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A study of teachers' understanding of English oral competence in lower secondary school in Norway

"Their oral competence is good and communicative"

En studie av lærere sin forståelse av engelsk munnlig kompetanse på ungdomstrinnet i Norge

«Deira munnlege kompetanse er god og kommuniserande»

Øyvind Aaberge

OsloMet

OsloMet – storbyuniversitetet

Fakultet for lærerutdanning og internasjonale studier

Institutt for grunnskole- og faglærerutdanning

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Abstract

This thesis has teachers' understanding of oral competence in English as its focus. The central thesis question that this project attempts to answer is: "How is English oral competence understood by teachers in lower secondary school in Norway". In order to find out, a phenomenological semi-structured interview was conducted with six teachers of varying experience working at in lower secondary at six different schools in Norway. The results of these interviews show that teachers' understanding of oral competence is centred around the central topics of communication, vocabulary and prepared speech events. It is also clear that though communication is central, there is a less clear idea of how communication competence is developed and the strategies that follow.

Abstrakt

Denne masteroppgåva har lærarar sin forståing av munnleg kompetanse i Engelsk som sitt fokus. Det sentrale problemstillingsspørsmålet som dette prosjekter har forsøkt å svare på er: "Korleis er engelsk munnleg kompetanse forstått av lærarar på ungdomstrinnet i Norge?" For å finne ut, har eit fenomenologisk semi-strukturert intervju blitt gjennomført med seks lærarar med variert erfaring som jobbar på seks forskjellige skular I Norge. Resultatet av desse intervju viser at lærarar sin forståing av munnleg kompetanse er sentrert rundt dei sentrale temaa kommunikasjon, ordforråd og forberedt snakking. Det er også klart at sjølv om kommunikasjon er sentral, er det ein mindre forståing av korleis kommunikasjonskompetanse blir utvikla og strategiane som følger.

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How is English oral competence understood by teachers in lower secondary school in Norway?

1.0 Introduction:

Oral competence in English is important for the general population in Norway because the English language has become an integral part of professional and the private life for everyone living in Norway today. University classes are taught in English, the shows on TV are most often in English, as are the platforms we watch them one. Friendships are often multicultural, as is the culture we surround ourselves with. In Norwegian school, teachers are supposed to prepare pupils for the multicultural world that awaits. In lower secondary school, this means preparation through two hours of teaching a week.

The oral skills promoted by teachers is therefore vital for the pupils' oral competence development, and that the skills developed in school are relevant for pupils in the real world. Understanding how teachers understand oral competence is therefore important, because their understanding dictates how oral competence is developed in schools. Therefore, this thesis asks the question: How is English oral competence understood by teachers in lower secondary school in Norway? The aim of this project is to investigate, find out and reflect upon teachers' thoughts and opinion on English oral competence at eighth to tenth grade in Norway. These three years are the final years of basic education in Norway, and the only ones required for all pupils to attend. The oral skills they acquire throughout these years are the basis for English language competence for the entire population of Norway. Oral competence is a topic that is interesting, challenging and sometimes frustrating, because the term consists of a huge variety of skills for the speaker to master. The complexity of oral competence needs to be boiled down into two to three 45-minute lessons per week. This is challenging as a practicing teacher, and which aspects of oral competence are most vital to become a more competent speaker depends on the pupil. The goal of this thesis is to see how teachers think about, understand and define the characteristics of oral competence, and the skills and subskills that oral competence entail. This thesis has the teacher as its focus, and the teacher's understanding of oral competence in the English subject in basic education. Teachers' voices are chosen because their understanding has a big impact on the development of pupils' oral competence understanding. Alongside the curriculum, they have substantial influence on the

oral competence that is being developed by every pupil in the country. The current curriculum, which was introduced in 2020, defines what kind skills are required for all learners of English. Whereas the curriculum is the same all over the country, teachers all come from various backgrounds, dependant on where they grew up and where they acquired their teaching qualifications. Understanding where teachers agree and disagree gives a unique opportunity to study how oral competence is being developed. Their understanding will differ, and whereas some aspects showcase a large degree of conformity and agreement, there will also be areas where one teacher stands alone in their understanding. All of this is interesting and important when trying to further the perception of English oral competence in Norway.

This project is divided into sections. The literary review is the next section, and includes theory on oral competence, and more specifically, theory which is relevant in order to understand and reflect upon the teachers' interviews. The section after theory is on the curriculum, as the main political document dictating content in school, and therefore also, oral competence. The section after curriculum is a methods-section which describes the process of developing the project, finding teachers to interview, interview process and the data analysis that followed. The results-section is after methods and presents and interprets the main threads of the six teachers' understanding of oral competence in lower secondary today. The section following results is a discussion of the results in light of the literary review and the curriculum. The last section is a conclusion, where the research is summarized and concluded, with inclusion of suggestions for further research within the field.

2.0 Literature review of oral competence

What does it mean to have oral competence in English? What skills do speakers possess that are taught for L2 learners but come naturally for L1 speakers? How do central theories on oral competence describe these skills, and what learning strategies can be used in the classroom to enhance oral competence for the pupils? These are questions that will be answered throughout this next section. It will focus on the theoretical basis knowledge on the topic of oral competence. The term "oral competence" will be divided into its different parts, in order to examine how this compares to how teachers understand the term. The main basis of this section will be a model created by Anne Burns and which is the basis for her 2019 article

named Concepts for Teaching Speaking in the English Language Classroom (Burns, 2019). In this article, she presents a model for speaking competence which can be seen as Figure 1 below. Burns divides the different competences into three main sections. Knowledge of Language and Discourse, Core Speaking Skills and Communication Strategies.
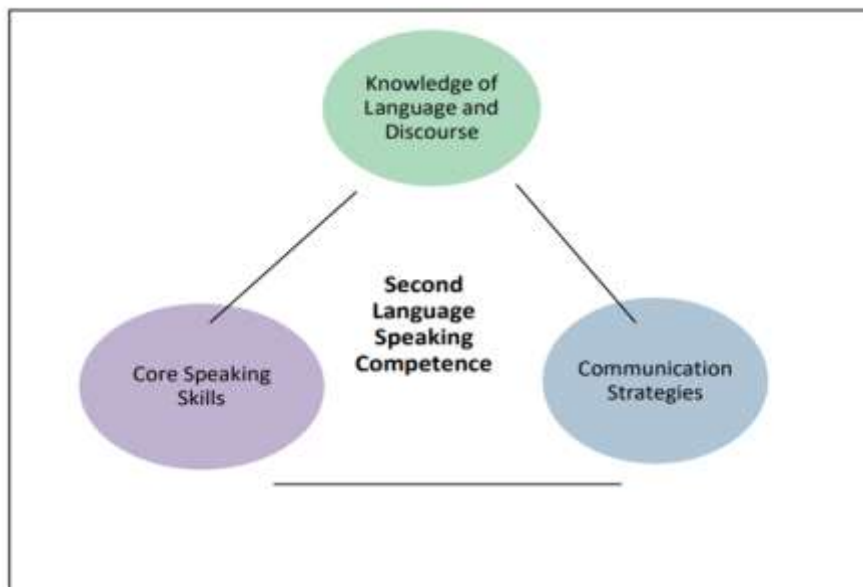
Figure 1: Components of second language speaking competence (Goh and Burns, 2012, p. 53)

The category "Knowledge of Language and Discourse" can be divided into different oral skills. These are pronunciation, knowledge of grammar and vocabulary, as well as knowledge of how discourse and genre affect the pragmatical and social appropriateness of a statement in a given context. "Core Speaking Skills" is the second category of the model presented by Burns. The oral skills within this category are fluency, the processing of speech and the negotiation that occurs as a conversation starts and develops. The third category of Burns' model is "Communication Strategies". This includes compensation strategies and the ability to utilize them when limitations of one's own language occur. Other strategies that fall under this category is metacognitive strategies and interaction strategies. Metacognitive strategies involve conscious thinking about how to produce speech adapted to the purpose. Interaction strategies include all the different aspects of speaking to other interlocutors and how to uphold both a casual and formal conversation. It will be defined in finer detail as each section is examined and discussed further. This thesis deals with oral competence, and though this model encompasses many of the skills that also are talked about in oral competence, there are

a few omissions that will also be examined in this section of the thesis. Listening is an important aspect of oral competence, and one which can be found both in the questions asked to the teachers interviewed for this project, as well as in the answers that were given. This is however not mentioned in this particular model, and will, therefore, be added to this theory section. Another aspect of oral competence which will be discussed is the status of English as a lingua franca and research on teachers of English in Norway.

2.1. Knowledge of language and discourse

The first component, as defined in the model of speaking competence developed by Anne Burns, is "knowledge of language and discourse". Burns describes this component of speaking as

> "mastering the sound patterns of the language,…knowing the grammar and vocabulary of the language,…and understanding how stretches of connected speech…are organized, so they are socially and pragmatically appropriate. (Burns, 2019, p. 3)".

Out of these, different categories arise that will be discussed in light of relevant theory on each topic. "Mastering the sound patterns of the language" is a competence which can be directly linked to pronunciation. "Knowing the grammar and vocabulary of the language" are not surprisingly linked to vocabulary knowledge and grammar knowledge, both of which will be talked about in 2.1.1. and 2.1.2 respectively. "Understanding how stretches of connected speech…are connected" means that speakers must have knowledge of both the genre of the speaking situation as well as discourse knowledge. The last few words within this component is that the stretches of connect speech must be "socially and pragmatically appropriate" means that speakers must have a register fit for purpose, which means having the knowledge base of knowing how changing circumstances also change the language requirements for the speaker (Burns, 2019, p. 3).

2.1.1. Vocabulary

Vocabulary as a theoretical term and skill for oral competence can be split into two main sub-categories: Receptive vocabulary and productive vocabulary. Receptive vocabulary refers to words that speakers can understand in conversation or when listening, but that do not occur when they themselves communicate orally. Productive vocabulary refers to words that

speakers both understand and are able to use both in professional and everyday speech without hesitation (Thornbury, 2005, pp. 22-23). The speaker can produce intelligible utterances using the words in the productive part of vocabulary knowledge. In all cases, the receptive vocabulary is larger than the productive one. When referring to a person's vocabulary, it is typically tied to their productive vocabulary as this is the only one that can be measured by other than the person him/herself. In terms of its role in English oral competence for learners, vocabulary, along with grammar, is defined as a basic skill (Burns, 2019, p. 3), and that without them, "students couldn't communicate in English easily. Those with awful vocabulary… are generally not prepared to get practice to talk; they would dodge to practice English" (Husnu (2018) in (Phoeun & Sengsri, 2021, p. 1032)). Vocabulary, and thereby having the ability to use a variety of words, is seen as a foundation in order to develop one's ability to communicate and speak English further.

2.1.2. Grammar

Grammar in oral competence differs from written grammar, as the expectation of accuracy and sentence structure is different when speaking than writing. Grammar in school teaching is divided into that of written and that of the oral mode. "Until recently, the grammar presented to learners of English has been based entirely on written grammar" (Thornbury, 2016, p. 8), which syntactically are meant for completely different purposes. The role of grammar in oral competence may have been affected by the fact that the rules to which it had have to adhere, are not relatable to the actual oral interaction and the appropriateness of grammar associated with such a speech event. Grammar in "spontaneous speech is produced in clause-length units rather than sentence-length" (Thornbury, 2005, p. 33). Suresh Canagarajah describes grammar in terms of a social language interaction between two speakers where an intersubjective achievement is produced through their shared norm of grammar. The flexible and negotiated grammar where grammatical patterns are recognizable in terms of what they communicate is used in speech as replacement for a native-speaker accuracy. This creates a common understanding of each other and is therefore vital in order to maintain their communicative objective. He also points out that scholars of second language acquisition, which could also include Norwegian pupils, place cognitive control over grammatical knowledge as key for oral competence (Canagarajah, 2014, p. 770). When talking about grammar as one part of the three-component system developed by Anne Burns, it is worth distinguishing between spoken grammar and written grammar. Because the appropriateness of a spoken text does not necessarily include grammatical accuracy, the rules that apply for appropriate communicative

grammar are less applicable. The expectation is also different. The grammar of a written work is assessed on the generally excepted rules of how a sentence is built and how words are written. Spoken language is more dependent on negotiation of interlocutors because the language is deemed appropriate, not on the rules decided by a community of writers, but solely on the receiver of the oral language. A speech is deemed good if the expectations of what good oral speech amount to aligns with what has been presented

The typical structure of written language, where dependant clauses can only exist next to each other, or in conjunction with an independent clause, does not apply for spoken grammar in the same manner as written. Dependant clauses, which in written language would be an incomplete utterance, is not incorrect when spoken as it belongs to the social construct of a conversation or dialogue. (Thornbury, 2005, p. 20) presents a model of how a spoken utterance is structured grammatically. The body of an utterance is either preceded by a head or succeeded by a tail, though it can also function on its own. The head places information at the front of the main statement, in order for the listener to more easily understand, such as in the statement: "Your garden, is it always such a mess?" The "it" in the main body of the statement refers back to the header. Tails are also meant to give additional information, and are typically noun phrases, which means that the entire "chunk" can be referred to as the "pronoun" in the main body. An example of a tail would be the part after the comma in "They're not cheap to buy, cars in Norway". (Thornbury, 2005, pp. 20-23)

Syntax is an important aspect of spoken grammar. It is "The system of rules that cover the order of words in a sentence" (Thornbury, 2016, p. 2). It gives another layer of description of grammar which does not apply for the written mode. The expectation and demands for syntax for spoken text separate it from written texts. There are many examples of spoken grammar commonly found in oral speech that in isolation, or if reading a transcript, may seem incoherent and pointless, but knowing the context, purpose, recipient and situation in which they are used and the effect that has on the situation is important when trying to master spoken grammar.

2.1.3. Pronunciation

Pronunciation as a part of oral competence is seemingly somewhat controversial. (Jones, 2017) in (Kang & Kermad, 2018, p. 2) says that "whereas deficiencies in grammar and vocabulary can make speech difficult to understand, deficient pronunciation can stop an entire conversation". Talking about pronunciation, it is important to note that the term can be divided into two separate aspects with their own attached skills. Each one of the aspects contain skills vital to pronunciation and are called segmental and supra-segmental. The segmental aspect includes phonemes, consonant- and vowel sounds and syllable stress. The supra-segmental aspect of pronunciation includes intonation, word- and utterance stress, linking and appropriate voice quality like volume, prominence and breath-control. This section also includes physical dimensions like eye movement and gestures (Burns, 2016, pp. 2-3). All of the skills mentioned above makes the speaker of the language intelligible. The reason why pronunciation can be seen as a basic skill of oral competence is because ahead of building knowledge on communication strategies and how language differs in various contexts, one must first master the basic knowledge and skill of simply producing intelligible words with correct stress and intonation. Intonation is the variation of pitch in the spoken language, whereas stress is the emphasis given on specific syllables. (Thornbury, 2005, p. 37) Stress, which is part of both the segmental and the supra-segmental aspects of pronunciation, are vital for oral competence. Stress is "appropriate placement of prominence", which at syllable-level consists of emphasizing the correct syllable in a word there may be more than one. On word- and utterance level, stress can alter the message by placing stress on different words. Important information is often stressed to indicate where the listener should focus their attention (Thornbury, 2005, pp. 4-5)

2.1.4 Genre and discourse knowledge

Anne Burns mentions discourse as one of the key points of the first major area of oral competence; Knowledge of language and discourse. Discourse refers to the rules to which any speaker must adhere to whilst talking within genre-specific contexts. A genre refers to "a type of speech event, especially in terms of how that speech event might be labelled by its participants" (Thornbury, 2005, p. 14). Genre is a concept used to describe "the patterned or predictable ways in which members of a culture use language to achieve a particular social purpose (Custance, 2007, p.38) in (Tishakov, 2018, p. 53) Genre can be split into two categories; interactive or non-interactive and planned or unplanned. An example of an interactive genre is ordering a meal, having a casual conversation or discussing current events. Non-interactive events of genre can be a university lecture or a voicemail, which are also

monologues. Examples of a planned genre events are public speeches, business presentations. If the language is planned, almost scripted, the "linguistic features of the language will resemble or replicate features of written language" (Thornbury, 2005, p. 14) An unplanned genre will have each speaker having to make "strategic and spontaneous decisions on the basis of the way the discourse unfolds. This in turn will affect the kind of language used" (Thornbury, 2005, p. 14) The phrase "discourse strategies" is mentioned in several theoretical works, such as by (Burns, Concepts for Teaching Speaking in the English Language Classroom, 2019, p. 2), and that they must be applied "in order to produce spoken language in a fluent, accurate and socially appropriate way". Discourse knowledge means being able to speak in an appropriate manner regardless of how the context unfolds. "Second language acquisition research has often related differences in linguistic outcomes achieved by language learners to differences in learning contexts" (Roquet & Vidal, 2015, p. 1). Varying contexts and genres of speaking situations in the language classroom leads to knowledge to use English orally in various contexts. Discourse means being able to "organize and connect individual utterances, as well as how to map this knowledge on to the turn-taking structures of interactive talk" (Thornbury, 2005, pp. 14-15) Whereas genre refers to the different speech events, discourse is the competence needed in order to handle it.

2.1.5 Register

Register consists of three different contextual factors. These are tenor, field and mode (Thornbury, 2005, p. 19). Tenor speaks to the relationship between speakers. As register talks of how changing circumstances changes the demand for the speaker, we can study how the language changes when one is speaking to a group of friends vs. when you are on the phone with an unknown salesperson. The degree of formality of the situation changes based on who the recipient is, and the speaker's relationship with that person or group of people. The second factor is field, which refers to what the topic of conversation is, and what kind of event the speaking is taking place in. Field also is related to what form the event is taking place in. The what, where, when, as well as the background of the participants all decide how the language is supposed to sound for it to be natural to the conversation and be considered contextually appropriate language use. Speaking in slang whilst holding a lecture is an example of the field of the situation not being in harmony with appropriate language use. The third factor is mode, which refers to how the speaking event is taking place. Language demands are dependent on the choice of channel. A face-to-face should sound different as one conducted over the phone, because the interlocutors of a real-time face-to-face conversation have setting, body language

and non-verbal communication as secondary modes of communication to help get a message across. A phone conversation does not have this, as such, the language needs to accommodate for the lack of contextual knowledge. Similarly, a real time talk as opposed to a pre-recorded speech should sound different if the mode is accounted for. (Thornbury, 2005, p. 19). The segment on register can be summarized with… "A speaker's knowledge…involves knowing what language choices are appropriate, given the register variables of field, tenor and mode" (Thornbury, 2005, p. 19)

2.2. Core speaking skills.

The second component of Burns' model of speaking is core speaking skills. It, according to Burns, "refers to developing the ability to process speech quickly to increase fluency… It also involves being able to negotiate speech,…as well as managing the flow of speech as it unfolds" (Burns, 2019, p. 3). Inside these few sentences there are many requirements of speech that speakers must master in order to obtain these core speaking skills. "…the ability to process speech quickly to increase fluency" does not talk about fluency as a skill, but rather a result of knowing other skills that can be considered sub-categories of fluency in this setting. These are: speech rate, chunking, formulaic language, pausing and discourse markers. "…being able to negotiate speech" means being able to build on previous utterances, monitoring understanding, repairing communication breakdowns and giving feedback. "…managing the flow of speech as it unfolds". In terms of skills required of the speaker, managing the flow of speech involves initiating topics, turn-taking, signalling intentions and opening/closing conversations. (Burns, 2019, p. 3)

2.2.1. Fluency

Moving on from knowledge of language and discourse to the next component listed by Anne Burns as second language speaking competence; core speaking skills. Processing speech quickly leads to fluency, however this involves a variety of cognitive processes that a second language learner must develop**. Speech rate, chunking, pausing, formulaic language and discourse markers** are examples of such skills which put together makes a speaker fluent.

Speech rate refers to the speed with which speech in various contexts are being produced. In order to achieve a speech rate, and thereby fluency, "some degree of automaticity is necessary" (Thornbury, 2005, p. 6). Automaticity allows speaker to focus their attention on the aspect of the speech event that needs it. Having to conceptualize, formulate and articulate

and monitor at the same time is difficult, and automaticity can help to alleviate some of these tasks.

When it comes to "formulation, automaticity is…achieved through the use of prefabricated chunks" (Thornbury, 2005, p. 6). **Chunking** is way of binding together commonly used words cognitively in order for the utterance to come out more fluently. "Speakers achieve fluency through the use of prefabricated chunks" (Thornbury, 2005, p. 23). If every speaker of English had to cognitively process each individual word ahead of speaking, every oral interaction would both be less fluent, slower and more tedious. Chunks can further be defined as "any combination of words which occur together with more than random frequency" (Thornbury, 2005, p. 23) Examples of such chunks can be formulaic language, such as: "in essence, at the end of, below the belt, sad and lonely". (Thornbury, 2005, p. 6) defines fluency in terms of the usage of chunks by saying that "with fewer units to assemble at the moment of articulation, there is proportionally greater gain in fluency". Chunks are necessary in order for speakers to achieve fluency. **Discourse markers** are phrases used in conversation that indicate the intention of the conversation, and the direction it takes. They are chunks, despite commonly being a single word can also be an entire dependant clause and are also processed as one lexical "part" of the sentence being uttered. Words that function as discourse markers are for example: "well, oh, anyway, then and but." They all signal different intentions and are natural elements of a fluent dialogue (Thornbury, 2005, pp. 9,15-16) Examples of formulaic language could be "in spite of", "in addition to", that might be true, but". These are chunks that signal the intention of the speaker.

Speech rate, which refers to the speed a speaker can manage to utter a coherent utterance is dependant on a variety of factors. Lexical access, or retrieval time, is the time it takes a speaker to cognitively access and utilize words stored in their mental lexicon while performing a speaking task. This is a key aspect of cognitive fluency. "Cognitive processing becomes more efficient when learners become more proficient, that is, when cognitive processes become automatic and efficient. Studies have shown how exposure and training shorten reaction times" (Lintunen, Mutta, & Peltonen, 2020, pp. 4-5). In addition, cognitive fluency can be seen in speech by use of pausing and repair as well as articulation rate. Repair fluency is talked about in (Skehan & Foster, 2012, p. 9), where reformulation, repetition and false starts are used as measures. Repair fluency focuses on language mistakes made in oral speech and how they are repaired. False starts are common in oral speech and occur as oral

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speech is produced without a clear mental view of how it is to end. Repetition can both be a useful tool when emphasizing a particular point, but also, when used exceedingly, is "considered a feature of disfluent speech (Lintunen, Mutta, & Peltonen, 2020, p. 6). Reformulation, the last measure, is also commonly found in speech. When speech is produced spontaneously, and especially in L2, thought processes are working out the sentence as it is being uttered, and therefore, reformulation is sometimes needed in order for the sentence to be comprehensible or make sense.

Pausing is another important skill in order to achieve fluency. "Frequent mid-clause pausing indicate disfluency" (Lintunen, Mutta, & Peltonen, 2020, p. 5) Pausing should have appropriate frequency, duration and location. Pausing is a natural way of spoken language, and only seem natural when they occur between clauses. That last sentence only seems fluent while spoken if the pauses were after the words "language" and "natural". Any other pause would decrease fluency and be seen as an unnatural pause. (Thornbury, 2005, p. 7) Pauses in conversation are rarely silent and are most commonly filled with a transitioning-word, such as "uh", "um", "sort of" "like" and so on.

2.2.2. Negotiating speech

Negotiating speech happens in conversation as speakers communicate with each other. Topics are initiated, maintained and concluded as part of negotiating speech. They monitor both their own speech and that of the other interlocutor. Building on previous utterances is an important part of speech negotiation. Giving feedback is an important part of speech negotiating and requires listening competence as well as discourse knowledge. In…understanding, it is not our grammatical proficiency, but our adeptness in negotiating the diversity of grammars in each specific interaction that enables communicative success" (Canagarajah, 2014, p. 769). This, in terms of skills needed for oral proficiency, downplays the role of grammar in interactive communicative events, and instead places negotiation at the centre of importance. In addition, during an interaction communication breakdown may occur because of a lack of language competence or other reasons that will be discussed in section 2.3. Negotiating speech also relates to accommodation, which will be expanded upon further in the section on "English as a lingua franca (Burns, 2019, p. 3)

2.3. Communication strategies

The third component in the model developed by Burns is communication strategies. This component requires that the speaker be able to "developing cognitive strategies to compensate for limitations in language knowledge,…metacognitive strategies…and interaction strategies" (Burns, 2019, p. 3) This section of theory has been divided into the three categories that Burns presents, which are named "compensation strategies", "metacognitive strategies" and "interaction strategies". As with the other components, the description of communication strategies will be presented and put into context in the same way as the other two components of Burns' model. The entire component deals with developing cognitive strategies to compensate for limitations in three separate ways. Developing strategies to compensate for limitations in language knowledge means that the speaker needs to learn to address communicative difficulties through circumlocution, paraphrasing, gestures, word coinage, approximation and avoidance. Mastering metacognitive strategies involve planning in advance what to say and thinking consciously about how you say something. Examples of interaction strategies are, for example: asking for clarification/repetition, reformulating, rephrasing and checking comprehension (Burns, 2019, p. 3)

2.3.1. Compensation strategies

Circumlocution is one of the strategies that can be used when one's language competence is lacking. This involves using known vocabulary to describe a forgotten or unknown word. An example of this would be saying "the thing you use to clean your teeth" if the word "toothbrush" was suddenly forgotten. (Sowell, 2018, p. 45). Paraphrasing means transforming the words of others in manner that makes the meaning clearer (Burns, 2019, p. 3) Word coinage, another compensation strategy, is the only one which results in a possibly can lead to a both understandable and grammatically incorrect word. It involves "creating a non-existent second language word based on a supposed rule" (Mutlu, Andarab, & Karacan, 2019, p. 249). An example would be saying vegetarianist instead of vegetarian. Even though many words do use the "-ist" ending in English, it is incorrect in this situation (Thornbury, 2005, p. 29). However, because the speaker did not know definitively the correct word, he took a chance, and it came out wrong. It can still be communicative even if it is grammatically incorrect, but that depends on the receiver.

Gestures is a quite common compensation strategies, as hand signals and body-language can often help in situation where the speakers' oral competence does not suffice. Asking for directions in a foreign country will often result in hand signals or other gestures. Another

compensation strategy is approximation, which entails using an alternative, related word. An example here would be to use "boat" instead of ship, or to say "roof" instead of "ceiling".

Avoidance is the last strategies that will be presented as one of the compensatory strategies of communication. This strategy comes in two forms, as speakers often avoid talking about topics where the speaker knows they do not have the appropriate vocabulary. Another avoidance can occur when the message being transmitted becomes too complicated. The speaker can then change the utterance to one less complicated or abandon the message altogether (Bøhn & Myklevold, 2018, p. 180)

2.3.2. Metacognitive strategies

Use of metacognitive strategies are vital in language learning, as "students without metacognitive approaches are essentially learners without direction and ability to review their progress, accomplishments and future learning directions" (O'Malley and Chamot (1990: 6) in (Forbes & Fisher, 2015, p. 174). Metacognitive strategies involve preplanning, preassessment and general consciousness of one's own language use involving the various strategies described in 2.3 (Bøhn & Myklevold, 2018, pp. 181,187,189) Examples of metacognitive strategies in use are when planning in advance what to say, thinking consciously about how to say certain things. Metacognition is a "consciousness about your own thought processes" (Imsen, 2014, p. 129)

2.3.3. Interaction strategies

Interaction strategies are those used specifically in conversation and other kinds of interaction with interlocutor(s). These strategies include asking for clarification or repetition, reformulating, rephrasing, and checking comprehension. "The interactional strategies focus on the negotiating of meaning ((Faerch & Kasper 1984; Nakatani 2006) in (Zhu, Liao, & Cheong, 2019, p. 1167).

2.4 Listening

As a part of this thesis, which attempts to capture teachers' understanding of oral competence, there will be put focus on an oral skill which is not mentioned in Burns' model. Listening is not a part of the mode because it is a model of speaking competence. It is a good basis to describe the different aspects of speaking when it comes to oral competence and describes the

varying skills that together form a competent speaker. However, it does not speak of listening, as it is not a speaking skill. "Listening is a receptive skill…, meaning that the listener takes in and tries to comprehend the language. In other words, it concerns the reception of oral input" (Tishakov, 2018, p. 57) Listening can be split into two. Reciprocal listening expects the listener to respond in some fashion. An example of this can be when listeners are taking part in a conversation. One of the interlocutors is talking, and only by listening to what the person is saying can the appropriate response be uttered. Non-reciprocal listening, on the other hand, is where there is no expectation or need for the listener to respond. Examples of this are often things one listens to for pleasure, such as music, a podcast or an audiobook (Tishakov, 2018, p. 57).

As an oral skill, listening can be challenging for new learners of a language, as one is expected to listen on both micro-and macrolevel.

> "At the micro-level, listeners focus on the smaller linguistic units, trying to organize the sounds into meaningful units. They attempt to decode the specific sounds, recognize words, stress and intonation patterns, adjust to the speaker's rate of speech and use knowledge of, for example, word classes, phrases and sentence structures" (Tishakov, 2018, pp. 57-58)

Micro level listening has a greater focus on grammar than listening at a macro-level. "At a macro-level, listeners use schematic knowledge about the situation, the speaker, their previous learning and other available contextual and background information to make sense of the oral text" (Tishakov, 2018, p. 58) In the same manner that grammar is the sub-skill that oral competence can build on, listening also consists on building knowledge of context, genre and strategies in order to enhance one's competence. Based on the aspects of listening above, it is clear that it is vital for oral competence in terms of interaction on every level.

One potential issue with defining listening as an oral skill, and having that oral skill be a part of oral competence enhancement in school, is that listening, unlike the other oral skills, is something fewer teachers have experience in assessing in comparison with the other oral competences. In school, "when organizing listening tasks, the teacher must specify how the students are to listen, for what purpose, and what task will come afterwards. The students will then be able to better focus their attention and mental resources, and work towards accomplishing the task" (Tishakov, 2018, p. 59) The focus of such tasks may be, in the same way that listening is split into smaller chunks (micro-level) and larger chunks (macro-level),

be either looking for words, phrases or trying to understand the gist of the text or the implied meaning conveyed by the context, situation or relationship of the speakers.

Being a good listener might sound vague, but in order to be perceived as one the listener needs to accomplish various tasks throughout the speaking event. "Knowing when to nod or smile, when to give short feedback, when to engage in what the other person is saying, and when to take own initiatives in the conversation. Listening involves an attentive way to meet a conversation partner, and this attention needs to be indicated or showed"((Børresen, Grimnes, & Svenkerud, 2012, p. 78)

2.5 Recent changes in English language teaching

In a globally connected world, English is most often used as a lingua franca or a common language used between speakers who do not share the same language and for whom English is not their mother tongue. (Harmer, 2007, p. 20). In English language teaching, English has often been considered a foreign language and competence or skill

> "has traditionally been seen as a matter of becoming linguistically competent in it, of getting to know the formal properties of the language-its phonology, grammar and vocabulary as recorded in standard works of reference" (Seidlhofer & Widdowson, 2018, p. 18)

This structural approach (SA) of foreign language teaching involves focusing the attention of teaching to learning and internalizing the individual elements of language, such as phonology, grammar and lexis. The reasoning for this teaching was that the foreignness of these features was to be overcame by internalizing distinctive linguistic features. The method for this approach was to grade them "according to relative difficulty" (Seidlhofer & Widdowson, 2018, p. 19). Placing features in order of difficulty made them easier to learn, but it also involved "abstracting them from their contexts in which they would naturally occur" (Seidlhofer & Widdowson, 2018, p. 19). In emphasizing the communicative nature of language today linguistic features of language are positioned differently. The contrast to foreign language traditions of teaching is communicative language teaching that is being done today. Proponents of communicative language teaching point out that by approaching the

language with SA, "learners were subjected to…unreal language-language which nobody ever actually used in this way, certainly not NS" (native speakers) (Seidlhofer & Widdowson, 2018, p. 19) A study conducted by Ulrikke Rindal and Caroline Piercy into pronunciation of English revealed interesting findings in regards to accent. It revealed that a majority of learners aim towards a native-like accent, but also that a "large minority report a wish to avoid native accents and use a neutral variety of English" (Rindal & Piercy, 2013, p. 211). This "variability…of English reflects the transitional status of English as a global language (Rindal & Piercy, 2013, p. 211) Another article by Ulrikke Rindal dives into the developing status of English in Norwegian school. It suggests that English, as a rapidly developing global language, "is increasingly characterised by those who use it as a second or later language, including Norwegians who negotiate the meanings of English in the ELT (English language teaching) classroom" (Rindal, 2014, p. 1) The article also suggests a development where social constructivist perspective and a larger focus on communicative competence will influence the development for Norwegian ELT (Rindal, 2014, p. 1)

2.6 Previous research on oral competence in Norway

In order to understand this project's implication in regard to teachers' understanding of oral competence in Norway, it is important to consider these in light of previous research on this topic in Norway.

A study of the attitudes of Norwegian teachers of English towards assessment of nativeness and intelligibility "showed that the teachers strongly agreed on the importance of intelligibility, whereas they strongly disagreed on the salience of nativeness" (Hansen & Bøhn, 2017, p. 54) When considering strategic competence and students' use of strategies in developing oral competence in English the results of a study showed that:

> "the students who received explicit instruction employed communication strategies more frequently than the students who received no instruction. They also used a higher number of good-quality strategies. In addition, they appeared to be more conscious of the strategies that they utilised (Bøhn & Myklevold, 2018, p. 179).

From these findings, it is possible to deduce that intelligibility amongst teachers in Norway is of a higher priority than sounding native. The ability to communicate understandably is more important than accent, which indicates a shifting attitude to accent where that is less relevant or irrelevant in assessment. It is also clear from Myklevold that strategy use is more frequent

when the pupils are taught explicitly how it can improve communication and their metacognitive view of the language.

Another study found that Norwegian learners associate the use of British English with prestigiousness, whereas the American English is more informal. This, in turn, impacted the choice of pronunciation. It was also shown that the linguistic elements of the language were adapted to better fit the local interaction situation that the students may encounter (Rindal, 2010, p. 240). When communicative intent is the goal of speaking to an interlocutor, the lingua franca and neutral accent is adopted as "the linguistic properties and norms are co-constructed and established…by speakers of different first languages" (Rindal & Piercy, 2013, p. 212)

A study conducted by Lynell Chvala into the oral exam in Norway revealed that there was "a general overrepresentation of informative oral presentations in the oral exam tasks for 10th grade and a general exclusion of explicit information in relation to spoken interaction and the participants or interlocutors in this interaction" (Chvala, 2012, p. 242). This supports the development in Norway where content-knowledge takes a prominent place in the understanding of oral competence, whereas information pertaining to purpose, interlocutor and situational context is not clear.

3.0 Norwegian context and curriculum

This thesis will consist of the theoretical bases of the literary review as well as an overview of the Norwegian context that will include English education policy in Norway. The previous section focused on theoretical basis by current relevant theorists on the topic of oral competence. This next section will focus on the Norwegian school context, and main ideas from the current curriculum that may influence how oral competence teaching is understood by teachers and taught in schools in Norway today.

The current curriculum in Norway is called The Knowledge Promotion 2020, though it is commonly referred to as LK20. It encompasses two main parts: The first defines general education aims, where the aim of the subject, its central values and core elements, inter-

disciplinary topics and basic skills are defined. In the second part, the different language competences and specific language aims in the subject are discussed. The elements relevant for oral competence will be presented in 3.1. The second part divides the 10 years of primary school into four key stages, and after each key stage there are competence aims which entails what competences are expected of the students by the end of the period. The competence aims for English are listed as after second, fourth, seventh and tenth grade. After second grade includes teaching in first and second grade. After fourth grade includes third and fourth year. After seventh grade encompasses the entire upper primary section, which is fifth-, sixth- and seventh grade. "After tenth grade"-competence aims encompasses the entire lower secondary school in Norway, which is eight-, ninth- and tenth grade. Because this thesis has lower secondary school eight to tenth grade as its focus, the only competence aims that will be mentioned here are the ones named "Competence aims after Year 10". These will be presented further in 3.2. 3.1 is a summary of the main ideas presented in each segment that are of relevance to the development of English oral competence. each segment's comments related to oral competence, it will be summarized and shortened in order for these next paragraphs to not sim

3.1. Aims for general education

Not all of the curriculum talks about oral competence, as there also are other topics within the realm of the English language. This section of the thesis will focus on the elements that can be linked to oral competence, whereby these will be examined and explained in order to describe their relevance in relation to teachers in lower secondary school in Norway. We begin by talking about the subject of English, its relevance and its central values. We will then move on to "Core elements", "Interdisciplinary topics" and "Basic skills", in that order.

3.1.1 Relevance and central values

LK20 describes the English subject's relevance and central values. This section of the curriculum, which is also the introduction to the English subject curriculum describes the reasons why the English subject is important. The English subject is defined as important to "cultural understanding, communication, all-round education and identity development" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020). It goes on further on communication by stating that it is to create a foundation for communicating locally as well as globally and this is the summary of what this section of the curriculum says on communication, which is one of the key points mentioned. "The English language teaching in Norway has as its goal that students gain

enough competence to communicate with people of various backgrounds locally, globally, academically and in everyday life".

3.1.2 Core elements

The section Core elements is divided into three sub-sections. These are the most important aspect of the English language subject in English, and all of them are vital for understanding how oral competence is supposed to be developed under the current curriculum. These sections will be discussed in light of oral language.

Communication: The section "Communication" defines it as a vital part of the English subject, and its implication in oral competence is central. Whereas previous curricula divided communication into its different modes of "written", "oral", this new curriculum does not separate them, and instead are all subordinate to the general term "communication". "Using the language in formal and informal settings" showcases how the expectations of a speech event also needs to be reflected in the language used by the speaker. It also can refer to prepared speech, such as an oral presentation. Formal settings demands that the speaker can communicate in a manner appropriate. Further, this section also includes how a speaker can communicate appropriately. A speaker is to "employ suitable strategies…orally". This is not very defined, though it is noted that teacher pupils' strategies for speaking in a variety of settings links to communication.

Communication can also occur across a variety of platforms, and "using different types of media and sources". Examples of such media can be digital, such as podcasts, or it can be visual media. Using different media to express meaning can also incorporate body language, and the effect of appropriate body-language and non-verbal communication to further the meaning of a message is not to be underestimated. The last sentence on communication also defines specific situations that the teacher shall give the pupils the opportunity to express themselves through, which are "authentic and practical" Varying the types of oral activity in the classroom would be suitable in order to prepare pupils for varying situations. Authentic situations are very broad and includes every single interaction where use of oral English is the way to communicate. This includes speaking to a friend, to giving a statement to the police, calling for help or telling a funny story. The list is nearly endless, and practical situations can be situations one is likely to occur. For example. A practical situation where oral English is used can be asking for directions, or checking into a hotel, seeing as these situations both

demand use of oral English, and are likely scenarios that, by practicing in school, the pupils are prepared for.

Language learning: Learning English as a language system ties back to communication and interaction and giving the pupils choices and possibilities. This section also defines technical terms of language useful for achieving said goal. These are having awareness about how English is structured and learning how phonemes, vocabulary, word structure, syntax and text composition can help vary pupils' communication. Vocabulary can both refer to having an expanding vocabulary in order to communicate well in more and more settings but can also relate to the increasing need to use technical terms and appropriate vocabulary in academic life. Word structure and syntax means having the knowledge to utter words that are grammatically correct in terms of conjugation, but that also are in an order that is correct. Phonemes, and the phonetic alphabet is a more accurate way of looking at pronunciation and learning how words are uttered correctly are important steps in furthering oral competence. Text compositions are also important within language learning, as the order of segments in any text are often dictated by rules. These are rules that are vital to know in order for the pupils' choices and possibilities not to be limited by their lack of knowledge on the rules of the language. This also includes the smaller elements that make up an entire text.

Working with texts in English: Textual competence is a central area in the subject, where exposure and work with texts are meant to develop pupils' linguistic and cultural competence, as well as expose them to a diversity of cultural ways of living and thinking. As a whole, work with texts should enable pupils to view their own and other's identity in multilingual and multicultural contexts and thus develop their intercultural competence (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020)

3.1.3 Interdisciplinary topics

Interdisciplinary topics, of which there are two, are a part of every subject in school. The two topics are "Health and life skills" and "Democracy and citizenship". This is how each of these describe oral competence:

Health and life skills: Oral skills relates to a person's ability to express their feelings, thoughts, experiences and opinions. Life skills connects to oral competence because of the word "express". Expressing oneselves orally and the ability to self-reflect are important

aspects of having oral competence. Communication patterns and being able to connect to their own and other people's feelings are important for conversing.

Democracy and citizenship: Communicating in English exposes students to people of different societal, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Different perspectives with the goal of showing students that their worldview is culture dependant. In terms of oral competence, communicating with others of various backgrounds, and experiencing different societies and cultures. Interpreting the world in new ways promotes curiosity, engagement and helps to prevent prejudices. Recipient awareness and intercultural competence are at the core of democracy and citizenship as an interdisciplinary topic.

3.1.4 Basic skills

Basic skills is the last section that will be presented here. This section is divided into "oral skills", "Writing", "Reading" and "Digital skills". Of these, only the first one, oral skills, is relevant when discussing the topic of this thesis. The basic skill of "Oral skills" will not be summarized, as its content and phrasing is vital to understand how the subject of English in school, and thereby teachers, understand oral competence. Instead, it will be discussed further as the quite short section details quite precisely the oral competence expected from students.

Oral skills as a basic skill is defined as:

> "Oral skills in English refers to creating meaning through listening, talking and engaging in conversation. This means presenting information, adapting the language to the purpose, the receiver and the situation and choosing suitable strategies. Developing oral skills in English means using the spoken language gradually more accurately and with more nuances in order to communicate on different topics in formal and informal situations with a variety of receivers with varying linguistic backgrounds." (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020).

The key point to lift from this section on oral skills as a basic skill of English, is that every aspect of the skills needed to be perceived as a competent oral speaker revolves around using the language in a manner that fits the communicative purpose, or in general for the purpose of communicating with others. "Listening, talking and engaging in conversation" is in the first

sentence. Listening is, as said in the section 2.4, a receptive oral skill, and one in which oral competence is measured in terms of the ability to receive information. Talking is a general term, and the important section to look at when trying to unpack what "talking" can mean, is that the pupil is to "create meaning through talking". Meaning is created when speaking with others, and thus that indicates the communicate nature of talking. Engaging in conversation, the last part of that sentence is also a communicate event. The next sentence, which begins with "This means presenting information…" is a further explanation of the different competences that a speaker must master in order to be able to create meaning. Presenting is the first one and would indicate a speech event closely resembling a speech, monologue, or an oral presentation of some kind. Adapting the language to the purpose, receiver and situation is a phrasing commonly used in this curriculum, and which can be found repeated when talking of the competence aims. Recipient awareness is an important aspect of oral competence, as evidenced by this sentence. Altering the oral speech in order for it to be perceived fitting and appropriate also involves "choosing suitable strategies" These can be strategies of interaction, metacognition or compensation strategies. Oral skills as a basic skill goes on to say that using the language accurately and with more nuances is oral competence. Nuances refers to being able to communicate a message in several different ways, and not always using the same vocabulary or phrasing. Accuracy can be related to grammar, as grammar mistakes and incorrect syntax or formulation would lead to a lack of understanding. It is also said that the pupils need to speak accurately and nuanced around different topics in both formal and informal settings with a variety of receivers with varying linguistic backgrounds. Whether a setting is formal or informal should affect the language being used. Recipient awareness is important when speaking with various receivers, both few and many. Intercultural competence can help navigate the potential pitfalls of speaking with people of different linguistic backgrounds.

3.2 English language skills and English competence

The competence aims are meant to cover a very wide area of the English language subject with few words. Even fewer after 2020, seeing as thirty were cut down to nineteen aims. Not all will be mentioned here, and as not every aim was deemed relevant for the furthering of oral competence. These aims, though no longer categorized into "Language learning", "oral communication", "written communication" and "Culture, Society and literature", are still

meant to cover a variety of topics, and not all are relevant for this thesis. They will be listed below, and will also be numbered, which is purely to distinguish them more easily from each other without the need to restate the aim.

The fact that English teachers in Norway are, quite uniquely, responsible for the oral examination in English, one would expect that they would have a pretty solid grasp on what oral competence is. But the new curriculum does not sort that out for them anymore. This creates a basic tension for teachers. Before there used to be a separate segment of the competence aims, and that was what was going to be assessed on the oral exam. That is, however, no longer the case. The new holistic competence aims are no longer listed by type of English or any other method, and it is up to the teacher to sort out which ones are relevant when assessing oral competence. There are, however, some general guidelines for conducting the oral examination…(does this need to be explained at all, or should I discuss it further

Competence aims relevant for oral competence. (After Year 10)

The pupil is expected to be able to:

1. use a variety of strategies for language learning, text creation and communication
2. use different digital resources and other aids in language learning, text creation and interaction
3. use key patterns of pronunciation in communication
4. listen to and understand words and expressions in variants of English
5. express oneself with fluency and coherence with a varied vocabulary and idiomatic expressions adapted to the purpose, recipient and situation
6. ask questions and follow up input when talking about various topics adapted to different purposes, recipients and situations
7. use knowledge of word classes and syntax in working on one's own oral and written texts
8. revise one's own texts based on feedback and knowledge of the language
9. explore and reflect on the situation of indigenous peoples in the English-speaking world and in Norway
10. explore and describe ways of living, ways of thinking, communication patterns and diversity in the English-speaking world

11. explore and present the content of cultural forms of expression from various media in the English-speaking world that are related to one's own interests (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020)

These competence aims are, as can be viewed, quite broad and non-specific. In this next segment, the competence aims will be dissected and explained. These competence aims are only ten of the nineteen listed, though these were the ones who applied to oral competence. They are also altered in the sense that Utdanningsdirektoratet does not number them. This was done for reasons of convenience.

3.2.1. Strategies

The first competence aim can be interpreted in a few different ways. It talks of strategies both for language learning, text creation and communication. These are three different kinds of strategies. Text creation strategy refers to a strategy for creating a type of oral communication which is prepared. Communication strategy is also a wide term, and encompasses both interaction-, metacognitive-, and compensatory strategies. Language learning strategies is a strategy for raising one's competence in language learning.

3.2.2 Digital

The next competence aims concerns digital resources. Being taught in schools in 2022 means that teachers need to be able to utilize and showcase to students how uses of different digital tools can make tasks easier and thereby also further learning. Digital resources in terms of language learning in English is very helpful. Whereas the older generations were limited to tasks and activities included in textbooks, today's pupils use computers, mobile phones and iPads actively in their learning, as is the goal of this competence aim. The internet allows for countless options of language learning and allows the class to perform activities not limited by what the teacher can think up. Oral texts can be made better by the use of digital resources, such as recording devices. By listening to one's own language, with the assumption that the pupils have the competence to hear if something is mispronounced, they can fix their own language mistakes when speaking, and also can help in making the students more comfortable when it comes to speaking in front of others.

3.2.3 Pronunciation

Pronunciation is key to be able to communicate, and this competence aim does dictate that pronunciation is made up of several skills, all of which, speakers must master in order for their communication competence to be enhanced throughout their years of learning. The "key patterns" of pronunciation is being aware of the different smaller elements, such as vocabulary and grammar, as well as intonation.

3.2.4 Variants of English

This competence aim, which is to "listen to and understand words and expressions in variants of English". An interesting aspect of this competence aim is that, though it clearly relates to intercultural competence, it does not dictate that the speaker of English must necessarily partake in such conversations, and only says that the pupil must listen to and understand, indicating that this competence aim relates to the receptive skills of English. Another aspect of this competence aims is that "variants" is used of different kinds of English. This indicates that not only geographical, but also demographic and societal variants are also expected that the pupils understand. Geographical variants of English, such as Nigerian, British, American and Australian are quite common to find as topics in English textbooks. At the same time, it is harder to find examples of sociolects being a part of teaching in schools. An example of such sociolect words can be the word "lit" being used a description of something others might describe as "cool." As the word becomes more commonly adapted by more people, it is also natural that native speakers understand it. However, because non-native speakers are expected to also, as described by this competence aim, understand what it means, it needs to be an included part of teaching oral English.

3.2.5 Fluency and coherence

The competence aim relating to fluency, coherence, vocabulary and idiomatic expressions. These needs to be used correctly, and be adapted to the different purposes, recipient and situation. This competence is particularly important in order to understand why oral competence is important for learners of English. Fluency is not one correct answer, but several. Oral competence is to be able to adapt one's language in order for it to be appropriate in the situation. Being able to express yourself differently when speaking in a formal setting or when speaking to a stranger or a friend requires an understanding of the different elements of the language.

3.2.6 Ask questions

The next competence aim also relates to differing purposes, recipients and situations, but this competence aim relates to asking questions and following up input, important aspects of maintaining a conversation. Listening will also be a part of the competence related to this particular competence aim. This aim also includes that that the speaker is to be able to ask these questions while talking about different topics, without disclosing what these topics are. It is up to the teacher what these topics can be, but it is natural to deduce that topics relating to either everyday life, current events, news, or topics related to school-subjects. Cross-curricular activities could also be a part of this competence aim.

3.2.7 Word classes and syntax

Being a competent user of oral texts means being able to use word classes and syntax correctly. This competence aim says that the pupil is to "use knowledge" of these aspects of grammar in order to improve their own work. This competence does dictate that grammar teaching is something that must be conducted in the classroom. How else are the pupils expected to be able to use their knowledge?

3.2.8 Revising

Revise one's own text based on feedback and knowledge of the language is the eighth competence aim and is related to metacognition. Knowledge of the language is a broad term, and encompasses the previous grammatical and strategic rules mentioned, such as word class, syntax, pronunciation as well as strategies. Revision, and being able to correct one's own work in this competence aim also lays responsibility on the teacher, as the feedback the pupil is to receive must be phrased and given in a way that actually helps the student and motivates for further learning.

3.2.9 Indigenous people

Exploring and reflecting are important aspects of being an orally competent speaker in a variety of settings. The situation of indigenous people both around the world and in Norway are vital to understand the cultural history of the region, and thereby its people. This competence aim relates to intercultural competence, and also to the ability to communicate with a variety of interlocutors locally and globally. English is a global language which can be used to communicate with people of different cultures, and this competence aim reflects that.

3.2.10 English-speaking world

The English-speaking world, though vast, is something that is expected that the pupils learn about. They are to learn about ways of living, ways of thinking, communication patterns and diversity in a way that they can explore and describe such aspects of the places they visit or simply learn about. This competence aim can be related to intercultural competence, and the ability to communicate across boarders with both native and non-native speakers. An interesting aspect of this very competence aim is that it does not specify whether the English-speaking countries had to speak English as a first language. I. E the curriculum details that speakers of English also must be able to accommodate speakers whose competence are equal or less than themselves. As an example of a communication pattern foreign to Norwegian learners of English, this competence would in sense also accommodate that pupils are supposed to learn that when in Bulgaria, nodding means "no", and shaking your head means "yes". As the only country on earth who does this, it is certainly a trait of the communication pattern of an English speaking-country.

3.2.11 One's own interest

The last competence, whose relevance is tied to oral competence, is to explore and present content of cultural forms of expression from various media in the English-speaking world that are related to one's own interest. This competence relates to intercultural competence. Cultural forms of expressions are numerous, and if one were to "explore and present" Norwegian forms of expression, such as fairy tales, bunad, and pinnekjøtt would be good examples of unique Norwegian cultural forms of expression.

3.3 Assessment and oral exams

Teachers' understanding of oral competence is important for pupils' development. They design the lessons conducted throughout the school year, and when the oral exam in tenth grade is to be conducted, the English teacher is heavily involved. In contrast with written exams, the oral exam is developed by the teachers at a local level (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020). The oral exam has twenty-four hours of preparation time, in which the pupil will have time to prepare for the challenges and tasks associated with the oral exam. Oral exams conducted within the previous curriculum had a required oral presentation as a part of the exam, but this has been removed for LK20. The exam task is created by teachers locally sending in suggestions, and the task needs to adapted to time constraints, form of the exam

and the competence aims in the curriculum. It also needs to be open in a way that allows the pupils to make choices based on content and form.

Listening comprehension in an exam is assessed based either on interaction or explicit listening-tasks. "The competence aims are the foundation of the assessment for each pupil's competence and is the point of departure for developing criteria for the assessment for the exam" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020). As one can see in the description of the oral exam, it leaves something to be desired if specific content or form is what the teachers seek. They are open and allows for a variety of tasks. This also means that the teachers creating the exam need to take the teaching into account and create tasks that show the pupil's competence in oral English.

4.0 Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The thesis question "How is English oral competence understood by teachers in lower secondary school in Norway" gives an idea of what direction the project should take in terms of developing a research method that can answer the questions in the most appropriate way. Gathering insight of the thoughts and ideas of teachers working in lower secondary school means that qualitative research would be appropriate. (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2019, p. 42) Conducting interviews is the most common type of research tool when conducting qualitative research and is also the one that will best answer the research questions for this thesis. "The application of the qualitative research interview is to understand sides of the interviewee's daily life from his or her perspective" (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2019, p. 42). There are several interview types that would give good answers to the topic. Semi- structured interviews were favoured based on several factors. One of them is that the semi-structured interview closely assimilates the main aspects of a qualitative research interview, which will be further explained below (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2019, pp. 44-50). Within qualitative research, phenomenological approach is common, as its focus is on capturing the informants' own description of the world and their perspectives (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2019, pp. 33,45).

(Kvale, 1997) claims that one of the reasons for conducting in-depth interviews is to gauge and gain insight into the thought process and also to see how they see the world from their

perspective. Semi-structured interview was chosen, as it was believed that by allowing the interview to run its course without too strict questions to follow up, the teachers' perspectives would better come to light. A free-flowing conversation could lead them to speaking freely about the subject, which could ultimately decide the direction of focus for this project. Another reason it needed to be semi-structured is that it is helpful to create a common structure or common underlying meaning relating to the phenomena being studied (Postholm, 2005, p. 79).

4.2 Descriptors of a phenomenological semi-structured interview

In their book from 2019, (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2019, pp. 46-50) name 12 key words/descriptors of a phenomenological semi-structured interview: *Life-world, intention, qualitative, descriptive, specificity, conscious naivety, focused, ambiguousness, ability to change, sensitivity, interpersonal situation awareness, positive experience.* These will be explained further with examples of how this relates to the interviews conducted in this thesis. *Life-world*, or the more descriptive German word for it, "lebenswelt", is the main focus of any qualitative phenomenological semi-structured interview. The informant, in this case teachers, have insight into the topic which the interviewer has to try and capture through the use of different methods, such as creating a comfortable environment and having written an interview guide that can be used to capture the thoughts of the interviewee. This first descriptor also describes how the aim of the interview is to capture uncorrupted opinions. This can be seen in the interview guide connected to this project, as the questions are more open early on in the interview. As the interview was being conducted, failure to bring up important topics uninfluenced was rectified with the insertion of more specific question towards the end of the interview. This was to ensure the inclusion of such topics, but also allowed for those teachers who naturally brought it into the conversation to do so without the interviewer putting the words in their mouth.

A qualitative interview also has demands for the interviewer. They need to be well-versed in the topic of the interview, as well as being aware of the effect of one's own behaviour during the interview, and how this can affect the interviewee. Questions commonly asked during such an interview are fact-based or *intention* based. An example of such fact-based question in this project is the inclusion of such question as "How long have you been an English-teacher in lower secondary school?". When going in-depth on the topic of the interview, and

the goal being to understand how the informant thinks about aspects of oral competence, it is more relevant to ask them intention-questions, such as "Do you agree with the curriculum and its definition of what oral competence entails, and why?" A skilled interviewer will, when asking questions such as these, be able to interpret how voice usage, facial expressions and body language can affect the message (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2019, p. 47)

The semi-structured interview is also *qualitative* and *descriptive* in nature. "The goal is not quantification. The interview seeks nuanced descriptions of the interviewee's life world through word and not numbers" (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2019, p. 47). The interview needs to be descriptive, which means that having accurate and nuanced descriptions of the interviewee's personal feelings, understanding and actions is important. The goal of the interview is to have a better understanding of the thought process and the experience the interviewee has on the topic.

The questions asked in an interview need to also be *specific*, both in order to minimize the possibility for confusion, but also for the data to be more accurate. An example of this in this thesis are the questions asked to the informants on the topic of grades. By being specific and asking about specific aspects of how giving out grades in English after the grade for oral English was removed, the insight gained was invaluable to understand the teachers. If the question was posed "How do you give out grades in line with LK20?", there is a danger that the informant would not catch the connection with how the grade for oral English was removed. Asking specific question such as this, while still remaining neutral and non-leading is a constant challenge in such an interview.

Another key aspect of a semi-structured interview is that the interviewer must approach the interview-situation with a conscious naivety. Having the questions strictly worded, the categories made ahead of time and the tool of analysis decided before the interview would yield results that are more easily comparable, but what you lose is that certain interesting phenomena would possibly go unnoticed and unexplored (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2019, p. 48). By having an open mind both in terms of questions asked and answers given, the goal of a qualitative interview is more easily achieved. These are to capture how teachers understand

concepts and ideas uncorrupted. The semi-structured nature of this particular project both allows for diverges in the interview as well as having established topics and questions to guide the interview forward and stick to the main topics. By not corrupting the answers with one's own assumption, the findings will be freer of assumption, and therefore be less affected by the interviewer. The next key point in this model, is that such an interview has to be focused. The topics covered must be approached with open questions, and they need to be as little leading as possible. Neutrality of the interviewer is impossible, as the situation of an interview is context-based, and the opinions expressed in them are as well. On this topic there were some elements of the interview-guide that were problematic. The first question on oral competence asked them to describe how they understand the term oral competence "in terms of speaking, listening and understanding". In addition, some questions can be seen as leading. They are written in such a way that the answer given by the teacher is a confirmation of the researcher's own assumption. An example of this is the question on the changes to curricula, where intonation and "the fact that students need to have a distinct British or American accent may have less focus". The part that makes this, at the time unknowingly, leading, is the addition of "Do you think this can help the students feel more comfortable in the classroom?" The question clearly leads the teacher down the path of the change in curriculum being of a positive nature. The question should rather have been worded "How has the omission of dialect- and intonation focus in the new curriculum affected pupils?

Ambiguity is a common finding in interviews. Answers given are sometimes unclear, sometimes conflicting and can also be ambiguous. The role of the interviewer is not to clear up such conflicting statements, but to study why such ambiguity is present, of reasons there can be many (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2019, p. 48). As an interviewer, it is also important to be aware of that as the interviewee orally states their opinion and reflects upon the topic of the interview, their opinion might *change*, as they reflect and discover connections and go through a learning process in the same way as the interviewer (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2019, p. 49). An example of this can be found, as will be further explained in the Results-section, the contradictions in the way Teacher A spoke about the use of technical terms. In one of the first questions of the interview, he expressed the importance of the students' ability to use technical terms. However, when asked about why he preferred not to use presentations as oral activities, he cited the pupils' use of language they clearly do not know and that he deduced to be too complicated for their own level, making the language seem "not their own" By not

confronting the informant of such ambiguities, and rather trying to ask question that invites them to dive deeper into their thinking, the reasons for such contradictions can be both uncovered and explored. It is though, sometimes also a good idea, if one can think of it in the situation, to ask for clarifications to uncover whether the ambiguity is a result of the informant's own communication difficulties or whether a cognitive inner conflict is occurring.

Knowledge in interviews is created in the social interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee, often referred to as an informant. This next description of a semi-structured interview is somewhat in contrast to a descriptor previously mentioned. The *conscious naivety* contrasts with the *sensitivity* and demand for previous knowledge on the topic of conversation. The same question will not yield the same result each time, and if the question was asked by someone with different grade of sensitivity and knowledge on the topic, the answers may also vary. They must be aware of the way questions are perceived, but not act on it in a way that the opinion of the interviewee is affected. This tension creates a "demand for a qualified naivety from the perspective of the interviewer" (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2019, p. 49)

The next to last description defines the phenomenological semi-structured life world interview as an *interpersonal situation*. The interviewer needs to be aware of personal limits of the interviewee, and the trepidation provocation that can arise from a situation, with the result being a deployment of defense mechanism where the interplay between the two participants in the conversation breaks down. This is a common result of ethical transgression being overstepped. The knowledge of the semi-structured interview cannot be produced without well-functioning interpersonal dynamics (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2019, p. 49). The last description defined is that the interview should be a *positive experience* and environment where the informant can talk about a topic as the expert they are, and where new insight possibly has come to light. A police interrogation is for this very reason, not defined as a phenomenological semi-structured life-world interview. As a researcher in the situation trying to focus on both the content of what is said, as well as thinking about the possible follow-up questions relevant to the topic being talked about, it can be challenging to spot whether the interviewee is comfortable and enjoys talking about their personal opinions and professional practices (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2019, pp. 49-50). There is sometimes a tension in the interview where, even though it is a wish that the interviewee is comfortable and enjoys the

experience of being interviewed, there is also sometimes the need to ask question which can be perceived as hard-hitting. Two of the last questions asked can be seen as somewhat hard-hitting. Ahead of the interview, it was theorized that these questions could potentially create some discomfort for the interviewee. It was therefore decided that they would be placed quite late in the interview in order for the positive experience to be upheld right up until these questions were asked. The first question was linked to which components of oral competence they believed to be of the utmost importance for the pupils attending lower secondary school. After this question was answered, the follow up would be: "Is this reflected in your own teaching. By asking this question, it could be studied how the teachers' understanding of the term correlated to their reporting of their own practice. Any contradictions here would be interesting to study. The reason this question hits hard, is that the question directly enquires about their professional integrity.

4.3 Interview as method

There are several kinds of interview that could be used to answer the thesis question asked in this project. As this project has teacher experience and understanding at its core, interview would be the most appropriate. In projects "where you want to explore nuances in experiences, in-depth interviews are appropriate" (Tjora, 2017, p. 114). As was written in a previous paragraph, semi structured interviews were chosen. For anyone with similar thesis questions, there were certainly other methods that were both available, and that also could answer the questions asked. Focus group interview is another type of semi-structured interviews, but one where the role of the interviewer is more moderator, and the conversation is very free-flowing and ideas about the topic would possibly arise to the surface quicker. There are some practical, but also theory as to why that was not chosen for this project. (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2019, pp. 179-180) says about the focus group interview that it "reduces the moderator's control over the interview…and it…can bring about interview transcriptions that are of a chaotic character". Focus group interview rose in popularity within market research and as a tool in marketing new products and services. One practical reason why it was not chosen for this project is the sheer logistical nightmare of having four to six teachers in the same room at the same time. Though there are many practical reasons why focus-group is not idea, for this thesis, there is also a reason based on the data that is to be produced. The interaction of four to six teachers leaves much less room for in-depth

exploration of the thinking of individual teachers. This thesis asks: How is English oral competence understood by teachers in lower secondary school". A focus group can capture the individual understanding of each participant, but much of the understanding in a focus group arises from the interaction between the participants and the dialogue they participate in. For this thesis, none of those kinds of results would be relevant in order to answer the main thesis question of this project. Having teachers from a variety of schools conduct an individual in-depth interview was deemed fitter for the main topic an objective of the thesis.

4.4 Pilot Interview

The week before the NSD (Norsk senter for forskningsdata) application was submitted, on Friday the 22nd of October, a pilot interview was conducted with a willing English teacher who was currently undertaking classes at OsloMet. The main reason for conducting the pilot interview at this particular time, was to allow time to change the interview guide ahead of the upcoming NSD application. The pilot interview had as its goal to give an indication of which questions worked well, which questions were worded in a way that caused confusion, which questions were unnecessary and which ones were not relevant for the main thesis. The questions asked in the pilot interview were on the topic of oral competence and teacher practice. It is hard to tell ahead of the actual interview situation which questions give interesting answers, and which are repetitive, and thus can be removed or reworked for the final version of the interview guide. "Piloting the interview…will certainly help clarify the interview" (Mann, 2016, p. 119).

There was also another important aspect of the pilot interview that was not present in the interview situation, but which also was important to think about throughout the interview process. The plan of interviewing teachers was always meant to be the main part of this entire project. However, there was also at one point both a plan to include either interviews with pupils or classroom observation, on which there had to be made a decision. The wish to interview pupils for their different ideas, perspectives and thoughts was removed from the project because diving deeper into the teachers' thoughts, understanding and experience with oral competence and reported practice would better answer my core question on the topics. The decision was made on the basis of the pilot interview, as it was realized that by simply

interviewing teachers the topic of the project would be more focused and thus could be studied more in-depth. Another beneficial part of removing interviews with pupils were the ethical considerations associated with interviewing children under the age of eighteen. After the pilot interview was completed, there was one week until the NSD application was submitted, and thus the time was spent using what was learned thoughout the writing process in addition to the pilot interview to complete an interview guide that could in the best way answer my thesis question. Another aspect why the pilot-interview was conducted was to check how long the interview would last. It is also a fact that an unexperienced interviewer can affect the situation. May-Britt Postholm (Postholm, 2005, p. 82) says that before interviews are to be carried out, the interviewer should practice conducting interviews, and further suggests roleplay as method for practicing conducting interview, which can be compared to the fictional setting of the pilot-interview. Piloting is an important phase of developing your interview approach where you can both develop your ability to maintain listening focus" (Mann, 2016, p. 118)The goal of the pilot was not to understand the particular teacher's understanding of oral competence. It was to understand how the interview situation affected the answers given and how the questions functioned to give the types of answers that would help answer the main thesis question of this project.

4.5 Interview guide and technique

The application to conduct interviews in conjunction with this project was submitted to the "Norsk senter for forskningsdata (NSD)" on Friday the 29th of October. At this stage, the main part and the different topics and questions that were to be asked were included in the interview guide. The upside of choosing to conduct a semi-structured interview, is that the questions are only a guide, and not a rulebook for which questions are appropriate to ask in the actual interview situation. It can often arise answers with particular interest for follow-up questions that can have significance to the topic. The interview guide is important for many different reasons. It provides a framework for the interview, and also, with it being a semi-structured, allows for digressions and side-tracking on topics that seem interesting in the situation. I made the decision to have an interview guide with questions relevant to a variety of aspects of both oral competence, professional practice and teacher education. These questions would help shape the thesis, so I thought it best to include one question too many instead of too few.

Seeing as an interview is a somewhat unfamiliar situation and seeing that the interviewee is not already a familiar acquaintance, the first few questions had as their purpose to familiarise and de-stress the situation. These were questions about the teacher, their experience, background and about the school they worked at. Starting an interview with someone unknown can be made better by first having simple non-reflective questions which are needed for the project anyway. Self-critical and deep-thinking questions come later. Such things as stating your level of experience are quite harmless and eases the interviewee into the interview situation. These warm-up questions served to differentiate and gather important information about each teacher. (Tjora, 2017, pp. 145-146)

The original plan for the interview guide was that it was to be given to each teacher participating ahead of time, in order for their thinking to start. Another vital aspect of an interview is the first impression and the small talk ahead of recording. Getting the teacher comfortable in the situation can affect how they respond to the questions. During a seminar with fellow PSTs, it was brought up by the other advisors and PST's that observation would be a more useful addition the project than student interviews. Ultimately the decision was made to go ahead with neither observation nor student interviews. Though the interview guide had to be made broad enough in such a way that it could accommodate for both, even though it was not finally decided if those elements were to be included. Talking about the interview guide, it is important to mention that though I had the same document for the interviews, the interviews were not identical in the way questions were phrased, the order in which questions were asked and also any follow-up questions cannot be planned ahead. Some of the questions in the pilot-interview produced answers that were incomplete, so follow-up questions were a natural progression of the conversation. During the interview process, in a seminar, there was a chance to talk about my project as it progressed. This was after three interviews were already completed and transcribed, and so it was natural that certain elements in either the questions posed or the interviewees responses to those question would be especially noticeable. One of these aspects were that certain questions did not yield the answer that was expected. It was concluded that the questions were poorly formulated, in several ways, and such had to be altered for the remaining interviews. They could also be considered somewhat leading, which is not ideal for a life-world-interview. Ahead of the interview process starting, interview guides were intended to be sent to all the teacher ahead of time, in order for them to

read through the questions before the interview if they wished. The thinking behind this idea was that during this time before the interview, their thoughts might change, evolve, or become more nuanced, and thus would further the results of the interview. The decision was made to not send the interview guide ahead of time for the last three interviews. The main reason for that decision was that, by providing the interview guide ahead of the interview, the teachers would be influenced to talk about the terms given to them in the interview guide. The goal of this interview process is partly to acquire the unadulterated opinion, thought process and ideas on the topic.

The organization of the interview guide was carefully considered, and the interview guide can be divided into five sections. The first section was made up of six to eight questions. This was not set in stone, and the first three interviews had fewer warm-up questions than the last three. This is a result of trial and error. During the first three interviews, the warm-up questions were asked similarly to all three informants, but throughout these interviews there emerged questions which were either important to know about their background, their experience or some follow-up to a response. An example of this is the question of "How many teachers in lower secondary at your school have English as a subject" The question, which digs into the collegial aspect of being an English teacher at a school where working in teams is common, did however not dig any deeper than asking of the number of teachers. Later in the interview the teachers were asked questions on how useful the collegial cooperation was at their school. As these questions are somewhat related to the same topic, the addition of a brief description of the collegial support was added to the introductory questions for the three interviews conducted last.

The second part of the interview concerned how the teachers understood, talked about, discussed and reflected around the topic of the concept "English oral competence". The goal of this question was to ask open question where the teachers could, uncorrupted by leading questions, answer question and talk about their own experience with and understanding of the technical term.

The third part of the interview guide was based around what was intended to be the second, and equally important, theme of the thesis: professional practice. In the same manner as the previous section, open and non-leading question were asked whose intention it was that the

teacher explain, talk about and relate their professional practice of English oral competence. Whereas the second section simply concerned "How do these teachers think about the term cognitively", the third section brought their experience in the classroom on the table. Seeing as oral competence was still the main concept, professional practice was not as general as it may sound. The tactic around how questions were asked, was that the interview guide included follow-up questions if the answers given were deemed, by the researcher, to not yield specific enough answers. An example of this is how the teachers were firstly asked "How has your ability to assess oral competence in English developed throughout your professional career as an English teacher in lower secondary." As was predicted, the question was answered with quite general comments about how skills developed throughout their career. The next question was intended to dig deeper by asking. "Concrete: How do you do things differently now in terms of content and assessment of oral competence vs. when you started as a teacher"? It turned out that this section of questions was not strictly specifically relevant to the main topic of this thesis, but if professional development and practice became relevant, and the differing experience level of the teacher became a topic of discussion, the question was covered if the teacher could not think of specifics in the first question. As the project progressed this category was cut, and the main idea of the thesis was narrowed (Richards l. , 2005, p. 133).

The fourth section of the interview guide only makes sense if one considers that not all details of how the thesis was going to turn out were figured out. Main topic was not decided, and some aspects were touch-and go whether they were actually going to be included as a main part of this thesis. As a contingency, several questions were included whose main intention was to cover basis if the topic became relevant. An example of a question in this section is related to teacher education. It was phrased: "Do your feel that your teacher education prepared you to teach and assess a student's development and competence in oral English" This question also spoke about the self-reflection and self-assessment of the teachers, which are useful when differentiating between the informants.

The fifth and final section included specific questions on the main topic of the thesis that may or may not have been mentioned by the informants previously. A question within this section is related to recipient awareness, which would be a natural aspect to mention on the question

about assessment in English. However, if the teachers did not mention it ahead of this section in the interview guide, they were given a second chance to talk about how recipient awareness is important or not important in terms of oral competence in English. This section also includes a question where the teachers were simply asked: "The last question is: Anything you would like to add on the topics of oral competence, your understanding of this in addition to your assessment practice?" If the teachers felt they had more knowledge about the topic which my questions had failed to cover, this was their chance to mention something they felt was important, and some of them did so.

4.6 Purposive sampling

Purposive sampling, in contrast to randomized sampling, means that teachers interviewed were selected based on particular criteria, and were not simply selected at random at random schools. "The purposive sampling technique is a type of non-probability sampling that is most effective when one needs to study a certain cultural domain with knowledgeable experts within" (Tongco, 2007, p. 147). There are several factors that can be focused on when selecting teachers for an interview process. For this particular thesis, there was a clear idea of which teachers were relevant to ask for interviews. One of the decisions that had to be made was on the number of teachers being interviewed. Along with the advisor, the decision was made to try and interview either four, five or six teachers. Any less, and the amount of results gathered would have the possibility of not being enough of the pertinent data. The factors upon which the teachers are selected vary for each project, and for this project there are certain aspects that separates teachers apart that have been focused on, and some which are of less importance. There are also several reasons why the number of factors has been limited. The thesis focuses on the teachers' thoughts, experience and understanding. Choosing teachers with different levels of experience and background can possibly give answers that indicate how teachers' opinions change throughout their professional career. This thesis also focuses on "lower secondary school in Norway", and teachers working between the grades eight and ten are the only ones relevant to participate in this particular thesis. Another aspect of the thesis that decides how the teachers are selected, are some of the questions in my interview guide related to professional practice. As stated earlier, the thesis was not fully formed at the point when the types of informants had to be chosen. The reason why the topic of professional practice dictated the sampling was because of how their opinions and practices

might change as they become more experienced, and this potential change was something that, by sampling teachers with a varying degree of experience, it would be possible to capture. As it happened, the least experienced teacher interviewed had been teaching at schools in Norway for over 10 years, though only two as a qualified English teacher for lower secondary. For practical reasons, the selection of teachers also depended on how many of the teachers that were e-mailed about their possible involvement in the study, actually answered. Out of fifteen teachers that were asked to be a part of this study, nine responded. Out of these, some of them had busy schedules, and such did not have the time to be interviewed in the preferred timeline. Six teachers were interviewed in total, not counting the pilot interview. This was not a random sampling, as four of the teachers had recent pre- or in-service teacher education from OsloMet. The fifth teacher had connections to the teacher practice-program at OsloMet and the sixth teacher was an acquaintance, who incidentally had also recently undertaken in-service teacher education, albeit at a different university. The teachers were between the ages of 30 and 65. Once the selection process started, the sampling turned from a purposive sampling into a convenience sampling according to who were actually available to participate. The criteria for which kinds of teachers were relevant to interview were met with all that were contacted, and those who ended up participating were the ones whose schedules were not too busy to accommodate a one-hour long interview in January. The criteria were: English teacher currently teaching in grade eight, nine or ten. Their experience, as mentioned earlier, was to be varied, and also wanted teachers both from different schools, but also different geographical areas. Gender was not a factor, and it ended up consisting of four females and two male teachers.

Each teacher was simply referred to as Teacher A- through F throughout the transcription process. The designation A-F refers back to the order in which they were interviewed, with Teacher A being interviewed in December 2021 and Teacher F being interviewed late January 2022. When speaking about statements relating to each one, they will be referred to as their codename, but when talking about what they have said more than once in one sentence, it will be more natural to refer to them by their personal pronouns. Teacher A and Teacher C were male, whereas Teacher B, Teacher D, Teacher E and Teacher F were female. This is mentioned to alleviate any potential confusion.

4.7 Interview process

The interviews were conducted in the timeframe between the 16th of December and the 21st of January. The interviewees all worked at different schools. One was conducted at a school in western Norway, one in the eastern part of Norway while the remaining four were situated in Oslo or in a county surrounding Oslo. Two of the interviews were conducted digitally, whereas four were conducted in-person at the school where the teacher worked. After three of the interviews were conducted and transcribed, there was a short break before the remaining three were conducted. The time was used to review the transcriptions and to consider whether some of the questions should be changed or replaced. One of the questions, the first one on oral competence, was worded such that the interviewee was guided into talking about oral competence through the theoretical terms: "listening, talking and interaction". This question was altered for the remaining interviews. The goal of an interviewer is not to tell the interviewee what terms they are to talk about their thoughts through. Being as neutral as possible when it comes to questions gives the answers better reliability when it comes to whether this is actually this teacher's thoughts. Reliability refers to, as defined by (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2019, p. 137) how reliable results are, and whether they are replicable. Validity refers to whether an interview study investigates what it is meant to investigate. As a part of the process, there were other questions as well whose inclusion was not executed in the best way. A question on recipient awareness, which is the focus of section 5.5.1, was not asked to every teacher, and was only asked to Teacher B, Teacher D, Teacher E and Teacher F. When the result of this question is presented, they will be presented with the inclusion that it is unclear what the opinion on the two teachers who were not asked the question was.

A perfectly neutral way of interviewing with the goal of capturing the unadulterated opinion and thoughts of these teachers would be to give them a piece of paper with "Oral competence-disclose!"-on it. In a practical sense this would not yield much result, and such the questions need to lead them in the most neutral way possible. How accurate the oral conversation is transcribed, in terms of pauses, emotional aspects included all contributes to the question of reliability in studies such as these.

The process of interviewing Norwegian teachers teaching the subject of English in Norwegian schools, with the meaning being to include it as a part of a thesis written in English, brings forth the question of which language the interview should be conducted in. On one hand,

interviewing in English makes for an easier transcription process and easier inclusion of statements related to the topic in the thesis. However, seeing as the oral competence of the interviewer and interviewee is not as good as in the native language, it was the belief that the conversation would have a better flow and thereby, more interesting statements if the informants were allowed to speak uninterrupted, and unhindered by lack of knowledge in the language spoken, while speaking about their understanding. Another important point is that this thesis focuses on their thoughts and understanding, which though the subject is English, their thoughts are Norwegian, and thereby are more correct when spoken in the same language as their thoughts. It is the language most clearly connected to the teachers' professional interaction and practice in school, and thus, most likely, the easiest language to capture nuanced understanding. Therefore, the choice was made to conduct all interviews in Norwegian, and also transcribe them into Norwegian. For inclusion of statements in the thesis, the transcriptions will be referenced, and statements that are translated will be used throughout. They will be translated by me, the researcher.

4.8 Data transcription

To transcribe means to transform. The oral text of the actual interview had to be written down as accurately as possible. The data transcription process for this project is important, but it also has a lot of potential concerns that needed to be acknowledged before the interview process was complete. There is the question of how much of what is said is to be transcribed, seeing as the way oral language and written language communicates differs greatly. Another issue is that, though this project is about English in Norwegian schools, and though it is also written in English, the interviews will be conducted and transcribed using Norwegian. As explained earlier, this is due to the belief that the conversation has a better flow when the interviewer and interviewee are not restricted by their vocabulary when answering a question. As far as the recording device being able to pick up every noticeable pause, hesitation and other non-verbal communication is always a potential danger when only recording sound. As with every other transcription, it is possible to add pauses and also to write down every word and pause in such a way that the actual atmosphere of the conversation comes across when written down. The transcription was conducted in a way that every word spoken, was written down, including hesitation and false sentence starts. Hesitations were included in the form of "…", and if the pause was thought to be significant or especially interesting, it was also

written down in the form of a "(5sek)" where the number of seconds the pause lasted was listed. Transcription is a tedious process, and one that takes up a lot of time. Six interviews with each one being close to one hour takes time to transform into a written data set which can be further analysed. Around 6 minutes per minute of recording, so for this project it required around 36-40 hours of transcription. The question of the validity of a recording, is something that must be mentioned. What is appropriate to include in the transcription is dependent on what is relevant for later analysis. By including pauses, hesitations and false starts in the transcription, it is possible to comment on the interviewee psychological state as they are either unsure or may be deflecting on a question. This may not be the most vital part of this exact project, but it can be useful when comparing the interviewees' body language and the intention behind their answers. Another consideration to be aware of when transcribing the interviews, is that the identity of the informants was to be kept secret, and that their personal information was to remain anonymous. This triumphs over the need for accuracy in the transcriptions, and there three interviews where certain elements or words needed to be censored in order to keep the confidentiality. These were things that revealed where they worked, the names of colleges or the school district, or their relationship with the interviewer. The information taken out was in this case not deemed relevant for the topic of the interview.

4.9 Data analysis

The data analysis was conducted in many different steps. After all interview transcriptions were written down, they were firstly being analysed through the main topic of oral competence. Creating a profile of each teacher where the gist of their opinion on the topic was written up. After this was completed, the categories could be created. The categories were created inductively, which means that they were created based on the content of the profiles created. We started with what the teachers said and worked up from that data to develop the categories. Each interview was then coded according to those categories. This was done by coding the data transcription for each category and writing up statements which were connected and could therefore tell something about this particular teacher's understanding. Writing the results-section of this project is the final step of data analysis. All the choices made leading up to categories visible in that section will be explained in the sub-sections below. This is a qualitative study, and one of the reasons this is qualitative is the conclusions

that can be made from each category. These results show six individual teachers', who work at lower secondary school in Norway, opinion, understanding and thoughts on oral competence.

4.9.1. Profiles

The profiles were created to be a summary of each teacher's understanding of the topic of this thesis. The profiles were, for the first teacher, made to include statements on the two main topics of the interview, oral competence and professional practice. However, to speed up the coding process, only statements for oral competence was included in the profile. All the six teachers' profiles were analysed, both by the researcher and using my advisor as an external auditor, to create categories which covered the teachers' understanding of oral competence in lower secondary school.

4.9.2. Category

The categories created were named vocabulary, grammar features, oral communication-type, oral communication-purpose, topics, context and settings, formulation and oral features. Vocabulary was made one of the categories because, based on the profiles of the teachers, they all mention and talk about it. A central part of their understanding of how they perceived oral competence was based around knowing words and having a vocabulary fit for purpose. Grammar features was made a category on the basis that it is a sub-skill in the same manner as vocabulary, and it is something that all the teachers talk about. The different aspects of grammar were accuracy, syntax, formulation, conjugation, grammar mistakes and general role of grammar in the teachers' understanding of oral competence

Oral communication was the category that both the researcher and advisor knew had to be a category. However, in order to better understand how the teachers spoke about oral communication, this category was divided into two. The first category encompasses the different types of oral communication that the teachers mention. This includes listening, prepared speech, spontaneous speech, general spoken interaction, spontaneous conversations, ability to be understood and other speaking activities. The other category within oral

communication focuses on the purpose of the oral communication, whether that be to convey knowledge, reason, debate, reflect, discuss or to use technical terms and terminology related to the subject. It could be coded according to what kinds of verbs the teachers used when describing the speaking activity. It is the action of the speaking activity that is important here. Whereas a presentation is a type of prepared speech, the purpose of the situation is to present. The purpose of presenting is different from other purposes that is achieved through other types of oral communication

The next category created from the profiles on each teacher was topics. During the interviews, all the teachers spoke about classroom activities. The interview included questions on professional practice, and topics dealt with in the classroom was frequently mentioned. The kinds of topics these teachers thought related to enhancing oral competence were the main focus of this category. Examples of topics frequently mentioned by the teachers related to English-speaking countries, literature, culture, social science-subjects, to mention a few. Only one topic is named in the curriculum, whereas other topics are merely hinted at. Such topics as "former colonial powers" and topics surrounding countries under colonial rule are common topics in lower secondary. They are, however, not required topics.

The next topic concerns context and settings. This category refers to how these teachers spoke about "who" was present and "where" the speaking situation took place. Digital context and all these changes affect the expectation of the language being produced. The role of context is important, because language is never produced without one, and seeing how these teachers understand this when they are dealing with speaking situations in the classroom. A number of the teachers were also asked about recipient awareness when students are performing oral tasks, and their understanding of that important aspect of context and settings.

Oral features is a category which includes many features of oral speech. It dives deep into features of oral language. Typical features here are pronunciation, intonation, fluency, accent and pauses. This category encompasses teachers understanding and thinking around the role of these specific features of oral language when it comes to enhancing the students' oral competence.

The reason formulation is described last, is that this is the only category which did not make it through the coding phase. It was originally created because the teachers spoke about sentence, syntax and formulation. After realizing that these could naturally fall under as aspects of grammar features, this category was no longer on its own, but rather a part of grammar features.

4.9.3. Coding- changing categories

After the categories were created, the next task was to code the transcription data for each category. Every statement connected to each category was put into a separate document. Each category was again audited with the help of the MA-advisor as the external auditor. Each category was commented on. Some statements were coded for numerous categories where relevant, and certain statements were misplaced and put in the incorrect category. Coding is challenging, and what made the categories useful was that each one had elements or skills that were easily identifiable in the transcriptions. Identifying statements as belong in one category, and not another, was the most challenging part of this section of the project.

One of the categories was changed during this process. It was important that each teacher's statements were included in every category. The category "formulation" did not contain statements from all the teachers, and it was therefore not a central category that showed these teachers' general understanding of oral competence. Seeing that formulation relating to sentence build-up and how an utterance is produced is clearly related to grammar, it was instead put as a sub-heading in the category named "grammar features". Formulation was only mentioned by two of the teachers, and it is thus confusing to leave it as a central thread of their understanding relating to oral competence.

Other categories were also altered to include statements said by the teachers related to oral competence which were not directly relevant to the criteria previously set for each category. One such example is "discussing", which was mentioned numerous times by the teachers. The categories used key words as identifiers, and "discussing was, as a clerical error, not at first included in "oral communication, as was the plan.

Another change was made after seeing a trend of the teachers commenting of the status of English and on English as a lingua franca. The statements related to this showed an

understanding of oral competence which was not clearly fitting into any other category, and so a new category was made for the results-section.

4.9.4. Results

Coded categories were analysed and a general description across the teachers was identified using the key words in the category. The key words that helped tie statements to each category were used when writing up results. Not every aspect of every category was mentioned by every teacher. Some aspects were more salient than others. The more salient aspects of each category were reported first for each category, of which there were now seven after "formulation" was made a part of "grammar features" and Changing status of English was created as a category. As the results for each category was presented, less frequent or less salient features were presented at the end. The very last points would then be aspects that may be as important to understanding the category, but which were simply mentioned by fewer of the informants in this project. Writing up the results-section from the six interviews conducted is fraught with potential challenges that need to be addressed. The interviews were conducted and transcribed using Norwegian. Therefore, when reporting results, the original language will not be what the reader is presented with. For ease of reading, the statement will be translated to English by the author, and the speaker of the utterance will be referred to with an anonymized name, as explained in 4.5.

4.10 Ethical concerns

This study was conducted in line with the ethical principles of OsloMet and the National Centre for Research Data (NSD) Ahead of each interview, a letter of information had to be signed where the interviewees were informed what participation in the study entailed, and their rights to information they have shared. It also told the interviewees what the study was about, and their role in it. All information about the teacher was anonymized in the transcription process. This decision was made early in the work with the thesis. All of these teachers currently work with pupils, and these pupils were talked about in vague detail. In order for none of the comments of the teacher to come back to them, their name and information was redacted. All information on each teacher is therefore vague, and only gives enough information to differentiate them from each other, but not enough to identify them

outright. At any point after the interviews, the teachers were allowed to redact their statements or pull out of the thesis altogether, as per the information guide given to them ahead of, or just following the interview taking place. The information guide was given to all the teachers to sign. This document is required for all interviews conducted at Norwegian universities and is checked by NSD (Nasjonalt senter for forskingsdata). The information guide informed the informants about the purpose of the thesis, the reasons why their participation is relevant as well as information about what participating encompasses for them. This includes the timeframe of the interview, the length the data, such as sound recordings will be stored as well as information regarding the fact that their anonymity is being upheld throughout. It informs them of their right as a participating informant and how their privacy and personal information is being managed. It also includes contact information for all members of the project and a place for them to sign after they have read and understand everything their participation encompasses, including the right to withdraw from the project at any time. Another ethical requirement for such study relates to the pilot interview conducted. The main reason the pilot interview was conducted was, as was mentioned in section 4.3, was to see how the interviewee answered to the question asked, and whether the response was expected or unexpected. Noticing how comfortable the interviewee and taking notice of how their body-language and demeanour changed throughout may be attributed to the level of intrusion each question presented. Ensuring that the intrusion is not a problem to the interviewee is in the researcher's interest also, "…since you aim to explain what is really going on". "Considering how settings and conversations might affect what people see and feal and say" (Richards L. , 2009, p. 39) is important when the aim and goal of the project is to understand and explain the teachers' lifeworld and their view on a topic

5.0 Results

The aim of this thesis was to explore how teachers understand English oral competence in lower secondary school in Norway". Six teachers from different lower secondary schools were interviewed, and the resulting interview data was analysed into categories that, as a whole, represent teacher understanding. This section will present the results of the analysis described in 4.8. For each category, teachers' statements will be presented and compared to the other teachers. The frequency of statement, i.e., who many of the teacher said something similar will decide the order in which it will be written down. The categories that will be

presented, interpreted and deduced are: Vocabulary, grammar features, oral communication-type, oral communication-purpose, context and settings, topics, oral features and changing status of English language teaching. Each section will begin with presenting the main threads and agreements amongst the teachers, whereas where their opinions diverged will be further down. Within each category, there are certain teachers that will have mentioned certain skills more frequently, and some skills that are only mentioned by a few. Each category and each sub-section within will include illustrative statements in the form of direct quotes that represent meaning in the category. It is natural that within the different categories, some teachers' statements will be more frequently mentioned than others. This does, however, depend on the category.

This next section of the thesis will present each category of oral competence that emerged from these six transcriptions. At the very end of the results-section, there will be a visual representation that shows the teachers' understanding of oral competence. Following this section will be a discussion-section, where the statements and opinions of these teachers will be explained, discussed and reflected upon in light of both relevant theory and the curriculum LK20.

5.1 Foundational skills

The next two categories presented in this chapter of the thesis are on "vocabulary" and grammar features". These six teachers all mention different aspects of these two categories and the skills within, and the impact they have on their understanding of oral competence. These two categories are categorized as foundational skills, which means they are at the bottom of the knowledge pyramid and are necessary for future language learning. They are a foundation for the other aspects of oral competence, and their importance in teachers' thinking about oral competence is very significant. The two categories vocabulary and grammar were interpreted as being the most central and foundational aspects of oral competence of these teachers' understanding of oral competence

5.2 Vocabulary

All of the teachers mentioned vocabulary when talking about oral competence, and thus recognize its importance as a fundamental sub-skill of oral competence. The statements connected to this category suggest also that vocabulary is seen as the most central key points of students' English oral competence. There were, however, some key differences in the teachers' opinion on the importance of vocabulary. Some key words that came up consistently were "building vocabulary, said by Teacher F and "having a high vocabulary", which was said by teacher D. The importance of having a vocabulary to use across a wide variety of settings was also mentioned by Teacher E.

5.2.1 Subject-specific vocabulary

The importance of having subject specific terminology and concepts was mentioned explicitly by four of the teachers, namely Teacher A, Teacher B, Teacher D and Teacher E. When talking about assessment, Teacher A said that the pupils' ability to "use the vocabulary specific to the subject-that is a thing-that they can use technical terms (for assessment). Teacher B also deemed ability to use technical terms important for assessment. She said that "…those that aim for the high grades (five or six) …those are the ones that often excel…to go in-depth on specific topics and use technical terms in a variety of topics". The ability to use technical terms in a variety of topics was deemed important. This can be interpreted in connection with formal settings, and subsequently, the need for more "complicated" and conceptual vocabulary.

5.2.2 Chunks

One of the interesting aspects of vocabulary learning, which is absent from the interviews, is that nowhere in the six interviews were the terms "chunks" or "utterances" mentioned. When speaking English, it is said by (Thornbury, 2005, pp. 23-24) that speaking in chunks is most common. If every word was cognitively produced separately on the spot, fluency would definitely be affected. Three of the teachers talked about vocabulary as the most major limiting factor to a student's oral competence, and a number of teachers mentioned vocabulary as a limiting factor to a student's fluency. None mentions chunks or speaking in language units other than individual words in any way. Several of the teachers mention that their students' vocabulary should be varied in such a way that they can talk about a variety of

topics. Vocabulary is also mentioned explicitly by a number of teachers as being more important than pronunciation. It can be interpreted that chunks is not a term used to describe how pupils produce utterances and speech.

5.2.3 Internalizing vocabulary

The next aspect of vocabulary is internalizing, and the extent to which that was talked about by the six teachers. As much as these teachers talk about the role of vocabulary, none of them separated or talked about the difference between active and passive vocabulary. Teacher A mentioned internalizing in terms of using technical terms in presentations and that, if such terms are not internalized, the language is affected. The students spoke English, but as the terms were not internalized, Teacher A felt that they were not using their own language. Teacher E also talked about internalizing as a part of vocabulary learning and how she wanted the pupils to "internalize these new words they have such that they show up- that you don't have to recover them- search for them all the time, but that they simply become internalized". Teacher E talks about internalizing as not having to actively "look" in your brain for the word, as it simply is internalized and a part of your active vocabulary.

5.2.4 Purpose of vocabulary learning

There are some key differences between these teachers when talking about what purpose vocabulary learning has. Teacher B, Teacher D and Teacher F all said that the purpose of vocabulary learning was tied to the purpose of upholding a conversation. They explicitly mentioned lack of words or lack of confidence in using them as a limiting factor when conversing with someone. Teacher D and Teacher E both mentioned that the purpose of vocabulary learning is also to gain enough vocabulary to be able to talk about topics within one's own interest and hobbies. Teacher E further mentioned that being able to talk about "everyday topics" as a goal of vocabulary learning. It can be deduced that this encompasses the normal situations one is put into when living in society of today, such as buying something from a shop. The teachers talked about vocabulary training in terms of also working with formulation, and varying the formulations in a way to enhance the language, though this will be expanded upon and further presented in the next category "grammar features"

5.2.5 Strategies

Another aspect of vocabulary is what to do when you cannot think of the correct word. Speakers can for example utilize a strategy called circumlocution. This is a strategy for talking around a word you do not remember. Only Teacher F spoke about this, as she said "…to have enough words to talk about a topic…or that they can talk around so they still can explain what they mean. If they lack a certain word- that they…find other words to explain what they are trying to say. She does not mention circumlocution explicitly, though it is clear that it is what is meant. It can also be deduced that, because Teacher F did not remember the word circumlocution, she had to use the strategy of circumlocution in order to still explain what she meant. Another common strategy mentioned by the teachers was approximation. Teacher D spoke about accurate vocabulary and approximation and exemplified by saying that even if a pupil said "roof" where "ceiling" would be more appropriate, the sentence still achieves its goal of communicating a message.

5.3. Grammar features

The second category is grammar features. The role of this category was to see how teacher commented and reflected upon the role of grammar in both how they understand oral competence, what kind of skills they value in students. This category is split into two sections, as the statements connected for formulation, both of syntax and sentence formulation, is a part of this category. The other main section of this category is related to grammatical accuracy and grammatical mistakes.

5.3.1 Grammatical correctness

When talking about grammar, all of the six teachers interviewed mention it as a skill related to oral competence, though the degree of how much it was focused on by each was somewhat divergent. Certain elements were mentioned by several of the teachers, such as being able to speak grammatically correct. This was mentioned explicitly by Teacher A, Teacher B, Teacher C and Teacher E. Teacher D had a contrasting opinion to the other teacher and

downplayed the importance of speaking grammatically correct. Through statements that will be presented below, each teacher' opinion on the importance of speaking grammatically correct will be presented. Teacher A spoke in general about how "technical language and grammar" are part of assessment but based on the order in which he mentioned it, it can be concluded that communication and being to uphold a conversation was seen as more vital to the assessment of oral competence than grammar. Teacher B talked about how speaking grammatically correct was connected to coherence in utterances, and generally spoke less about how grammar was not as important as other skills of oral competence. Teacher C spoke numerous times about how English should not be considered a foreign language in Norway, and therefore said this about use of grammar teaching in the classroom. "When we have English- it is not…English grammar we work with. We work with topics of literature and topics in the social sciences." This does, however, support the fact that grammar is a sub-skill of English, as speaking about literature and social science discussions in a foreign language would be difficult without a base of grammar and vocabulary, among other things. Teacher D spoke more about the lack of importance of grammar, by saying that "you can (still) understand it when one says, "I is" …, it is still communicative". She downgrades the importance of accurate grammar while still maintaining a position that communication is prioritized. Teacher E said that students need to have a "somewhat grammatical understanding of the language…that the syntax is correct, and the words come in the correct order". The use of the word "somewhat" indicates that Teacher E does not value grammar as an important aspect of oral competence. Teacher F mentioned how pronunciation and intonation were of less importance than syntax. She mentions how assessment of grammar is common in presentations, but also seems to be less in focus than the content of the presentations. From this it can be deduced that content is first priority, grammar is second and pronunciation and intonation is of least importance for this teacher.

5.3.2 Syntax and formulation

One word in particular that is important to note, is syntax. It refers to the order in which words are organized in sentences and is vital when talking about grammar. When these teachers talk about grammar in terms of oral competence in the classroom, it is important to see whether they name syntax, as this reveals in what terms grammar is being taught and showed in the classroom. Out of six teachers, only Teacher E and Teacher F mentioned syntax

explicitly as something they focus on in the classroom. Teacher C did mention sentence structure, thought did not utilize the term "syntax" exactly. The role of grammar in oral speech can be linked to formulation, and the act of formulating an utterance is linked with use of correct syntax. Both Teacher E and Teacher F mentioned "formulation capacity" and variation of utterances in order to enhance the language. These inclusions can indicate that chunks, which were mentioned in the category vocabulary, is somewhat visible in these teachers' understanding of how these are the building blocks when producing speech. Teacher E said that the pupils "practice formulation, practice variation in formulation". This was seen as an important aspect in order for the students to communicate well. Another aspect which is important to mention, is that not every teacher mentioned grammar or talked about it with the same level of importance. For some of the teachers, it was seen as a vital skill, where others viewed it as secondary to other oral competences. This will be further explained in 5.3.4.

5.3.3 Conjugation

Grammar is a quite wide term, and encompasses many distinct aspects of, in this case, spoken language. Teachers, as has been observable throughout the interview process, have a tendency to speak in non-specific terms of their own understanding, often falling back on speaking generally and referring to their own practice rather than their thoughts on the topic. Which skills relating to grammar were mentioned? Conjugation of verbs is an important skill, and one which were mentioned by Teacher C, Teacher D and Teacher F. Whereas Teacher C and Teacher D only mention verbs briefly, Teacher F goes into more detail. Teacher D said that verbs were focused on sometimes in assessment of oral competence, but deducing the statement made, it also seems that conjugation of verbs needed to be the sole focus of the exercise for Teacher F to comment on it, indicating Teacher D understanding that conjugation of verbs were not deemed as equally important to the other aspects of grammar mentioned. TF directly compared incorrect conjugation to wrong intonation and said that verb in the incorrect tense is more damaging to communication than pronunciation or intonation.

5.3.4 Grammar-not important?

Even though all of the six teachers mention grammar as part of oral competence, three of the teachers are also particular in downgrading the role and importance of it. This can be seen in

this quote by Teacher A, where he says "I don't give much feedback on grammar if…mastering the form is in focus". It is also interesting how this teacher seems to attribute the term "grammar" directly to "grammar mistakes". This sort of statement was similar in content to this statement made by Teacher F when talking about how she approaches grammar in oral presentations: "You are checking maybe one thing from time to time, and I make a form ahead of time so the pupils know what they are being assessed in." Even though the students know what aspects of grammar the teacher expects them to master in order to achieve a high grade, she only focuses on one feature of grammar at a time. Teacher C also pointed out the lesser importance of grammar when he said that it was not focused on in lessons in lower secondary, and rather focusing on content. From these statements it can be deduced that three of the teachers interviewed neither give much feedback on grammar mistakes nor has explored explicit grammar teaching in the classroom in lower secondary.

5.4 Oral communication

These next four categories presented: oral communication-type, oral communication-purpose, context and setting and topics are the basis for these six teachers' understanding of oral communication in their classroom. What kind of types of oral communication do they mention? What is the main purpose of communicating in English, both in the classroom and the real world? What topics are important for both learning about the English language, and why are they important for oral communication-learning? Do the teachers interviewed place value on teaching students about how communication is context-dependant, and what exactly is an authentic classroom situation? This next section will present and interpret and attempt to show the teachers' understanding of oral communication through these next four categories.

5.5 Oral communication- type

This section will explore the various kinds of activities and tasks that the teachers mentioned to develop English oral competence. Whereas the next category will deal with the purpose of oral communication, this section will look at different types of oral communication mentioned by the six teachers. These types can be prepared speech, prepared speech with notes, prepared

speech free from notes, listening, ability to be understood, spoken interaction, spontaneous conversational skills and non-verbal communication.

5.5.1 Prepared speech

As a pupil, oral skills and speaking English in the classroom for these teachers to a large degree amounted to prepared speech created ahead of time. Oral presentation is a common form of prepared speech in lower secondary, as described by these teachers. They are described as being either individual or in a group and are either held in front of either the whole class or a select few. The oral presentation in the classroom was mentioned by all of the teachers.

Teacher A talked about the negatives of using oral presentations, and of the artificial nature of the oral presentation in the classroom. Another reason that speaks of the negative association Teacher A had with oral presentation was that "in presentations they (pupils) don't use their own language- they are not conscious always of what they are saying". This is a result of these presentations in this particular classroom often occurring as prepared speech with notes. The language may be performed orally, but because the notes are in written form, and simply recited, will sound robotic and non-realistic as compared to more spontaneous speech. Students' own language, though not defined further by Teacher A, is not what prepared speech results will result in. Teacher A's understanding of prepared speech is that it does not yield a language competence in speaking in a "natural" way. Teacher A was the only teacher displaying concrete dislike of the presentation as a version of prepared speech within oral communication to be used in the classroom. Teacher B was asked about which kinds of formal assessment situations took place in her classroom. She said that presentations and oral tests were used the most, though did not give further detail on how these were presented to the pupils or conducted. She also pointed out that these formal assessment situations were not very common, and only were conducted two to three times a year. It was pointed out that, when pupils were presenting in that particular way, it was also common that they had to answer questions relating to the topic after having completed the presentations. The prepared speech events thereby commonly included elements of a semi-prepared/spontaneous conversation. The topic was known to the pupil, but not the exact wording of the questions they knew were coming was not. It is, however, to be expected that there will be a difference between the language used in the presentation and what comes as a result of a less

monologue-type speech event. Teacher B connected this form of prepared speech and question as preparation for the oral exam, which are conducted in a similar fashion. It is though unclear whether the pupils were informed that the inclusion of questions at the end was to prepare them for the form of the oral exam.

Unlike with Teacher B, there is no need to speculate whether Teacher C used the presentation to prepare the pupils for the exam. He explained how they were utilized to that exact purpose by mimicking the form of the oral exam in English. During each semester, the pupils were dealing with a variety of topics, and Teacher C said that after each topic it was common practice for the pupils to have presentations relating to said topics. Teacher C was the teacher who talked about using presentations the most, and it seemed like an integral part of his oral competence assessment. Teacher D also uses presentations, but also mentioned other forms of prepared oral speech events besides the traditional "stand in front of class-presentation". She mentioned "project presentation…, TV-broadcast,…podcast,…sway-presentation". These are all prepared speech events. The wish to incorporate different media and digital tools into presentation was a wish that Teacher D had, and it can be deduced that the curriculum' inclusion of digital media and the use of such tools in teaching is the reason. Teacher E mentions presentations as one of a variety of activities related to prepared speech in the classroom. She also underlines the importance of having proper practice and that the pupil is comfortable with the content of prepared oral presentation conducted. Whereas Teacher A said that having an "unnatural language" was often a result of presentations, Teacher E talked about how the vocabulary tied to the content is often the focus of assessment in formal presentation situations. Teacher F was asked about formal assessment situations and responded that "it is a result of presentations, giving feedback…. presentations, presentations, presentations". To this teacher, it can be deduced that presentations and formal assessment situations are somewhat synonymous. It can also be deduced that presentation, though not further defined, are commonly used in her language classroom, and are integral as a prepared speech events. Prepared speech is, based on the understanding of the teachers, important both in teaching and assessment for these teachers. The oral presentation in the classroom is the most common form of prepared speech mentioned, and it can be interpreted that it is not a spontaneous oral presentation. There are diverging opinions on the use of prepared speech, with Teacher A questioning whether they can be used to assess oral competence and Teacher C, Teacher E and Teacher F using them regularly and without any mentioned inner quarrel.

5.5.2 Listening

In the method section it was laid out and explained that in the section on the interview guide, some mistakes were made in terms of questions asked. One of these mistakes were linked to the first question in the interview guide. The question was phrased: "How would you describe the English oral competence that is to be developed in lower secondary, in terms of speaking, listening and interaction". This last dependant clause of that question had certain advantages and one big disadvantage. The advantage was that though it is generally accepted among theorists that these are the main columns of oral communication, it is not necessarily this for teachers. Teacher A, Teacher B and Teacher C were all asked that question which included the dependant clause. Teacher D, Teacher E, and Teacher F were also asked the question, but with the dependant clause mentioning "listening" removed. The inclusion or exclusion of listening may have affected the degree to which listening played a role in teachers' talk. Teacher A talked about the skill of listening in two ways, both in terms of conversation, and listening-type tasks where pupils decipher different messages in text. Active listening was the term used to describe those type of tasks. Teacher B mentions listening only when talking about the new curriculum and how they need to change exam tasks to incorporate listening tasks as well. She does not appear to think of listening as something relating to oral competence. Teacher F also does not speak much of listening-skills when talking about types of oral communication, and the skills attributed to maintaining a conversation. It can be deduced that Teacher C has an integral knowledge of the competence aims related to oral English, seeing as all he says on listening is that "pupils must be able to listen, speak, communicate and reflect after tenth grade". The way this was phrased exactly like the curriculum indicates that the term is present when considering oral competence but may not be as visible in concrete classroom activities. Teacher D says "…listening comprehension, if we think that it is oral". Listening came out like an after-thought, with her also questioning and doubting whether listening comprehension is a part of oral skills, even though she previously talks about maintaining a conversation. The clear doubt in the statements leads to the interpretation that listening was not an obvious inclusion as part of oral competence. Teacher E mentions listening, but only after being pushed for an answer to dive deeper into what skills go into making someone able to communicate well. Though the teachers certainly mention listening, the do not divulge any more detail about how they think about the term, or how they use it actively in the classroom, with the exception being Teacher A.

5.5.3 Spontaneous speech events

Spontaneous speaking events and the shifting nature of a conversation is another type of oral communication, and one which is just as important. This paragraph will present the findings of how the teachers spoke about spontaneous speech events. A conversation was mentioned as a speaking event by all six of the teachers. However, their understanding of the activity in the classroom also indicated that the conversation could also be a prepared one. Teacher A spoke of a conversation activity in the classroom where students would have the opportunity to prepare ahead of time both on topic and phrasing. This does take the spontaneity out of a conversation. Despite this example, this type of oral interaction between two or more speakers, rarely prepared, still follows a less strict pattern than a monologue or presentation. As Teacher E was pushed for a deeper definition of what goes into "being able to communicate", she listed up… "follow up input, ability to ask questions, being able to start a conversation…". Teacher C talked about conversation only once during the interview as he explained how the students talk one-to-one with him after an oral presentation and are asked questions about the topic of the presentation, in this way mimicking the jargon of the oral exam and thereby preparing them for it. In the same way that the exclusion or inclusion of the term "listening" in a question may have affected how Teacher A, Teacher B and Teacher C responded, the same case needs to made for the way "interaction" was talked about. It was also a part of the same question which was changed for the last three teachers.

5.5.4 Digital resources' place in oral communication understanding

Presentation and conversation are the most common versions mentioned of prepared and spontaneous speaking events respectively. There are, however, some types of oral communication that fit into neither, but also have elements of both. However, based on these teachers' responses on presentations and conversation, the line for what was prepared and spontaneous can be interpreted as rather fluid and not very clear. The use of digital resources in the classroom were speech events mentioned by several of the teachers, and it was clear that the use of digital tools were useful aids in increasing oral competence in pupils. Teacher A talked about how he used voice recordings for students to discuss and talk about different topics which had been used in the classroom. Teacher D talked specifically about the different uses of podcasts. Her students were taught how podcasts are made, their language requirements, in terms of not using slang when dealing with serious topics, and other aspects

that the students must think about. This kind of model teaching can be interpreted as a way for the students to gain recipient awareness as they themselves were to make podcast-segments. Through using both podcasts with content specifically made for kids in English as well as other authentic podcasts, the students could use this knowledge to create their own small segments where they could reflect and discuss a variety of topics and use their oral competence. She pointed out the importance of using digital tools in teaching, and how both podcasts and TV-broadcast were activities that she liked using for the reasons stated above. The reason this has an element of both prepared speech and spontaneous speech, is the fact that, unless the podcast or "TV-broadcast" is viewed by the teacher or other live, it can be rerecorded until the pupil is pleased with the final product. Whether notes were common aids in these activities is, however, unclear.

5.5.5 Non-verbal communication

Any interaction where a message is being communicated also involves elements of non-verbal communication. Among the teachers interviewed there were elements mentioned that indicate that they are a valued part of one of teachers' language classroom. Teacher D mentioned both body language and eye contact as important skills to master in order to communicate well. Teacher F briefly mentioned "watching the audience" as a criterion in oral presentations. This indicates that the presentations were considered less of a monologue, and instead could be seen more as a dialogue, seeing as there is an element of interaction present. Through this interaction, the presenter could potentially alter the form and content of what is being said dependant on the audience. By observing the audience, the speaker also indicates that he is speaking to them, instead of simply reciting something. This would be in contrast to students who have a script while presenting, and thereby adhering completely to that instead of looking at the people in front of which they are standing. Teacher B also mentioned "lifting the gaze" as opposed to reading a script during oral presentations in the classroom. This indicates that a similar communicative effect will occur in this classroom the same as Teacher F's. Non-verbal communication was mentioned by three of the teachers, though it can be deduced that these teachers do not place it central in their understanding of oral competence.

5.5.6 Summary of types of oral communication.

A commonality amongst the teachers, which was particularly noticeable in Teacher C, was the frequency in talking about how communicating was the most important skill within oral communication, without clear use of terminology to distinguish between different types and form of oral communication. The oral presentation was defined vaguely and its place in the classroom of these teachers was, as has been shown, central. Spontaneous conversations were also mentioned numerous times, though the practice of conducting genuine spontaneous conversations in the classroom, or any spontaneous speech event, was lacking in description.

5.6 Oral communication- purpose.

This next section will describe the purposes of oral communication, and its role in pupils' English oral competence development. However, whereas the last section focused on different types of oral communication, this next section will look into what purpose the oral communication had. Whereas the last category focus on, for example: prepared speech, this next section will focus on the communicative purpose of this monologue. It will consider which purposes of communication, as an aspect of oral competence, are being valued and placed highly by these six teachers' when it comes to developing English oral competence.

5.6.1 Presenting

During the presenting of results for the previous category, the prepared speech, often in the form of an oral presentation was a type used by all of the teachers. It therefore comes as no surprise that the purpose of oral communication that all the teachers talk about, is presenting, which accounted to delivering a message or information orally or a monologue where students talked to either the teacher or other students about a variety of topics. Teacher B explained how presentations function as formal assessment situations when her pupils "…prepare a topic that they are to present…they must be able to talk about it- that they (also) get asked (questions) about it…". Even though the oral presentation was mentioned a lot, it is not synonymous to the act of presenting, which also occur in less formal settings. Teacher D also talked about presenting here but uses a different word: "(the pupils) read a kind of text and then they are to speak about what it is about,…and talk about the text". The students are expected to present topics that are relevant to the course, but the teachers often only define it as talking, which would indicate that from Teacher D's perspective, the activities are free

from communicative intent. There is no indication of an interlocutor when the students of Teacher D are to "speak about" and "talk about" the topics.

5.6.2 Subject-specific terms

The next most important purpose of oral communication, as told by the teachers, is the ability to deliver content knowledge with the appropriate terminology and technical terms through the oral medium of English. Teacher A, Teacher B, Teacher C, Teacher D and Teacher E all talk about these terms. Teacher C said that "the pupil must use his English to transfer knowledge". Teacher B said that "those than aim for the higher grades are those that manage to go in-depth into the topics and technical terms within a variety of topics. An interesting contradiction was found when Teacher A was talking about the use of technical terms, as he said, "we want the pupils to use terms and technical terms which have to do with the topic they are learning about". However, when talking about why presentations were not his favourite type of oral communication-type, he mentioned this as a reason: "I experience in presentations that they don't use their own language, and that they don't use- they are not so conscious always of what they are saying." The use of the word "we" when talking about how they want pupils to use technical terms indicates that this may be an overarching goal that either is decided by the curriculum, the school or among the colleges at the school. The fact that he does not use "I" can indicate that he does not agree, but most likely may not feel as strongly about this or may not have an ownership to the role as it may have arisen before his time working there. When he contradicts this slightly, this is deduced to mean that the consequence of the rule that "we" have imposed, "I" (Teacher D) has seen the effect in the form of pupils not using "their own language"

5.6.3 Discuss/support an opinion

To be able to discuss a variety of topics and be able to express and support an opinion was also mentioned as a purpose for oral competence. The ability to discuss was talked about by Teacher A, Teacher C, Teacher D and Teacher E. In addition, Teacher A and Teacher along with Teacher B also mentioned supporting an opinion and expressing oneselves as purposes of oral competence. These are linked, in that it relates to seeing a case from different views and being able to talk about and use the oral language to reason with a counterpart. Teacher A

said that when they used discussions in the classrooms, the pupils used different statements and questions as point of departure, and that they were expected to discuss whether they agreed with each other, or why they disagreed with each other's viewpoint. Teacher D also brought a historic viewpoint into why she valued discussion and debate in the classroom: "They become skillful at seeing other people's roles or understand why someone have acted in a certain way throughout history or why they are doing it now." Understanding, explaining and discussing current events are important in her classroom, and by also discussing events in history, they have a better basis for discussing current events or people. The fact they are discussing how people in today's society act would also indicate that there is an element of intercultural competence

5.6.4 Conversing

On the less formal side, there was also agreement among the teachers that conversing with other and partaking in conversation is one of the more important purposes of oral communication. Teacher A, Teacher B, Teacher D and Teacher E all mention conversing, or partaking in conversation as something that students must master. It is presented a central theme of their understanding of the purpose of having an English oral competence. Teacher E defined oral communication as being able to "follow up input, ask question and being able to start a conversation… and also listen and paying attention." Teacher A also said that being able to converse includes "asking questions, including others in the conversation…" Teacher C did not mention conversation or conversing explicitly, though did say that "the most important thing is to communicate, to be understood- that is the point." Conversing, in this case, refers to any speech interaction where there is a direct counterpart, and someone for the speaker to make themselves understood for. Teacher B mentioned the importance to be able to converse without practice and be able to maintain a conversation "naturally". She mentioned having a conversation rehearsed on beforehand. "Naturally" will, according to this teacher's understanding, be connected to not having practiced a conversation and letting it play out spontaneously, as it does in real life interactions. Teacher D mentioned several factors that all go into a person's oral competence. She did mention conversing, but also mentioned communicating separately. This can indicate that she does not think of conversing as a communicative event, though it can also be interpreted as a person's wish to speak explicitly in the interview situation.

5.6.5 Reflect

As well as being able to discuss, there were also four teachers which talked being able to reflect. These were Teacher A, Teacher C, Teacher D and Teacher E. Teacher A talked about cross-curricular competence and how the pupils were to learn about democracy and the processes within by making choices based on information one receives…make up one's mind in regard to a variety of questions". The act of deciding based on views of different sides is what being able to reflect encompasses. Teacher C's view on reflection was that the reason we consider it as a part of the expectations for pupils after tenth grade is proof that English should not be considered a foreign language in schools in Norway. Neither German, Spanish or French classes have any expectation of reflection in class. He also said that if the students are not able to reflect, this should impact their grade in that they no longer qualify for the top two grades (5,6). Teacher D also stated that the grade 6 should be reserved student with a high degree of reflection. Teacher E talked about self-reflection in regard to pronunciation. She does focus on having a quote en quote perfect British accent, but she wants the pupils to "reflect on why they speak so differently (in different settings). She is the only teacher out of the six to talk about self-reflection and for the students to have a meta-view on their own language learning in order to enhance and increase competence. Based on the views of Teacher C and Teacher D, it can be deduced that there is a connection between pupils using their oral competence to reflect upon a variety of topics and achieving a high grade.

5.6.6 Everyday topics /hobbies

The last purpose, as explained by the teachers, which will be mentioned, is something that was quite surprisingly mentioned by three teachers. Teacher B, Teacher D and Teacher E all talked about being able to talk about everyday topics, things that interest the student, and talking about hobbies. Interestingly, it was also mentioned how oral competence is something the teachers perceived as being to also talk and discuss topics outside one's own interest and hobbies. Teacher E talks about what oral competence means in terms of skills the pupils need to master. She said that "the ability to talk about everyday topics…I think it's the most important-that they have a large enough vocabulary to talk about…things that interest them. But of course…in relation to…them moving on to higher education. You cannot only talk

about your hobbies." During this paragraph we can study her view on oral competence. She sees "being able to talk about own interests/hobbies" as causality to having a large vocabulary. She also says it is the most important to her understanding of oral competence, however when talking about moving on from lower secondary to higher education, she downplays its importance, and how, in the real world, this skill is perhaps not the most useful. The purpose of oral communication was, according to three of the teachers to be able to talk about everyday topics and hobbies, but Teacher E also contradicts this slightly in her statements.

5.7 Context and settings

Knowing the context within which the oral communication takes place is always vital for learners of oral English. One of the questions asked to the interviewees was linked to recipient awareness, and to what degree the teachers themselves were aware of its importance and how their pupils approached the use of spoken English in a context. Whether the recipient was made clear or if it was unclear or not specified. What thoughts, ideas and opinions these teachers have on this topic, is the focus of this category. Context and settings give information about where the oral communication takes place, who and how many are present and how expectations for the pupils' oral language changes in these circumstances. Key words for understanding communicative context are knowing the differences in communicative needs when speaking in-person, digitally, or when speaking in front of one person instead of many.

5.7.1 Recipient awareness

One thing which is important to know is that this category gathers most of its data from a question relating to recipient awareness. This is a question that, as was mentioned in the method section, was not asked to all the participants. It came forward as a relevant follow-up question for Teacher B, but was not asked to Teacher A or Teacher C. However, ahead of the interviews with Teacher D, Teacher E and Teacher F, this question was added as a fixed question to the interview guide. The reason why this is mentioned is that it does affect the reliability of this category, as the teachers were not given the same basis to answer a question relating to this category.

Different language contexts create changing demands for the speaker, and a number of the teachers talked about the students having a "natural" or "authentic" language. This is interesting, as this is quite challenging in a classroom where all contexts created are artificial, and the criteria for "natural" speech is not made clear, either to me or to pupils.

To the question of how the teachers responded on the question regarding recipient awareness. Teacher D responded that though they focus on it, the pupils' recipient awareness is low. Important to point out that her current class is the eighth grade, and such the demands and expectations are lower than they would have been in ninth or tenth. The pupils in her class are exposed to authentic text, such as podcasts or lectures, and they point out the different demands and differences in language that can be detected in these different types of text. However, Teacher D has still noticed how some pupils can use language such as "you guys" and "cause" when they perform oral speech in formal settings. Teacher E was also asked the question about recipient awareness and answered it to some extent. She firstly wanted a clarification of the question, which was related to oral presentations: "When the pupils have oral presentations in the classroom, how is the recipient made visible to the pupils in that situation"? She talked about how the situation of the oral presentation was uncomfortable for some of the students seeing as most oral presentations are presented to the rest of class. She did, however, not mention at any point how the language demands and expectations change according to the situation. Teacher F was asked the question with recipient awareness more explicitly, by including the section of LK20 where adapting content to the recipient is mentioned, and Teacher F did not elaborate, and spoke about how her pupils either had presentations in the classroom or to a smaller group. In most cases it seems that audience are undefined, and thereby also the speaker's role. Teacher B was also asked recipient awareness, in the shape of a question worded "do the pupils know what kind of audience they are supposed to be presenting or talking in front of or to? The question was semi-spontaneous, and as the teacher misunderstood the question to being a question on whether the pupils were speaking solely to her or their class as well. It could have been interesting to elaborate, but this response is interpreted as an example of how the teacher did not include descriptions of situations to her students where their role as well as a potential audience was made clear. However, for Teacher D and Teacher F, their understanding of the importance of recipient awareness as a context of showing oral competence was clearer.

5.8 Topics

This next section will look into teachers' idea of topics related to oral competence. This includes topics that were focused on greatly, and which were omitted. LK20 is quite vague and does not mention a great amount of specific topics that the teachers are required to touch upon, with one exception. The pupils are after tenth grade expected to "explore and reflect on the situation of indigenous peoples in the English-speaking world and in Norway" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020). The topics that will be talked about are indigenous people, literary texts, English-speaking countries and the society of today. These are the main topics mentioned by the teachers that represent their understanding of which topics are of importance in their teaching of oral skills and oral competence.

5.8.1 Indigenous people in English-speaking countries and Norway

Only Teacher D and Teacher F mentions indigenous people and the Sami people as a topic, as specified in LK20. Teacher D only mentions it briefly. She does, however, mention how "ways of living" is focused on. She does mention that the curriculum, and its focus on intercultural competence, is the main source on why this is part of teaching. Teacher F did talk about it, though she started by saying that the competence aim relating to indigenous people was one that the teachers at her school had "forgotten" a few years back. None of the other teachers mention it, even though this is the only topic specified in the official curriculum, to which they must adhere. In contrast with the other categories, which have been presented in an order relating to how much agreement there was on an aspect of topic, this category is structured differently. The curriculum explicitly say that "indigenous people" is a required topic, and it is therefore noteworthy that only two of the six teachers mention it. This can be interpreted as not being as present in teachers' understanding of what topics are important when it comes to oral competence. However, it can also be that because teaching based on textbooks often involves topics being mixed together, and therefore, the segments on indigenous people may be included in teaching but may only be a part of a larger topic.

5.8.2 Literary texts

A variety of literary works are also mentioned. Teacher A mentions "Harry Potter", "The Hunger Games" and "The Grinch" as literary works they talk about in the classroom. He further mentioned how the use of such works could be a gateway to talk about such topics as "identity" Teacher C also mentions literary works, such as "Romeo and Juliet" along with works written by Ernest Hemingway. Teacher F did mention her love of English literature and indicated that it was often a part of teaching. She did not specify which literary works were used or how they were being utilized in teaching.

5.8.3 English-speaking countries?

In former curricula, topics related to the English-speaking countries have been specified and explicitly mentioned. However, in LK20, teachers are freer and do not need to adhere to speaking about these same countries. These six teachers that were interviewed seemed to still use this as a topic in the classroom. Teacher A describes the American revolution as an established topic at his school for the eighth grade. Teacher B explained that she was not qualified to talk very much about LK20, as her school were seemingly still in a transitionary period where they are moving from one curriculum to the current one. This also explains the apparent confusion of topics which the curriculum requires her to talk about. As I asked about whether her pupils were exposed to not just the American/British accents, but also from Australia/ New Zealand, she responded with "There has at least been some…you are supposed to touch upon the different varieties". She also says that they work a lot with South-Africa, Australia, the US and Britain, but does not specify this in greater detail. Teacher C does not specify working with the English-speaking countries, and only refers to topics he uses in the classroom as social science-topics. Teacher D said about topics in the classroom that "there are a lot of topics that are required to touch upon in English…not that it is history subject…, but there are a few topics. One deals with indigenous people…, cultural differences…civil rights in the US". Though it is not wrong to think that these are relevant topics to talk about in lower secondary school, it is under the incorrect assumption that these are topics that she is required to teach. Teacher D also talked about a topic related to the British Isles but did not go into greater detail on what that entailed. She compliments the students' general oral competence, but that when the pupils are asked topic-specific question on, for example the history of Wales, they do not contribute much. Teacher E is a lot more updated on the current curriculum and points out the fact that they used to have to deal with

these specific topics, such as youth in Britain. Teacher F also seems fairly updated on the fact that the topic of English-speaking countries is not required. General knowledge was the goal of all the topics in English, according to Teacher F. She mentions the American school system, indigenous people in Australia, the American election and so on are only relevant to gain general knowledge and are not directly relevant for higher education. The fact that speaking about countries who are either native English-speakers or former colonies indicate that these topics, though often used to talk about other topics, seems to be used a central framework of theory used in the classroom in teaching connected to furthering the oral competence of pupils. It is clear that English-speaking countries is a central topic and a large contributor to activities in the classroom tied with enhancing oral competence. From some of the statements related to this topic, especially Teacher B and Teacher D, it can be deduced that the textbook used in the classroom is what dictates teaching. Teacher B said that the textbook used is adapted to outdated curricula, but that it still dictates teaching. Teacher F also linked relevant topics for her class directly to the textbook in the English subject.

5.8.4 Society of today and Democracy

The last topic mentioned by a number of the teachers relates to current events, the society of today and culture. In addition, democracy and citizenship, an interdisciplinary topic is also mentioned here, as the answer to that particular question is directly relevant to the fact that topics surround democracy was talked about and is interpreted as important to these teachers' understanding of topics that develop oral competence. Teacher A talked about one topic named "identity" which in today's society where racism and personal identity are highly relevant, is understandable a topic commonly used in the classroom. The topics dealt with in the English language classroom were being used to be able to talk about other topics that can help shape the pupils as human beings. Teacher A also mentioned literary conversation, and that they could be used in the classroom as an introduction to deal with topics relating to culture or society in English-speaking countries. As mentioned in section 5.6.2, Teacher C talked about the use of "Romeo and Juliet" in the classroom. He uses these works to talk about the society of today, and current and important topics. By using "Romeo and Juliet", his class could discuss arranged marriages and other societal topics. He also mentioned how literary works could be used to discuss democracy, which is one of two inter-disciplinary topics. Democracy was a quite popular topic mentioned by several of the teachers, through

this is helped by the fact that they were all asked the question: "To what degree do the oral competence developed in your classroom help the students to becoming participating members of the democratic society? Teacher E began talking about the differences between the pupils when it came to their vocabulary, and how that will affect their preparedness to be a part of the democratic society. Teacher F said that she did think her teaching prepared her pupils to be a part of the democratic society. When speaking of the different English-speaking countries, there were often references to the fact that the American election. Generally, when asked about the interdisciplinary topic of democracy, the answers left something to be desired.

5.9 Oral features

Oral language is too wide a term to use to describe how students speak English. By breaking it down into its individual parts, i.e.- what skills are required to be seen as a competent speaker of English, we can see how the six teachers interviewed understand oral competence in terms of common features of oral features. Understanding oral competence also means being able to identify and, in this setting, remember which skills are important in order to be seen as a competent speaker.

5.9.1 Pronunciation

Pronunciation was the feature of oral speech that was mentioned the most. All six teachers mentioned pronunciation, and the importance of speaking intelligible. However, whereas all teachers mention it, some go into more detail of the importance of each feature. A question was asked to all of the teachers relating directly to pronunciation and accent, which was: "How important is pronunciation and accent for the students' perceived oral competence" This is a question that does not directly answer the thesis question, as this does not relate to "teachers' understanding of oral competence". It was seen as interesting to compare the teachers' perception of what the students perceived in relation to the features of oral language they themselves talk about. Teacher A, oddly enough, answered the question on pupils' perception by explaining how, in assessment situation, the pronunciation of each and every word was not the most important to long as it did not disrupt the message carried. Teacher C talked about the importance of learning how to pronounce new vocabulary in oral presentations, and how comments relating to pronunciation of individual word are commonly included in feedback on such oral performances. Teacher D emphasized the importance of the

pronunciation being intelligible, and also points out that even if a pupil says "potAto" or "potEIto", it only matters that the receiver understands. She is the only teacher who displayed an understanding of recipient awareness, which is visible in her understanding of the importance of pronunciation in communication. Teacher E has a few contradicting, but interesting answers on pronunciation. Firstly, she compares their accents, and how the pupils' pronunciation is more correct and the accent more closely resembles British when reading something that they have prepared. Because this is a result of reading fluency, it cannot be seen as a reliable observation of oral pronunciation proficiency. Secondly, she believes that because the classroom is a more unsafe environment, their language is being affected, but that by being in the safe environment of their own home their language improves. Teacher F is the only teacher of the six who talk about the different sounds of the English language. She mentions the V/W-sound as something being mentioned to pupils, but it is unclear the importance she puts on this. Teacher B's answer relating to pronunciation showcases the first issue relating to the fact that this thesis is written in a different language than the interview in its original language. When asked about what criteria are in place when assessing the oral competence of the pupils, she started by listing such terms as vocabulary, being able to maintain a conversation, and also "pronunciation and the- if they speak very British English or American English or if they speak English with a VERY Norwegian accent…" The Norwegian word "uttale" and accent are used somewhat interchangeably. However, this statement does reveal that not adhering to the traditional native English accents does affect her perceived oral competence of the pupils. To sum up, the teachers all talk about the importance of pronunciation, but it is also interpreted as being less important than other features and is not held in the same regard as vocabulary and grammar, the other foundational skills of English. Pronunciation as an oral skill is not as important as the communicative goal of a message.

5.9.2 Accent

Accent and speaking in a variety of Englishes directly leads to a question every teacher was asked. This question relates to how communication is the most important aspect of being able to speak English. Less importance is being placed, in school as well as real life, on speaking perfect RP English- or American accent. The question asked whether they thought "the lesser focus in the new curricula on having a very distinct British/American accent can help the

students". Even though this question can be viewed as fairly leading, it also allows for further explanation of why it may have been a positive or negative development. Some of the results within the term "accent" could also have been mentioned in the previous section. Because of the context within which they were said, it is the conclusion of the researcher that it is more fitting that certain statements belong here. Even though "uttale", which directly translates to "pronunciation" is the word being uttered, the context dictates that the teacher is in fact speaking about "uttale" as "Norwegian pronunciation" or "British pronunciation". The demographic nature of accents is more closely related to these terms than what the previous section on pronunciation would be.

Teacher A spoke of the role media, movies and TV has on pupils in the classroom, and talked about the weakening positions of the established English accents. He also mentioned the positive impact of TV-shows like "Squid Game", where different accents of English are somewhat showcased. Moving away from traditional Hollywood-culture and instead being exposed to different varieties of English leads to an enrichment of the language. Teacher B's views on accent were very clearly affected by a student in a current class. Firstly though, she expressed her views on accents by saying that if the students had a "VERY Norwegian accent…(that) is a part of assessment." She compared that in contrast with being able to speak British or US English, thereby implying that users of those variants of English would be more easily seen as competent speakers. She also twice mentioned how some students, whose competence was top notch, still chose to speak in an unnatural Norwegian, or even Russian-English accent. Her conclusion was that this "joke-English", as she called it, was a result of the student wanting to feel more self-assured in the classroom. Teacher C had very clear view on accents. "We don't think about what accent the pupil has. That is not the most important. The most important is to communicate…It does not matter if the student has a Nigerian or Indian accent…that is the second circle- they've got English as a native language as well" He is the only one of the six teachers who included the theoretical backing to why accent should be less important than the skill of being able to communicate. He recognizes that because other variants of English are equally native as the more traditional British and American, discouraging the use of them is neither important nor useful.

Teacher D used examples to explain her view on accents of English. She both exemplified that under previous curricula, pupils who had oral examinations could have completed an absolutely flawless exam, and still be downgraded if their English sounded "too Norwegian". This would not happen in the English language classroom of today. She also talks about how Jens Stoltenberg speaks English with a very Norwegian accent and is nonetheless respected and understood in the formal situations his job in NATO requires. Being able to communicate is top priority, in any shape it may come. Teacher E, not unlike Teacher B also mentioned how the pupils alter their accent and adopt a more Norwegian-sounding accent when speaking in the classroom. Though Teacher E also talks about RP-English and of how little importance and impact that should have in the classroom. It seems that accent once again takes a backseat position to communication. Teacher F's view on accent was clear and consistent throughout. Communicative speech was most important, and accent was neither good nor bad, but simply unimportant. The general comments about accent leads to an interpretation that the development of English as communicative language subject has shifted focus in teachers' understanding of accent in oral competence.

5.9.3 Intonation

Intonation was mentioned by Teacher D, Teacher E and Teacher F, whereas stress was only mentioned by Teacher D and Teacher E. "Intonation" is a technical term that could be found in the interview guide, and such they had all been asked a question relating to it. However, only the three teachers mentioned above touched upon it further. Teacher D mention both intonation and stress. She mentions stress in the form of an example sentence often used in the classroom: "Can you give me that pencil". Intonation of the different words can change the meaning and focus of the question. Though stress are mostly mentioned as part of intonation, it is still interpreted as her having an understanding of the term and its role despite it not being further explored. Teacher E mentions frequently intonation as something that is not very important for her pupils to learn, but did not want to explain further why.

5.9.4 Fluency

Fluency was a term mentioned by Teacher A Teacher B and Teacher E, though Teacher B did have some contrastive thoughts on the subject. She said first that "to know many words is

important to uphold fluency". The question was on criteria for assessment, and it unclear whether she meant accordance between the topic and what the pupils are saying or accordance in what specific words they use and the meaning they are trying to convey. However, she also talked about how students may arrive at different points at different times and said, "some might have fluency before they have vocabulary". These points seem to be contrastive to what was said earlier. Teacher E also talked about fluency in a reading exercise. She said, "It might be that I give a text that they are to read to me- simply to listen to the fluency" She also talked about the importance of fluency for a pupil's competence, and how it was equally important to vocabulary, and more important than pronunciation. Fluency was mentioned a fair few times by the teachers, but most often implicitly as an end-result of mastering a more specific oral skill, such as for example: pausing.

5.9.5 Phonetics

Phonetics and the teaching of how English sounds should be articulated is not very present in these interviews. Only Teacher E and Teacher F briefly mention it. Teacher E talks about an activity commonly used to teach phonetics where a phonetically written word is to be matched with a picture of the same thing. Teacher F does not go into detail, but it is clear that she does not either see the value or simply thinks it is a boring subject to teach, as she sarcastically described it as "the most fun thing we do". Seeing as phonetics is linked to pronunciation, it was surprising that this was not mentioned more frequently and by more of the teachers.

5.9.6 Pauses

Only one of the teachers frequently mentioned usage of pauses as a feature of oral speech. Teacher E frequently mention it as a hindrance to fluency. It is important to note that pauses are important in oral speech, and proper use indicate competence, as explained in the literary review. What this teacher mentioned frequently are situations where lack of knowledge of how to continue talking leads to pauses because the student has to think, and that taking "100 thinking-breaks in 5 minutes" is not ideal. Pauses were solely mentioned as a negative, and not as a positive and vital skill to uphold fluency.

5.9.7 Natural language

The last oral feature is something that one of the teachers mention, though it is unclear exactly what was meant. Teacher F talk about how "by listening in the classroom when the pupils talk to each other…I am listening to whether they can pull out a natural language. To make the language out of what has already been said". This can be interpreted to mean authentic language, though it can also be linked to appropriate discourse. Teacher B also mention natural language, and it seems that authentic settings are what they strive for in the classroom., but also fails to name different authentic settings or situations.

5.10 Changing status of English language teaching

The teachers had many opinions on both what kind of oral activity they conducted in the classroom, what the context and content of teaching was and how the different elements of oral speech alter and affect the oral speech produced. To understand their opinion on oral competence, it is also important to present some of their opinions on the general status of the English language in Norway in addition to how teaching it has changed.

5.10.1 Not a foreign language

Teacher C questioned the legitimacy of English being defined as a foreign language in Norway. One of the reasons he gave was that in Norwegian schools, it is expected from students after tenth grade English that they have the ability to reflect and use the language to talk about a variety of topics. It was mentioned by Teacher C that these requirements were not the same in the "true" foreign language subjects, such as French, Spanish or German. He also expressed his view on teaching grammar, by saying that he does not work with grammar at lower secondary level, and that the focus of his teaching is other subjects, such as literature and social science. He uses English as a tool to achieve other curricular goals. These opinions affect the view on oral competence in English in comparison to the other foreign language. It also shows how his understanding of English has shifted from language teaching to teaching through the language. These statements indicate that by the time this teacher's students attend lower secondary school, their oral competence in terms of vocabulary and grammar are such that he can focus on content more than language learning, which would be surprising.

5.10.2 Lingua franca

Talking about the status of includes involves talking about its current status as a lingua franca, which is something Teacher D talked about. She said that the current curriculum was better suited to use in the classroom because it "takes into account that English is that world language and lingua franca that it actually is". However, she also compared this to how, before this current curriculum the students "…had to talk about the tasks in the book. This is deduced to mean that the teacher likened the English teaching book as mandatory syllabus and something that was required for the students to learn. Teacher C also touched around the status of accent use and concurred that older English teacher may value having a distinct British/American accent to a larger degree than one newly educated. His opinions on the matter is interpreted that, even though he is not newly educated, his opinion more closely aligns with those who does not have a big focus on accent. Teacher D, to exemplify the development of level of importance for assessment for oral competence, recited a story from an oral exam which was conducted during the last curriculum. The student delivered a near perfect oral exam in every measurable way, except for the fact that the accent sounded too Norwegian-sounding accent. The student's grade was downgraded from six to five for that reason, and that reason only. Teacher D further had an example of Jens Stoltenberg, the general secretary for NATO, whose English accent is also somewhat Norwegian-sounding, and how the importance for oral competence is ability to communicate, and that the development that has been going on, where previous students had their grades downgraded due to teachers focusing on aspects of oral language which are now deemed less importance in relation to simply being able to communicate with others in an intelligible manner.

5.11 Summary of results

The results-section can be summarized in the model seen below. The model consists of three main sections. Foundational skills encompasses both the teachers' understanding of vocabulary and features of grammar in oral competence development in English. Communication is the second results-section. It includes both type and purpose of oral communication along with topics talked about in the interview as pertaining to increasing oral competence. It also includes the context in which oral communication takes place and the

context of learning oral competence. The third and last section includes features of oral language that further oral competence. This section includes intonation, fluency, stress patterns, pronunciation and the shifting attitude to accent. This model shows the way in which teachers understand the different skills and contexts that in combination form an orally competent speaker of English.

Features of Oral Language

Pronunciation
- Intelligibility (syllable centers)
- Consonant phonemes

Intonation

Fluency

Stress patterns

Shifting attitudes to accent

Oral Communicative Competence

Type:
- Prepared monologue (individual, group)
- Active one-way listening
- Interaction (conversation)
- Non-verbal communication (eye contact and body language)

Purpose:
- Relay information about hobbies and interests
- Deliver content knowledge (and personalize it)
- Deliver and justify an opinion on a variety of topics
- See situation (current and historical events) from different perspectives and reason out a conclusion
- Explain/discuss current events
- Deliver a summary and analysis of a text
- "to reflect" - learn about democratic processes by making choices based on information

Topics:
- Indigenous people
- Literary texts
- Societal and political topics, current and historical
- Related to Eng-speaking countries
- Identity
- Prejudice

Context:
- In-person
- Authentic, natural (classroom settings, other pupils)
- Digital

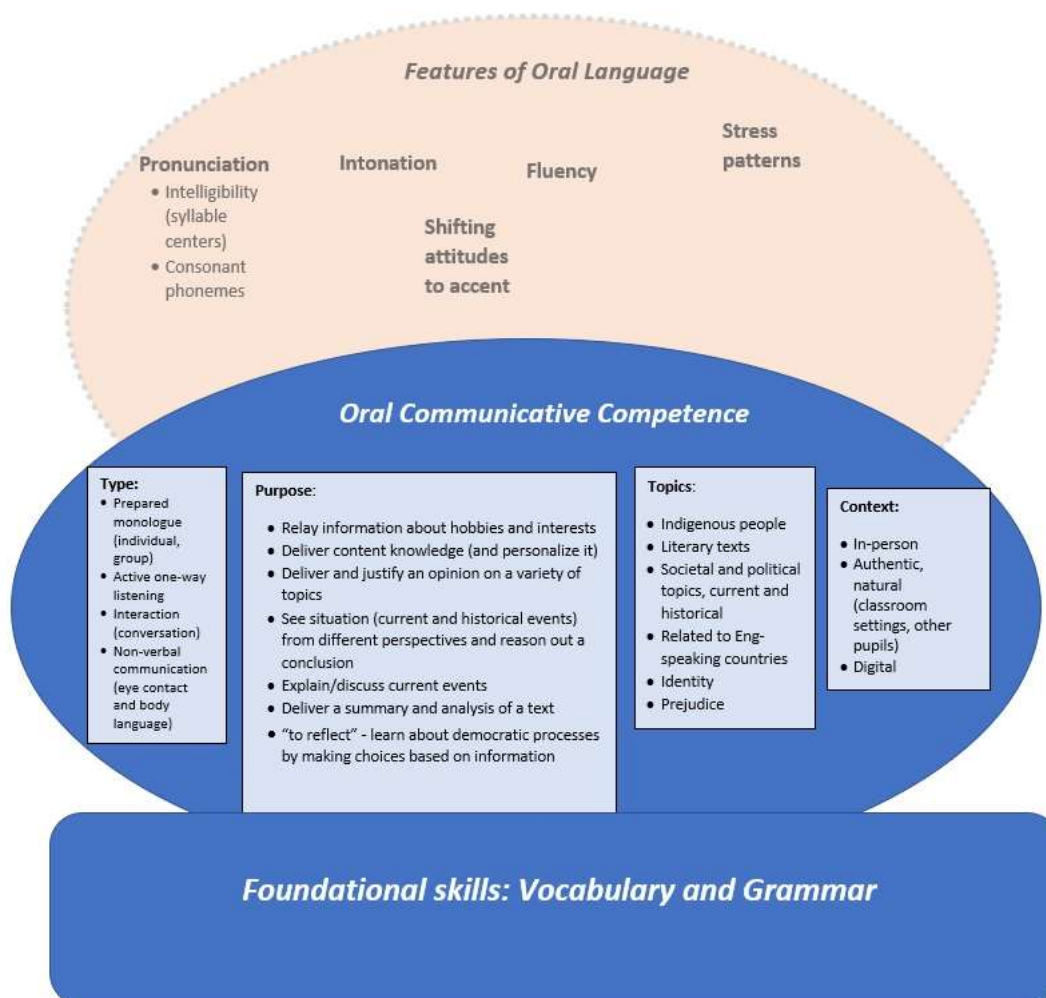**Foundational skills: Vocabulary and Grammar**

Figure 1 Teachers' understanding of oral English competence in Norwegian lower secondary school

6.0 Discussion

The aim of this thesis was to investigate and gain an insight into teachers' understanding of oral competence in English. The aim of this section is to consider, discuss and reflect upon

these findings in light of the main ideas presented in the literature review and the curriculum presented in section 3.0. The discussion is structured into sections which will each discuss different areas of the teachers' understanding in light of the literature and curriculum. The thesis question of this master's thesis is: "How is English oral competence understood by teachers in lower secondary school in Norway?" Throughout this next section, the content of the literary review, curriculum and the results of the interviews will be presented, discussed and reflected upon.

6.1 Knowledge of language- vocabulary and grammar

6.1.1 Vocabulary

The foundational skills vocabulary and grammar were discussed numerous times by all the teachers. They all spoke of its importance in terms of their understanding of the parts that make up oral competence in English. In terms of the different aspects of vocabulary presented in the literature review, vocabulary is unquestionably a part of oral competence, and a foundation for all future learning of the language (Husnu (2018) in (Phoeun & Sengsri, 2021, p. 1032) It is, however, interesting that even though vocabulary is discussed by all the teachers, only one of the teachers, Teacher A, mentions the difference between receptive vocabulary and productive vocabulary. The teachers spoke of learning new terminology connected to topics in order to enhance the language, but they fail to mention the difference between being aware of what a word means and being able to utilize it naturally in speech (Thornbury, 2005, pp. 22-23)

One omission from their understanding of the role of vocabulary is that chunks and chunking is never mentioned. As explained in the theory section, chunks are the elements that make up speech, as opposed to individual words. If every word was cognitively placed after each other without context the speech would become less fluent (Thornbury, 2005, pp. 23,33). When speaking is speech production, it is therefore noteworthy that, if speech is produced and cognitively developed through the use of chunks, it would also be natural to assume that the teachers also mention it. This seems to indicate they think less about work with longer stretches of language, like collocations, idiomatic expressions and other types of chunks listed in (Thornbury, 2005, p. 23)

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In the curriculum, it is also important to position the importance of vocabulary. It is mentioned twice. Firstly, it is mentioned in core elements, under language learning as one of five oral skills related to knowledge of English as a system. There, it is said of vocabulary that it "gives the pupils choices and possibilities in their communication and interaction" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020). Secondly it is also mentioned in section 3.2, as competence aim nr.5. It says that pupils are to express themselves with a varied vocabulary. It is definitely mentioned, but maybe not as much as one would think when one considers the relevance it had for the six teachers' understanding of oral competence. Throughout the interviews, when asked questions related to what kind of oral competence they valued in various settings, the teachers consistently mentioned vocabulary. It was also consistently mentioned as the first skill, which indicates that the teachers immediately thought of it in relation to oral competence. Without the language to express what one means and thinks, the pupil cannot even say anything. For these teachers, this language consisted primarily of vocabulary items. Teacher B directly attributed a lack of available vocabulary as the reason why a conversation stops. She thereby also mentioned that "the most important thing for them is to know words". This statement shows that Teacher B directly attributes using vocabulary to be used in conversation to vocabulary the speaker "knows", i.e., can understand or have knowledge of. There is no discernible division between receptive and productive vocabulary based on her comments on vocabulary. Teacher C does mention learning of new words, much like Teacher D mentions expanding the vocabulary, but neither giving any explanation how to teach vocabulary learning or why this is of such importance.

Teacher C generally expressed that vocabulary and grammar were not taught very explicitly in the classroom. However, he does mention working with new words and also ties this in with pronunciation. Burns also defines vocabulary as a sub-skill along with grammar and pronunciation (Burns, 2019, p. 3). There was a general agreement among the teachers that vocabulary and grammar were vital in oral competence, but only Teacher C included pronunciation of said words as an additional aspect of learning them. Pronunciation, though defined by Burns (Burns, 2019, p. 3) as a foundational skill on the same level as vocabulary and grammar, did not hold an equally important place in the teachers' understanding of oral competence. The comments were frequent by the teachers that it was not very important to their understanding of oral competence. An example of this is when Teacher F said that she

attributed an assessment of low competence in English "to words, not necessarily pronunciation. Teacher B also downplayed its importance when asked whether she valued it in assessment. Her response was "a bit important, but not very important…words is most important". "Words" would be reference to vocabulary knowledge, which she consistently lifted as most important.

The curriculum, under core elements, language learning, also places pronunciation, specifically of phonemes alongside both vocabulary and grammar. The competence aims also mentions pronunciation in the aim which states that pupils after tenth grade are expected to be able to "use key patterns of pronunciation in communication" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020). However, when talking about the role of pronunciation in terms of the six teachers interviewed, their response did not reflect this. The teachers consistently downgraded the role of pronunciation in relation to the other aspects of oral competence. An example is Teacher E, who was asked a question on what skills of oral competence were developed in the classroom, and what she was looking for in terms of assessment. Talking fluently, having enough words were listed first. She then said, "I do not place emphasis on pronunciation, intonation…it becomes more a secondary priority". The role of pronunciation in the teachers' understanding of oral competence was generally not regarded as an equally important skill in comparison to grammar and vocabulary. This downplaying of pronunciation can be interpreted as a view on accurate and perfect pronunciation. This, in authentic interactions is not very important as the interaction dictates what is most appropriate language use, as explained by Thornbury when speaking of field of register (Thornbury, 2005, p. 19)

Teacher C, when speaking about vocabulary, inadvertently mentions productive vocabulary, though as it was only mentioned once, and no reference was made to receptive vocabulary in any way, this is not interpreted of him understanding it in terms of vocabulary learning. It can instead be interpreted as gap in teachers' knowledge on how vocabulary learning is supposed to be. Commenting on its importance, but not mentioning any of the different aspects of the term, or saying anything on how this might be taught, is interesting and worrying.

One thing which is interesting when speaking of vocabulary is the teachers' comments about how vocabulary knowledge are the building blocks of speech, and not chunks. Based on the theory presented by Scott Thornbury (Thornbury, 2005, p. 23) it is in fact what makes up speech cognitively in a manner which is fluent. The pertinent question would be: Why are chunks not a central part of teachers' understanding of oral competence, when it is clearly an important aspect of the foundational skill in order to learn to speak English.

Another aspect which was mentioned by two of the teachers is internalizing vocabulary. Teacher A mentions it as useful in order for the pupil's language to sound more "theirs" in presentations. Teacher E says that internalizing also develops fluency. By internalizing words, the pupils would not have to "retrieve" the words every time they were to use them, but that they would simply be a part of their active vocabulary. Based on the reasoning for internalizing given by Teacher E, this can be seen as a way to talk about chunks. She does not specifically mention it, but the advantages of chunking, i.e., fluency, is somewhat similar to Teacher E's understanding of internalizing vocabulary and the effect that has on a pupil's oral competence.

To sum up this section, vocabulary is definitely central in teachers' understanding of oral competence, and more so than both the theoretical works relating to oral competence and the current curriculum. Active vocabulary is mentioned when it comes to increasing fluency, but the term "chunks" is, as evidenced, not a part of these six teachers' active vocabulary.

6.1.2 The role of grammar

The second foundational skill, and the topic of section 5.2 was grammar features. This section encompasses both syntax, grammar mistakes as well as formulation and accuracy. Grammatical accuracy and grammatical correctness were mentioned by four of the teachers.

Grammar is mentioned numerous times in the curriculum, such as in the part of the core element language learning, where word structure and syntax are talked about as the elements of language that give the speaker "choices and possibilities in their communication and their interaction" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020). In addition, the basic skills section on oral skills

also mentions "using the spoken language gradually more accurately…in order to communicate" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020). The competence aims also have elements of grammar features mentioned. Syntax and knowledge of word classes are named as important when working with text, thereby also showing its role as an oral skill in text creation. It further talks of word inflection, but the curriculum generally fails to include any instruction or strategies for implementing grammar as a part of teaching oral English in the classroom. The literary review had a different focus on spoken grammar than that of the LK20. According to Scott Thornbury, the appropriate grammar for an oral interaction is created between the interlocutors of a situation. This can relate back to how the curriculum, when speaking of the role of grammar in oral competence, "adapting message to the purpose, receiver and situation" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020). Grammar in oral competence needs to, according to the curriculum, be adapted to the context with interlocutors and the purpose.

The teachers' understanding of the role of grammar in developing oral competence was often removed from context. Teacher A's understanding of grammar in the context of assessment in the classroom was that it was included as criteria, but clearly of less importance than pronunciation, and less important than communication. He said that he "did not give feedback on grammar if it was not in focus". This suggests that grammar was not a topic of discussion unless he had asked the pupils to be especially aware of it. He also underlined that one does not need to have perfect grammar, and yet can still communicate a message well. This suggests that communicative grammar is of higher importance than accurate grammar. This can more clearly be linked back to the theory by Thornbury, and that, at least for this teacher, though he mentions grammar and activities linked to it is not his main priority in the spoken English language classroom. In addition, Teacher A and Teacher B both said that grammar was further down the list of priorities. Teacher B actually listed the priorities for oral competence. Words were most important; fluency was second and grammar third. And so long as the message communicated with the receiver, the other aspects of oral competence would be in the backdrop. These statements are indicative of a change in the English in schools in Norway. This change shifts the focus of English language teaching. English is not longer to be considered an EFL, but rather an ELF. English as a lingua franca puts the main focus of English in communicative goals and being able to convey messages to a variety of people in a variety of settings.

Teacher C was the only one whose opinion was directly in contrast with the rest on grammar, though he also contradicted himself. On an early question, he was asked how the LK20 affected his assessment practice. He said that the curriculum, and more specifically the competence aims, were guiding, and said he did work with topics within grammar such as syntax, word classes and word inflection. This statement is in direct contrast to another comment he made in response to the interview prompt:…"by discussing current topics in English and using the knowledge…is that not evidence that the students are competent enough in the language competence to use it as a tool for learning", was asked by the researcher. Teacher C responded by saying that "when we have English lessons, we do not work with grammar but rather topics related to literature and social science". It can be speculated why this very clear tension arises in Teacher C's understanding of the role of grammar in oral competence, though based on the fact that he first recited the curriculum, and then said he did not do much grammar teaching in the classroom, the latter is likely his most accurate description of his practice in the classroom. Teacher C briefly mentions sentence structure, but the use of the word syntax was only said by two teachers, Teacher E and Teacher F.

As evidenced by the comments made by Teacher A and Teacher C, English language teaching is content-focused. The wish to teach students accurate grammar is in contrast with this teaching, as the grammar-section of assessment is often of less important than reciting information and knowing the content of, for example an oral presentation in preparation of exams (Chvala, 2012, pp. 242-243)

6.2 Features of oral language

The model presented in the very end of section 5.0 is created to show how the teachers spoke on the different aspects of oral competence. At the very top of this model, i.e. what was mentioned the least of the three main areas, was features of oral language. This section of the results was not as relevant to their understanding of oral competence than the rest. This section includes pronunciation, intonation, fluency, stress patterns and a shifting attitude to accent.

As was mentioned in the section on vocabulary, pronunciation was consistently talked about by the teachers. Teacher D did not value pronunciation as a vital part of oral competence. And the other teachers place communicative intent as the highest priority. The conclusion made by Teacher D leads to an interpretation that accurate pronunciation and consonant phoneme pronunciation may have been used interchangeably. Intelligibility was mentioned by four of the teachers as important, yet the same also downplayed the role of pronunciation in oral competence understanding. This conflict of opinion is difficult to attribute to anything other than a lack of an in-depth understanding of the full scope of the different elements of pronunciation.

The teachers were asked about the importance of intonation in terms of intelligible oral speech, and the answers reveal little of the teachers' understanding of its role in oral competence. Teacher E and Teacher F talked about how the competent pupils need to focus on their intonation in such a way to not sound too Norwegian. A Norwegian intonation is not very clear, and the other teachers who used the term, Teacher D and Teacher B did mention intonation, but could give little insight into how it may impact oral competence. The general impression of intonation among these teachers, is that they do not really understand the term. Teacher E mention intonation when speaking about students whose accent sounded Norwegian. Unlike pronunciation, intonation is not specifically named in the curriculum, but is included as "key pattern" in the competence aim "use key patterns of pronunciation in communication" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020)

Fluency was a feature of oral language that the teachers mentioned as important for oral competence. Fluency is, as explained in the literature section 2.2.1, is an aspect of oral language consisting of many different aspects, which to some degree were mentioned by the teachers. One area where the teachers' understanding contrast to the literature on fluency, is that the teachers look at fluency as an oral skill which impacts pupils' oral competence. This is not wrong, but the literature review also views it as a goal consisting of many different skills (Thornbury, 2005, pp. 6,23). One of these skills were mentioned by the teachers. This will be discussed in the next paragraph followed by a discussion of the general comments made about fluency and its effect on oral competence for pupils.

Pausing was mentioned solely by Teacher E. She numerous times mentioned how excessive pausing was a hindrance to fluency and did not mention how pausing is a vital component of fluent speech, as explained by (Lintunen, Mutta, & Peltonen, 2020, p. 6). Disfluency occurs when pauses are misplaced, and only function to increase fluency when they have the correct location, length and frequency. Teacher E only pointed out the negatives of pausing while neglecting or not remembering in the interview moment the positive impact correct use of pauses has.

One of the important findings when it comes to oral language features, was the attitude among the teachers on accent. All the teachers were asked to talk about their opinion, and all but one expressed strong opinions on the fact that communicative ability is more important than having an accent. Several of the teachers also pointed out the shift in views on accent as the general trend in schools today is to not base assessment of oral competence on accent. This is also reflected in the curriculum, as accent is not mentioned anywhere in LK20. There is, however one teacher who was not of the same understanding as the rest. Teacher B talked about assessment and mentioned pupils who spoke with an American/British accent in contrast with those who spoke with an overwhelmingly Norwegian-sounding accent. She further mentioned how this contrast would affect the final grade of the pupil. This indicates an understanding of accent as a part of oral competence. However, seeing as five out of six teachers were in agreement that accent was of little importance, there is a changing attitude towards accents in English. The emerging importance of English as a global lingua franca has an impact on the understanding of accent as a part of oral competence.

6.3 Communication strategies

Burns' model details the use of communication strategies, and the effect that has on perceived oral competence in learners. In the six interviews there were, however, very little talk of strategy use. The only strategies mentioned by the teachers were approximation and circumlocution, which are defined in section 2.3.1. These are defined as compensation strategies and are both strategies associated with not finding the correct word to use in speech. Both of the strategies, approximation and circumlocution, are both linked to a lack of vocabulary. This shows how vocabulary is central to the teachers' understanding of oral

competence. In Burns' model (Burns, 2019, p. 3), communication strategies encompass many strategies, all of which are relevant in increasing oral competence. Metacognitive strategies, such as thinking consciously about how to formulate speech or planning to increase confidence and ability to communicate well were never mentioned by the teachers. Conversation and spontaneous speech were mentioned several times by all the teacher, yet any mention of interaction strategies such as asking for clarification, reformulating, rephrasing or checking comprehension to avoid potential communication breakdowns were never talked about by the teachers. Strategy use is mentioned both in theory as vital to oral competence" (O'Malley and Chamot (1990: 6) in (Forbes & Fisher, 2015, p. 174), but also in the curriculum. Interaction strategies are mentioned by Burns (Burns, 2019, p. 3), and interaction and general conversation is mentioned as a common activity in these teachers' language classroom. The two do, however, not seem to cross paths. Strategy use in general is therefore not central to these teachers' understanding of oral competence.

6.4 Listening

Listening is an interesting area of oral competence. The definition of oral skills in the Norwegian curriculum includes listening as well as speaking, and oral competence consists of both the productive skill of speaking as well as the receptive skill of listening. Spoken interaction, however, involves both speaking and listening among different interlocutors. In the literature review, listening was not mentioned as a part of Burns' model of speaking. However, Burns' model of speaking also involves strategies for interacting with interlocutors, and that is where the receptive skill listening is vital. Any interaction involves listening and is key to being a competent speaker of English (Burns, 2019, p. 3). In the current curriculum, under basic skills, listening is listed as one of three main areas of oral skills along with speaking and engaging in conversation. The competence aims also mention listening as a part of interaction in "following up input" in a conversation where listening is key. Despite attention to listening both in the curriculum and what the literature says mentioning listening, it is not necessarily of central concern to the six teachers interviewed in this thesis (Tishakov, 2018, pp. 51-65). As presented in previous section on results, listening as an oral skill was not something every teacher acknowledged or readily included. Teacher A was the only one to point out different types of listening, active and passive, and describe in detail the impact of listening skills on overall oral competence.

Teacher B and Teacher C both mention listening as a type of oral communication but since both define it similarly to how it written down in the curriculum, their knowledge of use of listening as a way to enhance oral competence may be more limited. Both teachers were also asked a direct question which relates listening as a key component of oral competence. Teacher B's only mention of listening was on the subject of the oral exam, and how listening tasks under the new curriculum needed to be an inclusion in oral English exams. Their understanding of the role of listening only relates to the demands set by the curriculum that listening is a part of oral skills. When asked to exemplify this importance either by activities in the classroom or defining what skills contribute to listening competence, neither do. Teacher D only mentioned listening as she was listing different types of assessment criteria and says "…listening comprehension, if we think that it is oral". For this teacher, listening was included as an afterthought at the end of a long list of examples relating to her answer. The fact that she questions whether listening should even be considered as part of oral competence speaks of its tenuous position in relation to the other aspects of oral competence. To summarize, for those teachers who were asked to relate directly to how listening is a part of oral competence, their responses did not reflect an explicit understanding of its role in oral competence. The spoken interaction of any conversation or dialogue requires listening comprehension, though this was not evident in teachers' discussion of listening nor its role in this type of oral performance. The fact that one teacher even question or is not aware of its inclusion in oral competence is a good example of why this needs more attention and further research.

6.5 Genre and contextual expectations in oral communication

Throughout this next section of the discussion the categories of oral communication-type, oral communication-purpose, context and settings and topics will be discussed. These categories show how the teachers understand oral competence in the classroom and how it is to prepare the students and teach them to become orally competent in the English language.

6.5.1 Genre

The genre of a speech event dictates how the speaker can communicate a message appropriately. As explained in the literature review section, genre refers to "a type of speech event, especially in terms of how that speech event might be labelled by its participants" (Thornbury, 2005, p. 14). Genre is determined by three factors, field, tenor and mode (Thornbury, 2005, p. 19) It is also said of genre that it describes "the patterned or predictable ways in which members of a culture use language to achieve a particular social purpose" (Custance, 2007, p.38) in (Tishakov, 2018, p. 53) The purpose of English language teaching is therefore to teach pupils how to communicate with people in a variety of genres. The curriculum also details the kind of qualities a competent English speaker has, and what kind of purposes they are supposed to be able to deal with through the teaching of the English subject. The basic skills section of the curriculum says that speakers are to adapt the language to the purpose, receiver and situation (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020). Field, as mentioned above, refers to what a speaking situation is about. Tenor is the relationship between speakers. Mode refers to choice of channel, such as a prepared speech in-person or a pre-recorded conversation. From this it can be deduced that both the literature review and curriculum have context knowledge and the ability to adapt one's speech to the situation as central points of agreement. In the next section, the categories for oral communication will be discussed for results will be examined and discussed in light of the criteria for oral communicative competence that has been showed present in both the literature review and the LK20 curriculum. The visual model which represents the discussion points for this next section is at the very end of the results-section, and is the bubble in the middle of the graphic. It is a summary and visual representation of the teachers' understanding of oral communication through the four categories oral communication-types, oral communication- purpose, topics and context and settings.

6.5.2 Types of oral communication

Oral communication-types is the category that involves the different kinds of activities and tasks that the teachers mentioned to develop English oral competence. Prepared speech was a common type of oral communication mentioned. Prepared speech with notes was also common, but the term most commonly used by the teacher was "oral presentation" The types of activities the teachers mentioned that they used in the classroom were quite few. Looking at field, tenor and mode of the activities described by the teachers reveals why these are not

ideal. The field of the oral presentation, which was understood as synonymous with oral competence development, was most often described as presenting a topic the pupils have been working on. This was described exactly by Teacher A, Teacher C, Teacher D, Teacher E and Teacher F. Exactly how the pupils were to present was up to them, and the teachers did not give any indication that pupils were given info on how their language had to be adapted to the situation of an oral presentation. Thereby, field is not taken into account when the pupils of these five teachers were conducting oral presentation.

Tenor, the second factor of genre refers, in this project, to a question posed relating to recipient awareness. Tenor speaks of the relationship between the speaker and the interlocutor, and the language needs to be adapted to the recipient or interlocutor. The curriculum is also clear on adapting a message to the receiver, as explained in both the basic skills section and also in the competence aims (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020). The question that needs to be asked in order to discuss whether tenor was taken into account is: How do these teachers prepare their pupils for the variety of speech events and possible interlocutors that are present in real world interactions? The answer is that recipient awareness is generally quite low, both for the pupils as well as the teachers. The teachers were asked a question from the interview guide on recipient awareness. Their responses varied greatly. Teacher B, Teacher E and Teacher F misinterpreted the question. They responded to the question as who the actual viewer or recipient of oral presentations were, which was in most cases the class and the teachers themselves. They did not go into recipient awareness as an important aspect of oral communication, which would indicate that it is not very present in developing oral competence. Teacher D on the other hand, did say that she was aware of its effect and importance in oral speech acts, but that her class (eight grade) "did not have the communicative ability to actually put it into practice". The fact that three out of four teachers did not connect recipient awareness as important in oral competence leads to the conclusion that this might be a lesser-known aspect of oral competence. This area would benefit from more research, and specifically targeted towards teachers' education.

The mode of the prepared speech events, as described by the teachers, were somewhat varied. The pupils were to both use digital tools as a frame for prepared speech. There were also two of the teachers, Teacher D and Teacher E who talked about podcasts being used. The teachers

were to first listen to and be exposed to podcasts before attempting to create one themselves, either on a self-chosen topic or one relevant to the subject. The teachers therefore understood that the context of the podcast as a pre-recorded digital speech event also created a demand for knowing what language demands were appropriate for that particular context. Another type of oral communication is listening which was discussed in section 6.4.

In contrast to prepared speech, another type of oral communication were spontaneous speech events, and conversations that, for the most part, were being performed spontaneously.

6.5.3 Purpose

The types of oral communication that were mentioned by the teachers were quite few and narrow, with prepared speech being the dominant one. The purposes of communicating orally, however, were much more varied. Presenting is a general term which refers to the loosely defined oral monologic performance where content is to be talked about by the pupils to an audience. This audience was never defined in any way, neither by the teachers, and thereby not to the pupils doing the oral speech either. In comparison, when the curriculum talks of presenting. Another purpose of using the oral language mentioned frequently by the teachers, was the delivery of content knowledge on the topics dealt with in the classroom through the use of appropriate and relevant subject-specific terminology. Teacher E used an example from the classroom where a discussion on climate would result in the pupils picking up words relevant for the topic, such as pollution and recycling. Her assessment of oral competence was based on pupils making these words a part of their productive vocabulary. The purpose of using subject-specific terms. Purposes of communication were often content-related and general, though teachers were more explicit on discussing and supporting an opinion. This could be because this specific purpose is mentioned in Health and life skills section where "expressing (your) opinion" is seen as part of expressing oneselves orally, while less purposes are explicitly identified elsewhere in the curriculum (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020)

6.5.4 Topics

Topics were central in how these teachers understood oral competence. The majority of classroom activities as well as specific speech events in the classroom were centred around

particular topics. Content-based teaching was a recurring theme throughout these teachers' understanding of oral competence. The topics mentioned by the teachers were centred around indigenous people in English-speaking countries and Norway, literature, English-speaking countries and contemporary society and democracy. In the curriculum, these are topics can be recognized several places. The pertinent question relates to relevance and central values. The English language teaching in Norway has as its goal that students gain enough competence to communicate with people of various backgrounds locally, globally, for professional and academic purposes (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020). With this in mind, the range of topics discussed are varied but may not be integrated in teaching in a way that prepares pupils to talk about these topics outside of the classroom.

6.5.5 Context and settings

The role of context and settings for showing oral competence is vital to understand the opinions and understanding of the teachers interviewed. The curriculum states that speakers of English must be able to "express themselves in authentic and practical situations" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020) In terms of the understanding of the importance of variety of context and settings for the pupils in speech events, these teachers did not accommodate this. The speech events were rarely defined as anything more than "speak to the class". The teachers were asked a question on recipient awareness, and did not understand the question as relating to recipient awareness. The teachers interpreted the question as asking who the pupils were talking to or what their own role was in speech performance situations. This indicates that recipient awareness was not present in their understanding. The one teacher who commented on recipient awareness also said she did not feel that this is something the pupils mastered. Through her statements, however, it was also clear that there was also a lack of variety in terms of speaking situations. A basis for communication stated in the curriculum is to communicate with people locally, globally, academically and in everyday life. With the limited amount of "authentic" situations presented by these teachers, it indicates that this part of the curriculum is not being fulfilled. The pupils may learn to speak English inside the classroom, but with a variety of spontaneous and prepared communicative speech performances one encounters outside the classroom, their preparedness is somewhat lacking.

6.6 Changing English subject?

The last category which will be discussed in this section revolves around the status of English and the changing English subject in school today. This thesis has revealed and examined the understanding teachers have for oral competence in school. These opinions they have is influenced by the English subject as a whole, and of the change English has had over these past years. What do these teachers say about English as a subject that reveals their understanding of oral competence. The change in attitude towards accent towards a language more suited to the communicative intent is indicative of a change that is aligned with the development of English as global lingua franca. Teacher C's opinion of English as a subject in school was also indicative of this goal of English teaching. Teacher C claimed that the demands for English-speakers in lower secondary is that they need to use the language to convey messages to a variety of interlocutors and also be able to maintain conversations and discuss important topics, as such the language should no longer be considered a foreign language.

Both Teacher C and Teacher D expressed that accent should no longer be a part of assessment of English. Teacher C exemplified how an older teacher who had worked under previous curricula might be of the opinion that accent does matter. Teacher C, however, underlined the fact that it was not important. Teacher D recited a story of an oral exam where a pupil whose performance was perfect was downgraded from a "6" to a "5" because he sounded too Norwegian. Teacher D pointed out how this would never happen today. Accent can not be found as a criteria in the current curriculum, and the shift of focus can be shown in the competence aim that says ""use key patterns of pronunciation in communication". Every aspect of producing speech has the goal of communicating, which, as was said under grammar features in section 2.0, does not necessarily include accent or "impeccable speech", as Teacher A said.

7.0 Conclusion

As the last aspect of this segment, a conclusion will be made on what was learned by conducting this qualitative study, and how it can further research on the topic of oral competence understanding in Norway.

Seeing as the result of this thesis is based on six qualitative, phenomenological semi-structured interviews, there needs to be an understanding of what that includes, and what the methods used limit in terms of results that are present and conclusions that can be made. This project has many implications. Firstly, it contributes to the understanding of how teachers understand, think about and act in terms of oral competence in the classroom. Secondly, its content can help understand how the teacher education in Norway prepares its students to all the tasks that working in lower secondary school in Norway today entails. Personally, this project has had a huge contribution both to my understanding of the English subject and its teachers but has also given me great insight into how research such as this can be conducted. It can also be noted that this thesis also reveals some findings that were of particular interest, and that leads to further questions and ideas that could be used for further research on the topic of oral competence in lower secondary school in Norway.

There are three main points of interest in the findings that were found interesting, and which gives an insight into the understanding of these teachers' understanding of oral competence. The first one ties in with the title of this thesis. The secondary title for this thesis is: "Their oral competence is good and communicative". This ties in with the result that teachers emphasize communication and communicative ability. However, they use imprecise or general professional or theoretical language to consider specific features of oral communication. The title of the thesis is an example taken from Teacher B. She was asked how she would describe the pupils' oral competence, where the answer was "good". She defined them as competent but did not divulge into how their competence was satisfactory. The understanding of the pupils' language being communicative was a common thread throughout. It was also exemplified by the fact that two of the teachers answered "they can communicate" to a question asking them what makes a pupil communicative competent. The results for this thesis, though interesting, needs more research. A more in-depth interview with a larger sample size where the experience level was more varied would expand the knowledge on this topic. Another interesting project would be tied to observing how

communicative ability is developed in the classroom and seeing where teachers' understanding and teachers' practice differ.

The second finding, which was somewhat surprising was the centrality of vocabulary in their understanding of oral competence. All talked about it, and they believed it as being the most vital oral skill for oral competence and communication. Teacher described her understanding of the importance of it by saying…"Vocabulary is what restricts their (pupils') ability to maintain a conversation". In relation to both the curriculum and theory on the role of vocabulary in oral competence, these teachers emphasize it both generally for language competence and in addition to oral competence more than expected. The strange aspect of vocabulary being one of the most central aspects of oral competence is that neither theory, as explained in section 2.1.1, or the curriculum connect vocabulary to oral competence in the same manner. Once again, more research on this topic would further the understanding of where one such opinion arises. A focus-group interview with teachers would be an appropriate research method, as the data can be created in the conversation, discussion and reflection between the teachers.

The third interesting main finding was related to context of speech events. There was a lack of visible context awareness, both in understanding but also expressed when speaking about practice in the classroom. The curriculum clearly states that speakers must adapt their language to the purpose, receiver and situation, yet this is not reflected in schools. There is a lack of variety of interlocutors and authentic speech events. Further research is definitely needed at this area, with the focus possibly being a look into teacher education in the English subject. Interviewing quantitatively by use of a survey would also possibly help gain a greater understanding of their understanding on a larger, albeit less detailed scale. The curriculum states that teachers must prepare their pupils to communicate locally, globally, academically and in everyday life (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020). This indicates a changing status of English outside of school that has not been fully realized in teachers' understanding of oral competence in school. As oral competence in English is important for the general population, further education of teachers in this area is recommended.

Øyvind Aaberge

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Appendix: Informed consent-form

Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet

How is English oral competence understood and integrated in practice by teachers in lower secondary school in Norway?

Dette er et informasjonsskriv som skal gi deg innsikt i prosjektet du deltek i. Formålet er å undersøke korleis ståa er for munnleg kompetanse i ungdomstrinnet i engelskfaget på ungdomstrinnet. I dette skrivet gir vi deg informasjon om måla for prosjektet og kva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.

Formål

Formålet med dette prosjektet er å undersøke lærarar sine tankar om korleis munnleg kompetanse blir behandla på ungdomstrinnet i engelskfaget. Eg vil finne ut lærarar sine tankar om korleis munnleg engelsk sin rolle i verda endrar seg. Eg vil vidare samenlikne sentrale teoriar og læreplanar og sjå korleis dette skil seg frå lærarens forståelse og praksis i skulen. Sentrale teoriar om munnleg kommunikasjon, kompetansemål og den generelle delen av læreplanen blir brukt som bakteppe for å sjå lærarar sine tankar om og praksis knytt opp til munnleg kompetanse i samanheng. Bakgrunnen for kvifor eg har valt å fokusere på dette emnet i mi masteroppgåve er at engelsk sin rolle i skulen og verda endrar seg i det 21.århundre, og det er interessant å sjå korleis lærarar heng med på denne endringen. Målet er å undersøke korleis forståinga i praksisfeltet forbereder lærarane på alle ulike situasjonar innafor munnleg engelsk i ungdomsskulen. Sentrale omgrep om munnleg kompetanse i engelsk på ungdomstrinnet skal bli belyst både i teori og praksis for å bidra til meir transparent undervisnings- og vurderingspraksis i faget.

Kven er ansvarleg for forskningsprosjektet?
Øyvind Aaberge, masterstudent innan skolerettet utdanningsvitenskap ved Oslomet, er ansvarlig for prosjektet.

Kvifor får du spørsmål om å delta?
Informantane til denne studien er engelsklærarar med varierande erfaring som engelsklærar på ungdomsskulen. Deltakande i studien er 3-6 lærar som jobbar med elevar på ungdomsskulen i Norge.

Kva innebærer det for deg å delta?
Metoden for å delta i dette prosjektet vil innebære eit intervju på ca. 45 minutt der ulike spørsmål om læraren sine tankar, beskrivelsar og erfaringar med munnleg engelsk i klasserommet skal bli utforska. Læraren skal minst ei veke før intervju få intervjuguide. Som semi-strukturert intervju vil det komme tilleggsspørsmål og oppfølgingsspørsmål som ikkje blir spesifisert i intervjuguide. Intervjuet vil bli tatt lydopptak av, som vil bli lagra på ein passordbeskytta einhet fram til transkribsjon er gjennomført. Dette vil ta ca 1 måned etter intervjuet er gjennomført. Den transkriberte dataen blir anonymisert og lydopptak blir då sletta. Klasseromsobservasjon med fokus på læraren sin praksis rundt munnleg kompetanse er

ein del av dette prosjektet. Ved å delta i intervju kan læraren bli spurd om å delta i denne delen av prosjektet. Dette også er frivillig.

Det er frivillig å delta

Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet. Viss du velger å delta, kan du når som helst trekke samtykket tilbake uten å oppgi nokon grunn. Alle dine personopplysninger vil då bli sletta. Det vil ikkje ha nokon negative konsekvenser for deg hvis du ikke vil delta eller seinere velger å trekke deg.

Ditt personvern – korleis eg oppbevarer og brukar dine opplysningar

Opplysningene om deg vil kun bli brukt til formåla fortalt om i dette skrivet. Opplysningene blir behandla konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket. Det er kun Øyvind som har tilgang til dine opplysningar, og lydklipp frå intervju og andre identifiserande informasjon vil bli anonymisert i transkribsjon og i sjølve masteroppgåva.

Kva skjer med opplysningene dine når eg avsluttar forskningsprosjektet?

Opplysningene anonymiseres når prosjektet avsluttes/oppgaven er godkjent, noko som etter planen er sommer 2022. Alle opptak og personopplysningar vil være anonymisert så snart det er transkribert, og denne blir beholdt til prosjektet er ferdigstilt.

Kva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?

Me behandlar opplysningar om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

På oppdrag fra Oslomet-Storbyuniversitet har NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Dine rettigheiter

Så lenge du kan identifiseres i datamaterialet, har du rett til:
- innsyn i hvilke opplysninger vi behandler om deg, og å få utlevert en kopi av opplysningene
- å få rettet opplysninger om deg som er feil eller misvisende
- å få slettet personopplysninger om deg
- å sende klage til Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger

Hvis du har spørsmål til studien, eller ønsker å vite mer om eller benytte deg av dine rettigheter, ta kontakt med:
- Oslomet-Storbyuniversitetet ved Lynell Chvala, tlf: 67237219. Epost: Chvaly@oslomet.no
- Vårt personvernombud: Ingrid S. Jakobsen, tlf: 67235534. Epost: personvernombud@oslomet.no

Hvis du har spørsmål knyttet til NSD sin vurdering av prosjektet, kan du ta kontakt med:
- NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS på epost (personverntjenester@nsd.no) eller på telefon: 55 58 21 17.

Øyvind Aaberge

Med vennlig hilsen

Lynell Chvala   *Øyvind Aaberge*
(Forsker/veileder)

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet *How is English oral competence understood and integrated in practice by teachers in lower secondary school in Norway?*. Eg samtykker til :

- ☐ å delta i intervju
- ☐ å delta i klasseromsobservasjon

Eg samtykker til at mine opplysninger behandles fram til prosjektet er avslutta

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(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)