from reality and can further affect the results and findings. The way the participants' extramural English habits were measured in the questionnaire is also a limitation because it is harder to compare time spent on the different extramural English activities.

5.6 Suggestions for development of the current study

As presented and discussed in Chapter 4 and earlier in Chapter 5, the results from the collected data did not show any statistically significant correlations between the different variables. The reason why the results were not statistically significant can be the results of a number of things. The first explanation is that there is no correlation between the variables presented because one variable does not lead to the other. However, despite the results not being statistically significant, it is still possible that there is a correlation between the amount of time students at the age of 13-14 in Norway spend on TikTok as well as other extramural English activities, and their general English vocabulary and grammar proficiency. There are changes that can be made within the survey that could result in something different from what was found through the survey in this study. In this section, I will be presenting possible alterations to the current study in order for it to maybe result in statistically significant correlations. The study's limitations presented in the previous section will be further discussed, including proposals for changes.

As mentioned, one study limitation was some parts of the questionnaire. When analyzing the data, I found that the intervals within the hours of screen time on TikTok needed to be shorter. This was something I should have discovered in the pilot. 81 percent of the participants answered that they have screen time "between 1-3 hours" (48 percent) and "between 3-6 hours" (33 percent) (Table 11). This means that all the participants who spend one hour daily on TikTok end up in the same category as those who spend three hours daily and the same for the participants who spend "between 3-6 hours" daily on the platform. Almost 50 percent of the participants cannot be separated, although it is very likely that their screen time differs by several hours. By using smaller intervals within the alternatives, the results would show a higher span within the results. If I were to undergo the data collection again, I would change the intervals to only 1 hour meaning that the alternatives would be "I don't use TikTok", "under 1 hour", "between 1-2 hours", "between 2-3 hours", "between 3-4 hours" and so on, until "more than 8 hours". This way, I would get a more exact picture of how much time each student spends on TikTok, which I believe would be beneficial for analyzing the results.

Since the data was collected through an online anonymous survey, there is a lot I cannot control regarding the results. Although the questionnaire is in Norwegian, which eliminates the possibility of language barriers, several other factors could influence the results. The students are 13-14 years old, and there is no way of knowing whether they answer honestly. Some of them may struggle to concentrate, others want to finish as quickly as possible, and some might not care enough to read the questions thoroughly or even at all. This means that despite all of the questions in the survey needed to be answered for it to be submitted, there is no way of knowing whether the answers are authentic or honest. To collect as fully authentic and honest answers as possible, the questionnaire and the general English test would need to be questioned in a one-to-one interview. By interviewing the participants one-on-one, they would take longer to answer the questions and feel the pressure to answer honestly. However, interviewing 56 participants one-on-one is a highly time-consuming method. It is, therefore, the reason why I chose to collect the data through an online survey that the participants accessed through a link and answered all together while in the classroom, being monitored. By surveying inside the classroom, there is some form of control as opposed to the participants answering the survey at home by themselves.

Another limitation that could change the results if it were to be changed is the general English test. The test consisted of 25 tasks, where the participants were to either choose the answer to the sentence or the word missing from the sentence (see Attachment 1). If I were to do the study again, I would include more tasks in the questionnaire to draw a more precise line between the results, as the range between the least to most correct answers was only 11. Based on the current study's results, there are no statistically significant correlations between any of the variables concerning the students' extramural English habits and their results from the general English test. By utilizing a general English test with a higher number of tasks than the one used in this study, the range of the results would be longer, and the differences in proficiency could be more apparent.

Another possible limitation is the general English test itself. Although I conducted a pilot test and the variation within the results was sufficient, there is a possibility that the English test was not difficult enough or that tasks within the test were not sensitive enough. The last limitation to be discussed is also regarding the survey. It lies within the differences in measuring the participants' extramural English activity habits. Their screen time on TikTok is

measured in hours daily, while their time spent reading in English or watching English media is measured in whether they do it daily or several times a week, several times a month, or never. If all extramural English habits were measured the same way, it would be easier to tell how much time is spent on one extramural English activity compared to the others. This limitation only concerns research question one and would not have changed the fact that the results were not statistically significant. Still, it would give a more precise answer to the participants' exposure to English exposure through extramural English activities.

6 Conclusions

According to the results of the current study, Norwegian 13-14-year-old students spend a mean of 2-4 hours on the social media platform TikTok daily. This includes the students who spend over eight hours on the platform and those who do not use the platform at all. Very few students read English books, and most of the students listen to English music, watch English media like television, series, and movies, and read English media like articles, news, websites, etc. daily.

The main focus of the study was to investigate the relationships between the three main variables, which were the students' extramural English habits, their English grades, and their test results on the general English test conjoined in the questionnaire the participants were asked to answer. The initial prediction of the results was that there would be positive correlations between the key variables. I believed that the students who received high scores on the general English test would also engage with many or spend much time on extramural English activities. My predictions were proven wrong. There were no statistically significant positive correlations between the key variables. The results found that the students who were highly exposed to English through extramural English activities did not perform better on the general English test and did not have higher grades than the ones not exposed to the same amount of extramural English.

However, it is essential to be aware of the current study's limitations and the possibility of the results coming out differently if changes were to be made. Changes like altering the questionnaire, more specifically making the English test longer, the intervals between the

options of hours spent on TikTok shorter and measuring all extramural English activities in the same manner.

In conclusion, there are limitations to the current study. However, I believe that by considering the alterations discussed in section 5.6 and changing some features of the study, the results would have come out differently. 88 percent of the participants of the current study believe that they learn a lot of English through TikTok. Considering the amount of time they spend on TikTok but also other extramural English activities where they are exposed to considerable amounts of English input, I believe that chances are high that they learn some features of the language, but that these were simply not captured by the test I gave them.

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8 Attachments

8.1 Attachment 1



Extramural English - Hvor mye engelsk lærer norsk ungdom (ungdomsskole, 8.trinn) utenfor skolens vegger?

Hva er ditt morsmål?

Språket du har lært hjemme (du kan ha flere)

Hvilken karakter fikk du i Engelsk forrige termin (til jul)?

- 6
- 5
- 4
- 3
- 2
- 1

Har du lese/skrivevansker?

- JA
- NEI

Hvor mye skjermtid har du i snitt per dag på TikTok?

- Jeg bruker ikke TikTok
- Under 1 time
- Mellom 1-3 timer
- Mellom 3-6 timer
- Mellom 6-8 timer
- Over 8 timer

Trykk på alternativene som stemmer mest

Jeg leser engelske bøker

- Daglig
- Noen ganger i uken
- Noen ganger i måneden
- Aldri eller nesten aldri

Jeg leser på engelske nettsider, sangtekster, nyhetssaker, artikler

- Daglig
- Noen ganger i uken
- Noen ganger i måneden
- Aldri eller nesten aldri

Trykk på alternativet som stemmer mest

Jeg ser på engelsk TV, serier, film, Youtube

- Daglig
- Noen ganger i uken

Noen ganger i måneden

Aldri eller nesten aldri

Jeg hører på engelsk musikk

Daglig

Noen ganger i uken

Noen ganger i måneden

Aldri eller nesten aldri

Jeg spiller (gamer) på engelsk

Daglig

Noen ganger i uken

Noen ganger i måneden

Aldri eller nesten aldri

Jeg snakker engelsk

Daglig

Noen ganger i uken

Noen ganger i måneden

Aldri eller nesten aldri

Hvor tror du at du har lært mest engelsk?

Alt på skolen

Mesteparten på skolen

Mesteparten utenfor skolen

Alt utenfor skolen

Tror du at du lærer mye engelsk gjennom TikTok?

JA

NEI

Test your English. For the question below, please choose the best option to complete the sentence or conversation.

"Can i park here?"

Sorry, I did that

It's the same place.

Only for half an hour.

"What colour will you paint the children's bedroom?"

I hope it was right.

We can't decide.

It wasn't very difficult.

"I can't understand this email."

Would you like some help?

Don't you know?
I suppose you can.

"I'd like two tickets for tomorrow night."

How much did you pay?
Afternoon and evening.
I'll just check for you.

"Shall we go to the gym now?"

I'm too tired.
It's very good.
Not at all.

"His eyes were bad that he couldn't read the number plate of the car in front."

such
too
so
very

"The company need to decide and for all what its position is on this point."

here
once
first
finally

"Don't put your cup on the of the table - someone will knock it off."

outside
edge
boundary
border

"I'm sorry - I didn't to disturb you."

hope
think
mean
suppose

"The singer ended the concert her most popular song"

by
with
in
as

"Would you mind these plates a wipe before putting them in the cupboard?"

making

doing
getting
giving

"I was looking forward at the new restaurant, but it was closed."

to eat
to have eaten
to eating
eating

**"..... tired Melissa is when she gets home from work, she always makes time to day
goodnight to the children."**

Whatever
No matter how
However much
Although

"It was only ten days ago she started her new job."

then
since
after
that

"The shop didn't have the shoes I wanted, but they've a pair specially for me."

booked
ordered
commanded
asked

"Have you got time to discuss your work now or are you to leave?"

thinking
round
planned
about

"She came to live here a month ago."

quite
beyond
already
almost

"Once the plane is in the air, you can your seat belts if you wish."

undress
unfasten

unlock
untie

"I left my last job because I had no to travel."

place
position
opportunity
possibility

"It wasn't a bad crash and damage was done to my car."

little
small
light
mere

"I'd rather you to her why we can't go."

would explain
explained
to explain
will explain

"Before making a decision, the leader considered all of the argument."

sides
features
perspectives
shades

"This new printer is recommended as being reliable."

greatly
highly
strongly
readily

"When I realised I had dropped my gloves, I decided to my steps."

retrace
regress
resume
return

"Anne's house is somewhere in the of the railway station."

region
quartet
vicinity
district

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