MA THESIS

M5GLU

May 2023

Ownership in Oral English

Eierskap i muntlig engelsk

Academic thesis

30 credits

Aron Xue & Thomas Berseth

OSLOMET

Oslo Metropolitan University

Faculty of Education and International Studies

Department of Primary and Secondary Teacher Education

Abstract

This study investigates the attitudes towards oral English proficiency among students in Norway. Specifically, the study explores how students conceive of desirable oral English proficiency, and whether such conceptions are related to accent or pronunciation. Additionally, the study examines the relationship between students' conceptions of their own English proficiency and their oral participation in English. This study uses a qualitative research design that primarily utilizes interviews with 8th-grade Norwegian students as the main source of data, complemented by observations as a supplementary data source which then will analyse participants' responses related to their conceptions of desirable oral English proficiency, and whether these conceptions are related to accent or pronunciation.

The results of the study suggest that students conceive of desirable oral English proficiency as being closely related to pronunciation and accent and that pronunciation is essential for effective communication. There was also evidence to suggest that accent and pronunciation played a role in these conceptions, with some participants viewing certain accents as more desirable than others. Moreover, the study found that students' conceptions of their own English proficiency were related to their oral participation in English, with those who perceived their proficiency as higher being more likely to participate in oral interactions.

These findings have several implications for English language teaching and learning. Teachers should be aware of students' attitudes towards accent and pronunciation and how these attitudes may impact their motivation and participation in oral English activities. Furthermore, teachers should be aware of how a focus on grammatical accuracy might impede students' participation. Additionally, teachers should consider working on creating a positive classroom environment that encourages students to take risks and participate actively in oral communication.

Keywords: Accent aims, Accent anxiety, English as Lingua Franca, Language attitudes, Oral participation.

Sammendrag

Denne studien undersøker holdningene til muntlig engelskkompetanse blant studenter i Norge. Spesielt utforsker studien hvordan studenter ser på ønsket muntlig engelskkompetanse, og om slike oppfatninger er relatert til aksent eller uttale. I tillegg undersøker studien forholdet mellom studentenes oppfatninger av sin egen engelskkompetanse og deres muntlige deltakelse på engelsk. Denne studien bruker kvalitativ forskningsdesign som primært benytter intervjuer med elever i 8. klasse som hovedkilde til datamateriale, supplert med observasjoner som en tilleggsdatakilde. Deretter vil studien analysere deltakernes svar knyttet til deres oppfatninger av ønsket muntlig engelskkompetanse og om disse oppfatningene er relatert til aksent eller uttale.

Resultatene fra studien antyder at studentene anser ønsket muntlig engelsk ferdigheter som sterkt knyttet til uttale og aksent og at uttale er avgjørende for effektiv kommunikasjon. Det var også tegn på at aksent og uttale spilte en rolle i disse oppfatningene, der noen deltakere så på visse aksenter som mer ønskelige enn andre. Videre fant studien at studentenes oppfatninger om egne engelskkunnskaper var relatert til deres muntlige deltakelse i engelsk, der de som oppfattet sin kompetanse som høyere, hadde større sannsynlighet til å delta i muntlige interaksjoner.

Disse funnene har flere implikasjoner for engelsk språkundervisning og språklæring. Lærere bør være mer oppmerksomme på studentenes holdninger til aksent og uttale, og hvordan disse holdningene kan påvirke deres motivasjon og deltakelse i muntlige engelskaktiviteter. Videre bør lærere være klar over hvordan fokuset på grammatisk nøyaktighet kunne hindre elevdeltakelse. I tillegg bør lærere vurdere å skape et positivt klasseromsmiljø som oppmuntrer studentene til å ta mer risiko og delta aktivt i muntlig kommunikasjon.

Acknowledgements

We think the completion of this thesis would not have been possible without a jocular co-authorship consisting of much correspondence filled with witty quips. A most jovial co-operation where we were both carefully optimistic and anxious at the same time. This journey would not have been possible without each other.

We would like to express our most deepest gratitude to our supervisor Ingrid Miriam Rodrick Beiler for the invaluable and compassionate guidance. Thank you immensely, for incredible feedback and support. This would not have been possible without your expertise, professionalism and kind words.

I [Aron] am very grateful to Thomas Berseth for being adaptable with my somewhat slow and brooding self. I could not have asked for a better co-author to this thesis for keeping the thesis from straying by being an incredible writer and comrade. I would also like to thank my brother, for providing much needed constructive feedback to this thesis and being stressed for my sake. I am also thankful for the sustenance provided to me during this time by my brother.

I [Thomas] am very grateful as well of having Aron as partner, absolute genius of a mind, and an incredible reader. We definitely worked for our strengths and complimented each other on our weaknesses, giving us a great teamwork. This could never have been completed without you, and an additional thanks to Ingrid for pushing us into believing in ourselves.

Table of contents

1.0 Introduction

Our interest in researching English oral proficiency in younger students is driven by experiences of learning English as a foreign language and the challenges we faced in developing our oral proficiency, motivated us. Our primary focus was to gain insight into the attitudes and challenges experienced by young students as they transition from primary to secondary school where the expectations and pressures are higher.

When I (Thomas) began lower secondary school, my oral English skills were deemed below average. However, by the end of the period, I had made considerable progress and was performing above average. To improve my English proficiency, I adopted an immersion approach and developed a personalized learning strategy. I actively engaged in classroom discussions despite my insecurities about making mistakes. Whenever I was corrected, particularly with regards to pronunciation, I actively practiced repeating the words until I got them right. I changed my "language of thought" from Norwegian to English, and my inner voice adopted an American accent. This allowed me to achieve an American accent when speaking as well, which received positive feedback, despite my limited vocabulary. While feedback increased my motivation for English, looking back, my "good" English only resulted from participating in class, developing an accent, and cramming pronunciations, which I consider to be my only areas of high proficiency in oral English compared to other categories. I believe many students are thinking the same as I did when I was young, increasing my interests in language attitudes.

During my mandatory field practice, I (Aron) experienced very few instances of English engagement among the students. Although I am always astonished by the significantly higher English proficiency of today's students compared to my generation, and I believe reluctance to participate in oral English communication in class remains. I understand the challenges of engaging in a language with limited communicative experience motivation or authenticity that sparks a conversation. Yet some of us might still receive the common request: "Can I say it in Norwegian?". Although this request is understandable, there is a feeling of uncertainty of facilitating a vicious cycle. Without practice, students will not gain fluency and confidence to speak the language, which in turn makes it harder to practice. While studies (see Brevik & Rindal, 2020, p. 935) have found that even speaking as a teacher in the L1 will be beneficial for language learning in L2, in no way do I wish to enforce an English only classroom. It

made me wonder what I can do to help students escape this cycle. There is a likelihood that we will still see the continuation of limited English participation in English lessons, perhaps I can help facilitate towards positive change through this thesis.

After completing the first year of our pedagogical courses, we both realized that we wanted to continue our studies and become English teachers. Our interest in effective ways to learn English led us to extramural English, but we became more interested in exploring thoughts, feelings, and attitudes towards the language. This field resonated with us as we had experienced it ourselves, and we found that previous research was limited in the age groups we wanted to study.

This master's thesis focuses on exploring 14 young students' perspectives on what constitutes proficiency in English, as well as their attitudes towards accents and pronunciation. Although previous research has investigated related topics, our study stands out due to its narrow focus on younger language learners. By collecting and analyzing data from this specific demographic, we gained a unique perspective that adds value to the existing literature. Our research specifically targeted students in the first year of lower secondary school, as we believed that their insights would offer greater depth and nuance to our research question compared to older, more proficient learners who have completed more mandatory English classes. Attitudes towards accent and proficiency in the participants are therefore an avenue we would like to explore in relation to each other. It is worth noting that the interviewees in (e.g., Rindal, 2015; Rindal & Piercy, 2013) studies were in the upper secondary school age bracket.

We believe this study's findings have the potential to influence language teaching and learning practices, as well as enhance our understanding of the complex dynamics between language proficiency and oral communication. By examining students' perspectives on desirable English proficiency, this research offers valuable insights into how language educators can enhance their support and guidance for students in language learning experiences, particularly in the context of oral communication.

1.1 Conceptions of "Good" English

English language proficiency is viewed highly worldwide and is often described as "good English" as an indicator of mastery or competence (e.g., Cunningham, 2020). However, the term "good English" can be problematic because it suggests that there is a single, universally accepted standard for the language, which is not the case. The word "good" implies the existence of "bad" English, which can be a subjective and divisive notion.

English is a pluricentric language with numerous varieties where they all have linguistic features, cultural associations, and social meanings (e.g., Kramsch, 2014, p. 233). What is considered "good" in one context may therefore not be seen as such in another. In Norway, the national curriculum for English' (Ministry of Education and Research) focus on oral skills, emphasizes the communication skills, which includes understanding and use a range of spoken language, accents, and dialects during their 11 years of mandatory English classes. However, the curriculum does not specify the use of any accent, nor is it a part of the assessment criteria (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019). This highlights the importance of recognizing and respecting the diversity of English and promoting communicative competence rather than a prescriptive notion of "good" English. The findings of this study can help inform language teaching practices that support students' communicative competence and recognize the diversity of English language use.

We consider "good" English to be a misnomer for many different perspectives of what English is supposed to be for different people (see Hymes, 2001, p. 46), but it is still used in studies to suggest attitudes towards languages (Cunningham, 2020, pp. 142-156). Depending on how one's view interprets languages to uphold and symbolize one's perspective of what is good and bad might shape their view of language varieties (e.g., Chvala, 2020; Shibata, 2021; Tajeddin et al., 2018). Such conceptions of what "Good" derives from the thought that it is often associated with native speaker norms, which may be unrealistic or unattainable for non-native speakers. Instilling young learners of a perceived deficit on one's English usage disregards individual language identity, reinforce negative perceptions of what can be considered "good" (e.g., Cunningham, 2020; Derwing, 2003). The term can be considered a language attitude of monolingualism that has a considerable effect on language learning and usage (Canagarajah, 2013, pp. 18, 20, 37).

For many speakers, achieving L1 accented speech in English may not be necessary to achieve their personal or professional goals. The notion of "good English" can perpetuate linguistic

and cultural hierarchies, in which some varieties of English are deemed superior to others (Jenkins, 2009, pp. 35-37). Thus, thinking achieving L1 accented speech is indicative for good oral English proficiency by implication. An example of this could be, standard British English or Standard American English being considered more prestigious than other varieties, where the other varieties are labelled as "incorrect" or "bad" English.

1.2   Research questions

First and foremost, our most significant interest and focus were proficiency in oral English. With the increased globalization of the English language and English as a **Lingua Franca**, the importance of continuing research on the topics rises. A reason for choosing this age (12–13-year-olds) would provide more insight and information about our topic that the older L2 learners, which has a higher level of competency in mandatory English classes, could not. Attitudes and proficiency in the participants are therefore an avenue we would like to explore in relation to each other. The interviewees in Rindal (2015) study, which focused on English language accent attitudes in Norway, where British English, American English, and Neutral English are the three most common varieties (e.g., Rindal, 2015; Rindal & Piercy, 2013) We took inspiration in this; thus, our choice of interviewees is influenced by the need to understand how these different English accents are perceived and valued in our study participants.

We aim to build on previous research and provide more information to the topic with these research questions:

RQ 1: How do students conceive of desirable oral English proficiency?

RQ 2: How do students' attitudes towards accent and proficiency relate to oral participation?

The first research question of this study is to examine students' perceptions of desirable oral English proficiency. Specifically, we aim to explore whether students place importance on pronunciation as a component of their oral proficiency, and if so, which specific aspects of pronunciation they deem most critical.

The second research question aims to investigate the relationship between students' attitudes towards accent, their proficiency levels, and their willingness to participate orally in English. We seek to understand how students view accents concerning their language proficiency and their accent goals in relation to their identity.

1.3   Thesis structure

This master's thesis consists of 6 chapters, excluding the first chapter of introduction. The second chapter focuses on presenting the theoretical framework and relevant terminologies and a comprehensive review of existing literature on the research topic is presented in the separate third chapter. The fourth chapter outlines the methodology employed to answer the research questions, including data collection followed up with ethical considerations and analysis procedures. Credibility will then be provided in the end the chapter. The fifth chapter presents our findings, which have been analysed to be further discussed considering relevant theory and previous research in the sixth chapter. The last chapter, we summarize the research, highlighting our contributions to the existing literature, offering suggestions for future research, and presenting our concluding remarks.

2.0 Theory

In this chapter we introduce the theoretical framework of our research. We begin by presenting theoretical terms such as native and non-native speakers, as well as the concept of English as a Lingua Franca and communication accommodation theory, followed up by language attitudes, English oral Proficiency, accent anxiety and willingness to communicate. We have focused on theories that will assist us in understanding different factors that are in play for students' English proficiency, attitudes and participation.

2.1 Native and non-native speaker and ELF

A native speaker is someone who has spoken or heard English from a very young age in natural settings, usually from parents. "Native speakers of a language, it seems, can fill time with talk easily, speak smoothly, appropriately, correctly, with ease and effortlessness. But it appears extremely difficult to pinpoint where this perception comes from" (Götz, 2013, p. 1). Today there are many varieties of English that are valued more than others. However, according to Rindal (2014b), many non-native English users are more proficient in English than the natives in comparison with (Rindal, 2014b, pp. 7/17-17/18). The terms "native speaker" and "non-native speaker" carry significant ideological weight in terms of equating manners of speech towards proficiency. Chvala (2020) emphasize ideologies of English as connotations that English as a language symbolizes, which can be interpreted positively or negatively. Examples to this would be *English is foreign*, *English is cultural heritage* or *English is in flux* (Chvala, 2020, pp. 2-7). "Native speaker" is often used interchangeably with L1 user, although this term has been problematized. The distinctions come from Kachru's circle model from 1992, which includes different stages of when and where the English language is learned and categorized thereafter (Kachru, 1992). The model has some flaws, which Kachru admits (see Graddol, 2006, p. 110) since the outer circle in the model has become more inaccurate due to development and progression of the English language (Rindal, 2014b, p. 7/17). However, the model's categories reflect a national view of language, making it a valuable illustration.

The terms L1 and L2 are neutral and do not carry the same value judgments as the native and non-native speaker distinction. L1 and L2 are useful terms for describing a person's language background and can be used to identify differences in language proficiency, acquisition, and use (Cook, 2016). For instance, a person who has learned English as their L2 may have difficulty with certain grammatical structures that usually are not noticeable in an L1. While

the distinction between native and non-native speakers can be useful in certain contexts, it is important to recognize its limitations and potential for discrimination (Cook, 2016, p. 104).

Although earlier theories on English language use focused on native speakers and non-native speakers, recent research on English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) has expanded to include the use of English among non-native speakers from different linguistic backgrounds to facilitate communication in international contexts. There have been numerous studies on ELF throughout the 1990s, from various researchers. In previous years, ELF was looked at and explored from different perspectives of ranges of linguistic levels and sociolinguistic contexts and synergies as well as its meanings for the fields of second language acquisition and English as foreign language.

Kachru's model from 1992 explains the English expansion in today's world with his three circles where the most significant aspect of Kachru's model is the expanding circle, which represents speakers of EFL (Kachru, 1992). His three circles model is what the first generation of ELF developed in response to. European varieties of English are behind in the same field of research because the assumption has been that European varieties of English versions are not legitimate versions as they did not undergo colonisation (Jenkins, 2006). According to Kachru (1992) the outer circle should represent the institutionalized non-native speaker varieties that had passed through an extended period of colonization, which explains the stigma on European varieties. The European English speakers are usually speakers of ELF as well, in the way that they learn English in school from early ages and learn more from intercultural communication than communicating with people with English as a first language (Jenkins, 2006).

One of the complications for ELF is that there are other terms that can collide with it. International English sometimes can be used in a different manner, for example seeing English as an international language, making the term ELF misleading, because it can suggest that there is a clear distinguishable, codified and unitary variety called international English, which is not the case, but rather an English language that is different to whomever speaks it (Jenkins, 2006). ELF researchers have also, to some extent, excluded people who have English as mother tongue from their research data collection and are defining ELF as contact language which is used only among non-mother tongue speakers. However, some researchers (e.g., Trudgill & Hannah, 2013), also include the countries with people who have English as the official language.

Although the orientation to ELF communication originally focused heavily on form according to Jenkins (2015), she argues whether or not ELF is in a need of change of its theory because of its multilingual nature. The article Jenkins wrote in 2015 provides an overview of first-generation and second-generation ELF research and concludes with the need of a third generation of ELF research that situates ELF more explicitly within multilingualism. ELF needs to be a nuanced version of Kachru's model of which his goal was to legitimise different Englishers, and ELF is a way of legitimizing across those different Englishers who does not have that stable status (Jenkins, 2015).

Jenkins (2022), discusses the thought of accommodations in ELF to continue her previous work of using English as a Lingua Franca. There has been a neglect of studies accommodations from the early 1990s hence, Jenkins eager to do so herself. Applying accommodations theory in combination with ELF was a way of adding a new strand to the theory, which lead to new explanations of linguistic adjustments in communications between societies with different cultural backgrounds and English as Lingua Franca. The earlier studies of ELF where (Jenkins, 2000) explored the accommodations theory in connection to pronunciation and phonological variations. Her study revealed that "participants replaced their preferred first language influenced pronunciations with more nativelike versions in communication situations where it was crucial for them to be understood" (Jenkins, 2022, p. 3). While aspects entailing to first language English speakers might ease communication with specific native English speakers, this does not prevent others from participating in communication in the outer circles or people in the Expanding circle.

Understanding the Communication Accommodation Theory and its applications in English as a Lingua Franca is crucial for comprehending the adjustments people make in communication to create, maintain, or decrease social interactions, as well as how these adjustments can affect the outcomes of the communication.

2.2   Communication accommodation theory

Communication accommodation theory (CAT) is exploring the way in which we adjust our communication to accommodate interlocutors and what our motivation for doing so is (Whaley & Samter, 2007). CAT provides a wide range of predictions of explaining of why people make the adjustments they do to create, maintain, or decrease social interactions. Convergence as an attempt at social integration have generally been positive evaluated by the receivers according to a study by Bourhis et al. (1975), where they saw that it validated the

recipient's own way of expressing themselves. Converging people are generally viewed more favourable than diverging people because it is perceived as more efficient communication as well as cooperative (Whaley & Samter, 2007). There can also be negative outcomes of this. A so-called "full convergence" in the case of foreign language can seem to be not desirable as it can seem controlling and be met with distrust according to a study by Preston (1981). The motive for either converging or diverging is crucial to whether it spikes a positive or negative reaction. When the addressee makes their evaluation of the interlocutor's competence, effort and external pressure of expectations, which impels the speaker to act in a certain way (Whaley & Samter, 2007). Hence if a person is known to have lesser communicative competence, a nonaccommodative stand could be justified.

Power differentials is also something to keep in mind as a teacher is expected to converge to those in subordinate positions. Students will try to upward converge to their teacher by using formal English with scientific terms, and the teacher who will downward converge to their students by using a more informal and lay language (Whaley & Samter, 2007). However, this can be perceived as disrespectful or condescending. According to CAT the people are manifesting different strategies like language styles, dialects, pronunciation, lexical differences, and other non-verbal behaviours. The strategies are skills to accommodate interlocutors and are used to convey a message in the most effective and understandable way possible between each other.

2.3   Language attitudes

Language attitudes refers to the people's feelings and beliefs about the specific language and its varieties. These attitudes are a part of what shapes the individual's language identity and social identity (Giles & Rakić, 2014, p. 16). The study of language attitudes which has gained some attraction recently has particularly been focused on the sociolinguistic field which seeks the understanding of language functions in a society. Many researchers on sociolinguistics have studied various aspect of language attitudes. These attitudes can be positive or negative and what each individual thinks can be influenced by cultural norms, historical context, and personal experiences (Giles & Rakić, 2014).

As noted, social context is varying factor of language attitudes. McGroarty (1996) mentions that factors such as education, media and political discourse can influence on people's language choice and use (McKay & Hornberger, 1996, p. 24). A more recent example of this would for instance be Jens Stoltenberg, as of May 2023, is serving as the 13th Secretary

General of NATO and frequently speaks English with a distinct Norwegian accent during his conferences. This can either be a positive influence or a negative one depending on the situation and the people's own views (Hymes, 2001, p. 46). Negative bias towards L2 accented speech can exist amongst L2 language users (Derwing, 2003, p. 549). Though it can be said that the heavy Norwegian accented English by Norwegians have been scrutinized in the past. During Thorbjørn Jagland's congratulatory speech, who at the time was chairman of the Norwegian Nobel Committee, created quite an uproar because of his heavily accented Norwegian-English. The aftermath of the speech made Norwegian tabloid news report on the mostly negative reception it made by online netizens (Lilleås, 2009). The listeners might have thought the accent to be so far off from the standard as to provoke a negative reaction (e.g., Anisfeld et al., 1962, p. 230; Derwing, 2003, pp. 548-549).

A known criticism towards non-standard accent use has been the issue of intelligibility, in which heavy accent foreign accent has been mentioned specifically (e.g., Derwing, 2003, p. 551; Jenkins, 2006, p. 175; Munro & Derwing, 1995, p. 291). In terms of gauging speaking scores it has been written that strong accents make it hard to distinguish stressed syllables or calculating the rate of speech, which affected the speaking score results (Tsagari & Demetriou, 2022, p. 103). Although, this manifested in speaking score result, the study did not make a claim on intelligibility. The intelligibility criticism has been disputed by many people who address this misconception to begin with as they mention that high degree of accentedness does not reduce intelligibility or comprehensibility (e.g., Derwing & Munro, 1997; Munro & Derwing, 2006, pp. 529-530). It should be stated that the context of all these perspectives seem to exist within the context which by oneself through others tries to deem what's most appropriate through social norms that have been created. In this case social norms of appropriate speech (Cazden, 2011, p. 367). If these conceptions reach a broader sense then issues of social identity and group affiliations increase (Rindal, 2016, p. 94).

The study of language attitudes in the sociolinguistic field has gained considerable attention in recent years, with many researchers studying various aspects of language attitudes. By understanding the factors that influence language attitudes, researchers can gain insight into how language functions in a society and how individuals form and express their identities through language. This knowledge can help inform language policies and practices that promote linguistic diversity, inclusivity, and social cohesion.

2.4   English oral proficiency

While there is much research that covers different aspects of language proficiency, such as fluency, grammar, and coherence and cohesion, it is generally accepted that fluency is a major component of oral proficiency, despite some problematic definitions and their impact on research in the field (Tsagari & Demetriou, 2022, p. 91). According to Bøhn (2019) in *English Didactics in Norway – 30 years of doctoral research*, English oral examinations in Norway evaluate vocabulary, fluency, accuracy and pronunciation. In this section, we will be covering the definitions of fluency and accuracy and pronunciation, which are all related to English oral proficiency (*English Didactics in Norway - 30 years of doctoral research*, 2019, p. 378).

Brown et al. (2005) categorizes fluency within hesitation, repetition, repair and speech rate which again encompasses specific subcategories such as, speech flow, naturalness, intelligibility, and nervousness (Brown et al., 2005, p. 26). In the Norwegian context, fluency is concerned with incorrect word order, lack of idiomaticity, inappropriate lexis, clutter, and tendency to over-verbalise. Though it should also be said that in terms of oral fluency it is more tied to communicative competence (*English Didactics in Norway - 30 years of doctoral research*, 2019, pp. 67, 400).

In Brown et al. (2005) accuracy is a subcategory of pronunciation used in different contexts for identifying error. Although accuracy is used as an umbrella term in this case encompassing different avenues of detecting errors, we wish to focus on the grammatical accuracy in this thesis. Grammatical accuracy focuses on reproduction of functional language structures, verb tenses, articles prepositions etc (Brown et al., 2005, p. 144). In terms of achieving communicative competence some need of grammatical accuracy is needed (*English Didactics in Norway - 30 years of doctoral research*, 2019, pp. 119, 370).

Pronunciation, which is a subcategory of phonology, encompasses the articulation of vowels and consonants, as well as to intonation, word stress and rhythm. This was noted as linked with accuracy and "nativeness" by the judges in Brown et al. (2005) study in which case the highest level of phonology was described as: "Level 5 test-takers were described as having native-speaker-like pronunciation with the occasional mispronunciation. […] natural or native like, and words described as linked in a native-like way. Word stresses were deemed appropriate.*"* (Brown et al., 2005, p. 37).

Cazden (2011) brings up on how evaluative terms such as "grammatical" and "appropriate" are used in terms of communicative competence which opens the question for the need of

criteria, as evaluative terms need evaluation to be used effectively. As the latter term "appropriate" is linked more towards social norms, it raises the question of whom is to decide the norms or standards (Cazden, 2011, p. 367). Because the concept of oral proficiency is open to multiple interpretations, a clear definition is necessary to avoid confusion (e.g., Götz, 2013; Hymes, 2001).

Pragmatic fluency plays an important role in the development of oral English proficiency among L2 speakers. According to Götz (2013), pragmatic fluency involves the ability to use language in a way that is appropriate for a given social context. She further argues that L2 speakers often struggle with pragmatic fluency, as they may not be familiar with the social conventions and expectations of the target language community a disputed term in ELF communication (Götz, 2013, pp. 61-63; Jenkins, 2006). This can lead to misunderstandings and may hinder their ability to communicate effectively in English. Since rules governing pragmatic features are rarely taught, learners mostly transfer the pragmatic conventions of their mother tongue, which may be inappropriate or not nativelike, which may be interpreted controversial (Götz, 2013). This can also be a contributor to miscommunication. While pragmatic features may not be as immediately noticeable as other aspects such as accuracy or accent, they may as well hold equal significance due to their immediate impact on the listener.

English proficiency is relevant to all areas of second language acquisition, but oral skills are where students have limited opportunities to practice output outside of school, as noted by Sundqvist and Sylvén (2014). This implies that students have limited sources of output outside of academic settings unless they proactively seek out situations that require English output. While at the same time the English output that they are exposed to, though the classroom context, will be limited to strong normative pressure to communicate in the L2 with an external purpose (Mercer & Williams, 2014, p. 35).

2.5 Accent anxiety and WTC

Accent anxiety is a common experience for individuals who engage in L2 communication or any foreign language other than their L1. This anxiety can range from mild discomfort to crippling self-doubt and can affect people of all ages and backgrounds (Derwing & Munro, 2009). Derwing and Munro (2009) acknowledge the negative impact of accent anxiety, specifying that it is the feeling of self-consciousness and insecurity that arises when speaking a non-native language. This feeling can lead to avoidance behaviour, such as not speaking, feeling embarrassed, worrying, feeling imperfect, and hiding one's accent. Research conducted by MacIntyre and et al. (1997) suggests that anxious students tend to underestimate their level of proficiency, while relaxed students tend to overestimate theirs. Thus, when a student feels incompetent or expects to fail, anxiety usually follows, creating a vicious cycle where language learners avoid communication, preventing them from reassessing their competence, and anxiety levels remain high because anxious students do not accept their own progression of proficiency.

Accent anxiety can greatly affect language learning, as research has demonstrated. Individuals who suffer from accent anxiety are often less motivated to learn the target language and less likely to engage in communicative activities that would provide opportunities for practicing and improving their language skills (Macintyre et al., 1998). Moreover, accent anxiety can result in a lack of confidence in one's ability to speak the L2, which can further impede language learning and use (Derwing & Munro, 2009). These learners may feel like they cannot achieve proficiency in the L2, leading to a lack of confidence and a reduced desire to learn the language.

Derwing and Munro (2009) note that "listeners are amazingly sensitive to the presence or absence of a foreign accent". While an accent may be easily detectable, it does not necessarily cause communication problems or indicate low proficiency. In fact, individuals who are proficient in both the regional variation and the standard form of the language can alter their accent to control the social distance between themselves and their conversational partners (Vincze & MacIntyre, 2017, pp. 62-63). In their study, Vincze and MacIntyre (2017) found that accent stigmatization moderated the relationship between perceived second language proficiency and second language use anxiety. Specifically, they found that individuals who perceived their second language proficiency as low and experienced accent stigmatization were more likely to experience high levels of language anxiety and lower willingness to communicate in the second language.

Accent anxiety can stem not only from a self-perceived lack of English proficiency, but also from self-awareness of how one's accent may be perceived as strange or different by others. Fantini (2000) states: "Awareness is on and of the "self" and it is always about the self in relation to someone or something else. Hence, all awareness is "self"-awareness […]" (Fantini, 2000, p. 29). This can extend to how one may be conscious of how others behave and communicate, and if their communication style differs too much from others, it may be interpreted as strange. Vincze and MacIntyre (2017) add on this point by stating that even individuals who perceive themselves as proficient in L2 will be more anxious to use L2 if they receive negative feedback on their accent. Furthermore, it was also seen that accent anxiety was less with those who receive less negative feedback even if the skills were lacking (Vincze & MacIntyre, 2017, pp. 65, 72). As a consequence, people may alter their communication to fit in or make others feel more comfortable (Spencer-Oatey & Stadler, 2009, p. 31). If one is perceived as not fitting in with the group, it may create social tension within the group, even if the group's shared interest is to become proficient in English (Tajfel & Turner, 2004, p. 376). Tajfel and Turner (2004) points out within social identity theory of intergroup behaviour: "[…] a group that does not necessarily wish to increase the level of its own salaries but acts to prevent other groups from getting nearer to this level so that differentials are not eroded" (Tajfel & Turner, 2004, p. 385). In a reversed sense, accent anxiety may also be based on an in-group preference to not distinguish oneself from others, even at the cost of perceived advancement in oral English proficiency. Reversely, the English standard accent becomes the nonstandard accent in a Norwegian context (Giles & Rakić, 2014, p. 15). This could be seen in a study by McKenzie (2008) that examined Japanese people's evaluations of different accented English speakers. The heavily accented Japanese speaker was considered the most socially attractive, as it was assumed that there was familiarity and solidarity with the heavily accented English speaker, perceived as the most normal, whereas the moderately accented Japanese speaker was viewed the less favourably being perceived as an outgroup. Thus, the moderately accented speaker was placed between the desirable native English accent and in-group heavily accented speaker (McKenzie, 2008, pp. 144-145).

Furthermore, willingness to communicate (WTC) plays an important role in accent anxiety as it affects an individual's ability to initiate communication in a second language (Hymes, 2001, p. 51). WTC is a construct in the field of second language acquisition (SLA) that refers to an individual's readiness and inclination to initiate communication in a second language (L2)

(Macintyre et al., 1998, p. 546). WTC is a crucial factor that influences language learning and use, as it determines whether individuals are willing to take risks and engage in communicative interactions in the L2 (Macintyre et al., 1998). Research has shown that WTC is related to language proficiency and language use (Macintyre et al., 1998). This implies that communication is not necessary to demonstrate WTC. For example, when students raise their hands to answer a question in class, all of them are expressing WTC, even if only one person is selected to answer (Macintyre et al., 1998).

When students raise their hands, they are committing to a course of action that indicates their willingness to communicate and attempt an answer if called upon. WTC implies a strong intention to behave in a particular way, where the speaker wants or plans to speak up if given the chance and opportunity. The reason behind this is explained by Macintyre et al. (1998) as self-confidence in the language in general, where students must demonstrate their understanding of the question and formulate a response. This shows motivation and could be a combination of wanting to please the teacher and obtaining good grades. Prior language learning experiences serve as a foundation for current motivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 156).

Several factors may influence WTC, including individual and contextual variables (Macintyre et al., 1998). Individual variables include self-efficacy and language anxiety, while contextual variables include the language learning environment, cultural and social norms, and exposure to the target language. Studies (Raoofi et al., 2012, p. 1) have shown that self-efficacy, or the belief in one's ability to communicate effectively in the target language, greatly influences performance, making it a strong predictor of WTC. Moreover, language anxiety, or the fear of negative evaluation and judgement in language use, has been found to negatively affect WTC, while a positive and supportive language learning environment that values target language use and offers opportunities for meaningful interaction can enhance WTC (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 110).

WTC is a dynamic construct that can change over time and in response to different contexts. Recent studies (Raoofi et al., 2012) have shown that WTC can be fostered through various interventions, such as language classrooms that provide a supportive environment for learners to practice speaking, as well as online language exchange programs that enable learners to communicate with native speakers (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011).

Overall, this chapter has explored several key theoretical frameworks related to the topic of English language learning and use. These frameworks include the distinction between native and non-native speakers, the concept of English as a Lingua Franca, the Communication Accommodation Theory, language attitudes, English oral proficiency, accent anxiety, and willingness to communicate. By examining these frameworks, it is clear that language learning and use are complex processes that are influenced by a variety of individual and contextual factors.

3.0 Literature review

In this chapter we will review studies related to the topic of English attitudes and L2 learners. In selecting which studies to review, we have considered the relevance to our study context. First, we discuss studies that identify key practices for English accent attitudes with a particular emphasis on studies conducted in Norway or with Norwegian learners. Second, we considered studies that examine factors that may influence perceptions of one's accent which could implicate language learners. Unfortunately, due to limiting the scope of our research to mainly younger L2 learners and their oral English participation, our literature review will not be as extensive as we would have hoped. It can be said that there are studies pertaining to oral English participation outside of Europe for older students. However, for the sake of time and research scope, we have set aside perspectives such as *silent participant*, *forced participation* and *overt* and *covert speech*. Nonetheless, there are some studies covering older students outside of Europe that provide relevant information, which shall be mentioned in this section.

To identify relevant studies, we conducted a systematic search of academic databases, including Oria and ERIC, using relevant keywords: " Oral English", "accent attitudes", "Norway", "accent", "pronunciation", "ELF", "native" and "non-native," among others. Most of these are featured in the theory section. The immediately relevant studies in the literature review include Rindal's studies on L2 pronunciation, language attitudes and choices among older adolescent learners in Norway (Rindal, 2010, 2014a, 2014b, 2015, 2016; Rindal, 2013). We have also decided to bring attention to Chvala's (2020) study on teacher's English language ideologies in Norway which informs us of teacher attitudes in Norway that could influence how English language teaching is conducted for young learners. Shibata (2021) covers how college students in several different countries evaluate their own accent, accent aim and hesitation towards speaking in English, giving us a more current insight on its tendencies of oral English proficiency being related to accent aims and implications of such.

We also reviewed reference lists of relevant articles and book chapters to identify additional studies that may have been missed in our initial search, some of which is covered in the 2.0 theory section, such as the study consisting of university students from McKenzie (2008), who suggest a tendency to look at native speakers to provide "notions of correctness" while heavily accented speakers are regarded as favourable compared with a learner who is pursuing L1 speaker accent in Japan. Derwing & Munro's several studies, some of which feature data from adult students, relate to pronunciation, accented speech, language attitudes and intelligibility which might be shared with young L2 learners in Norway. On the other hand, it

should be stated that the context of the studies of Derwing and Munro is different from a Norwegian context in which speech correction is tied to discriminatory attitudes. (Derwing, 2003; Derwing & Munro, 1997, 2009; Munro & Derwing, 1995; Munro & Derwing, 2006). Nonetheless, some notions of English accent attitudes that might be shared in a Norwegian context. Bøhn and Hansen (2017) study on teachers' orientations towards nativeness and intelligibility informs us of how teacher pronunciation assessment might influence student language attitudes and is where we found articles from Derwing and Munro.

These studies provide valuable insights into the attitudes and perceptions of Norwegian learners of English, as well as the factors that influence their language learning choices and outcomes. By reviewing these studies, we hope to gain a deeper understanding, and aim to provide a comprehensible overview of the literature on the respective topics.

3.1   English accent attitudes in Norway

Among the many studies we considered are those researched by U. Rindal. She has acquired extensive information on the characteristics of attitudes, accent use, pronunciation, and choices of L2 learners in Norway, such as "Who owns English in Norway? L2 attitudes and choices among learners" (Rindal, 2015) using the same data as she gathered in her earlier study in 2014 (Rindal, 2014a). English has become the global Lingua Franca, and as a result, its importance as a second language has increased tremendously. Norway is not an exception, and English has become an essential part of the Norwegian education system, as it is a mandatory subject from the first grade of primary school.

In the study Rindal (2014a) conducted, the 70 Norwegian older adolescent English language learners were asked to fill out a questionnaire and some were interviewed. The findings focus on the participants' chosen accent aim and reasoning for their accent aim. Through Rindal's (2014a, 2015) study it was shown that a majority of the participants would adopt either a standard southern British accent or standard American (shorted for GenAm), respectively 23 and 30 out of the 70 participants. The British accent's positive connotations were, but not limited to, civilized, classy, less vulgar, intelligent, and deemed to be the original form of English. Negative connotations were that it was more difficult to understand, unnatural, shallow, too formal, old fashion, arrogant and fake if not "gotten right". On the other hand, the American accent was associated with ease of use, relaxed, natural, and easier to access in terms of what they "hear the most". However, it was also associated to be: ugly, dumbed down, less nice, rough and not well educated (Rindal, 2014a; 2015, pp. 247-250). This

coincides with a notion that non L1 accented speech is viewed more negatively than what is perceived to be a "standard" (Anisfeld, Bogo & Lambert (1962) in Derwing, 2003, p. 549).

The study further emphasizes that a significant minority, 11 participants, chose not for a specific accent, but for a "neutral choice". This "neutral choice" was based on pragmatic reasons such as adopting an understanding of both, adopting it to their interlocutor and avoid being inferred a cultural association of their own identity based on the accent. Examples to this were if they had lived in Britain or America or being fond of the country it would be perceived more authentic if they chose to adopt an accent aim (Rindal, 2014a; 2015, pp. 250, 254,256-259). Nevertheless, the participants who chose either British or American accent aims seem to adopt linguistic forms related to their intended aim. As with the participants who chose the neutral choice, it was not possible to avoid influence from both British and American accent forms, with the latter being the dominant output due to accessibility (Rindal, 2014a; 2015, pp. 260-261). Regardless, putting on an accent is conveyed as putting on an identity, which the individual may choose to opt out of based on what certain accents reflect (Rindal, 2014a; 2016, pp. 95-96).

Rindal's earlier work from (2010), aims to explore how adolescent Norwegian learners, who are acquiring English as a second language, perceive and evaluate American and British varieties of English in terms of pronunciation (Rindal, 2010). To accomplish this goal, she utilized both quantitative sociolinguistics and second language acquisition methodologies to investigate the learners' stylistic practices in an L2 context. The findings of the study suggest that Norwegian learners are capable of adapting different English variants from various English varieties to convey local meanings within and outside of the Norwegian classroom. Rindal and Piercy (2013) examines further on the attitudes of Norwegian learners of English towards their own English pronunciation, as well as their perceptions of native and non-native English accents. And another study, Rindal (2013) questioned the standard of English taught in Norwegian schools and how it affects learners' attitudes and language choices. The study showed that Norwegian learners have different attitudes towards different English accents, and they often make conscious choices about the accents they want to emulate. However, as these attitudes manifest without any official English pronunciation norms there are perceived norms of learner attitudes towards English language, which will also be covered in this study (Rindal, 2010, p. 256). For the sake of ease as there are various accents in Britain and America, we will be using the words British and American to reference the standard accents in the findings section. This is how it was framed in Rindal's (2014a, 2015) studies as well.

While there is a great deal of research on language attitudes among adults and older students, there is a lack of data on younger students. Although we aim to address this gap with our own research, it is important to consider how teachers and adults can be a strong influence in shaping language attitudes among students. Which is why it is relevant for us to examine the attitudes of language teachers which can provide insight into how language attitudes may be transmitted to younger students. This can help us better understand the broader impact of language attitudes in schools, in relation to social identity and society.

Bøhn and Hansen (2017) conducted a study on employed educational and psychological measurement theory and primarily utilized a qualitative research methodology to examine teachers' perceptions regarding what should be evaluated in an oral English exam in Norway. The results revealed that while there was general consensus among the teachers regarding the primary components of student performance that should be assessed, there was greater disagreement regarding more specific components. The study also shows that the even if the teachers are strongly in favour towards English language teaching of intelligibility, there were mixed answers in its relevance to English accented speech. With regard to identifying errors that influence intelligibility, the study found that there was an uncertainty about whether the errors were related to intonation and whether the teachers were less concerned about how things were pronounced (Bøhn & Hansen, 2017, p. 65). The study concludes with three recommendations regarding the assessment of oral exams in English in Norway. Firstly, it suggests introducing national rating scale guidelines and systematic rater training. Secondly, the pronunciation construct needs to be better defined for teaching and assessment purposes, with a decision needed on the relevance of the L1 English accent principle. Finally, teachers are advised to allow for the practice of higher-order thinking skills in the classroom.

Although we have no intention and cannot claim a direct link between the language attitudes contained in this study and language ideologies as a broader concept, for which we lack substantial data to support. However, it is still related in the sense of studies in a Norwegian context. Chvala's (2020) study on teacher ideologies reveals the different considerations Norwegian teachers have about the English language, including beliefs related to values, pragmatics, identity and critical perspectives (or lack thereof) in relation to the role of English. The study concludes by emphasizing the need for long-term initiatives towards metalanguage and critical perspectives on English and English language teaching. The goal is to help teachers make English language teaching more relevant, inclusive and meaningful for the reality's young learners face with English in this day and age (Chvala, 2020).

Rindal (2014b) examined the evolving status of English in Norway, both as a language and as a subject in schools and offers predictions on the ontological and epistemological perspectives that will shape English language teaching (ELT) in Norway by 2030. She insinuates that there may be a growing acceptance of variation in the curriculum and among students' language practices, suggesting that L2 pronunciation characterized by hybridity and variability may be perceived as communicative competence rather than a limitation to proficiency (Rindal, 2014b). The recognition of English as a personal language for Norwegians will be acknowledged, and educators will emphasize the role of English in personal development and identity. This includes developing knowledge about the values attributed to L2 forms and involving learners in the negotiation of these meanings (Rindal, 2014b). She also believes that by 2030, English will continue to be personal to Norwegians, but this perspective will be recognized and integrated into language teaching practices.

These studies highlight a connection between individuals' beliefs, emotions and the type of impression their English accent creates, both for themselves and for others. This is something to take in consideration of in a Norwegian context. In turn these beliefs, feelings of accent regarding prejudice and stigmatization might further influence how speakers are willing to communicate and participate in the classroom. Also, there have been few studies on how this can affect classroom participation and if considerations around language attitudes are still prevalent in even younger learners. Thus, we seek to investigate this further in this study and its implications.

3.2   Perception of one's own English accent

Perceptions of one's own English accent have been the subject of much research in recent years, with scholars exploring the impact of factors such as culture, identity, and socialization on how individuals perceive their accent. Perceptions of one's own English accent differs from perceptions of proficiency as having an accent is not a sign of overall proficiency (Derwing & Munro, 2009, p. 478). It should be noted that this perception can still affect how one perceives of one's overall English proficiency depending on one's language attitude (Munro & Derwing, 2006). In our study we wish to not only understand how English learners might choose to adapt a specific accent aim, but also investigate if such choice is also dependent on how one's own local English accent might be perceived. Unfortunately, there seem to be a lack of studies that examines how English language learners might perceive non-native varieties of English in Norway.

As such, a study conducted by Shibata (2021) investigates students from different parts of the world which informs us of how language attitudes can be different between countries, which reinforces a need for a Norwegian context by young learners might be a possible future research avenue. The study from Shibata (2021) employs a 10-item questionnaire with a likert scale between 1, strongly disagree, to 6, strongly agree, for 290 participants from seven countries: 31 Austrians, 57 Chinese, 48 Danish, 27 Germans, 31 Japanese, 21 Kazakhs and 62 Malaysians. The participants were college students of different majors, which informs us that the participants are adults (Shibata, 2021, p. 129). For the sake of relevancy to our study we wish to highlight the Danish and German answers to the questionnaire in terms of distance and share a closer language group. Also, study does not show the items chronologically which is why we choose to introduce the results unchronological.

The article discusses the results of a survey conducted on many countries, while this study chose to use the data from Danish and German speakers' attitudes towards their English accent. Most participants reported feeling confident in their pronunciation, with higher numbers among Danish speakers. Most participants were happy with their accent. Participants from both groups reported high levels of intelligibility in their English, and many participants believed that non-native accented communication in English is acceptable in intercultural communication. While there were differences in responses between the two groups, both Danish and German participants expressed a desire to achieve a native-like accent in English. Finally, participants from both groups reported little reluctance to speak English with an accent (Shibata, 2021, pp. 130-136).

The literature review presents recent research on individuals' perceptions of their English accent, including factors such as culture, identity, and socialization. The review notes that having an accent is not a sign of overall proficiency, but it can still affect how one perceives their overall English proficiency. Although we cannot infer the same indications of results to a Norwegian context, the study from Shibata (2021) does inform us that the participants from Denmark and Germany, share a very similar percentage of answers towards almost all the items. It might therefore not be implausible to assume that this could inform a hypothesis of similar kind for these items in a Norwegian context. In terms of our study, the previous studies show a possibility that Norwegian English learners' perception of accent aim might have shifted from 2015 in terms of prejudice and stigmatization because of Shibata (2021) findings. This might still correlate to an unchanged perception of how native English accent is still desirable regardless of less prejudice and stigmatization.

4.0 Methodology

In this chapter we present the methods we have used to examine our research questions:

- RQ 1: How do students conceive of desirable oral English proficiency?
- RQ 2: How do students' attitudes towards accent and proficiency relate to oral participation?

This study uses a qualitative research design with interviews with 8th-grade Norwegian students as the primary source of data, complemented by observations as a secondary data source. In the following chapter, we will outline our research design, including our selected participants and setting. Further we present our methods of choice and explain how we conducted interviews and observation notes, followed up by ethical considerations. To finalise the chapter, we present our procedures for data analysis and discuss the research credibility.

4.1 Research Design

The methodology used in this study is qualitative, with semi-structured interviews conducted after classroom observations in English classes. Both the interviews and observations were done in a short time span within 3 weeks in a lower secondary school in the eastern part of Norway, in a suburban area. This school was comprised of classes that were split into smaller student groups in which the teachers could conduct their classes. Additionally, classrooms were fitted with modern technology to accommodate a school where students could make use of handheld electronics like tablets with access to the Internet.

Although studies pertaining to a Norwegian context exists, we consider most of the current existing studies (Rindal, 2015; Rindal & Piercy, 2013) to be more focused on older learners or teachers, with less focus on data with considerations from the young learners themselves. Thus, the choice of a qualitative approach was not only the most realistic in terms of wanting an in-depth understanding of pupil perspectives and explore a phenomenon about which there is little existing research, but also when the focus is on "what" and "how" instead of the quantity (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018, pp. 48-51). Through our approach we wished to accentuate considerations of future practice as practitioners from analysing the response from young learners. At the same time, attempting to seek out suggestions young learners which is relevant for them to have for their English language learning.

4.2   Participant and setting

Participants were requested through a contact at a previous practice school in our teacher education. The school was first contacted through email to the principal/administrative office to get permission. However, no response was received within a few weeks, hence we contacted a previous practice teacher directly of which enabled us to communicate with other willing teachers. We requested lessons with extensive oral participation to observe.

We chose to focus on younger language learners in their 8th year of primary school specifically. One of the classes was a class of 18 students and the other was a class of 14 students in 8th year of primary school (12-13 years of age) with a total of 32 students at the time the observational data was collected. Previous studies that use student-based answers in relation to accent aims have taken account for older participants in their second year of upper secondary school.

First batch of the students were first selected based on the first school/teacher that accepted us conducting research in their classes. Later the sample was increased after asking other English teachers in the school if we could request participation from their respective 8th grade students. Through both emails and phone calls with a willing teacher responsible for the English curriculum for an 8th grade class, we were allowed to observe and interview students for six days over a period of 3 weeks in total. As such, giving us the opportunity to ask an additional class that were divided into two groups totalling 4 student groups of approximately 15-20 students each. Understanding that not every student would be willing, or perhaps remember to bring the signed consent form.

The participants in question had no affiliation with OsloMet or us as researchers as prior correspondence was conducted approximately a year before students enrolled in said school. Therefore, the conditions of how the classroom observations and individual interviews were conducted in this study, will only serve to inform us of the conditions which might have influenced the data. This point shall be elaborated further in relation to the approach we have gathered the data. The participants of the interviews were from the same group as of the observations, however fewer, because of availability and voluntarily wanting to participate in the interviews. As mentioned, no selection of students was made.

4.3 Methods

To determine the most effective methods for gathering consistent and concise data, we consulted previous research on similar topics. Based on this research, we proceeded with conducting semi-structured interviews. However, due to our flexible approach to the interview's natural flow, we missed asking a specific question to one participant which may have caused some questions to be answered differently or in a different order. To address this, we included inconclusive findings in the appropriate sections of the findings chapter and analysed the interviews accordingly.

In addition to interviews, we also used observation as a method. The observation was conducted in two different classes during an oral-focused English lesson created by the participants' teacher. The lesson was designed to promote high levels of participation and interaction. Both researchers were present during the observation, which took place on the same day, one hour apart. We took notes throughout the observation and compared them later to gain a deeper understanding of our observations.

4.3.1 Semi-structured interviews

We conducted semi-structured interviews with 14 students, which were audio recorded as a means of capturing the interview using the "Nettskjema-Diktafon" app. The total amount of interview data gathered from the 14 participants was: 02:05:40, which on average is approximately 9 minutes per participant. The participants were mostly recorded once each and individually during the interview. In three cases the recordings were corrupted which led us to doing the three interviews again on a different day. These could have an influence of how they answer the questions, and we can confirm that some of the answers were not the exact same as the first interview for these samples. However, the repeat interviews did not seem to impede the participants wishes to give thorough answers and we observed that our mistake was of no concern during the repeat interview in terms of well thought out answers. We specifically only used the answers of the second interview and scrapped the first interview of those three participants.

Five of the interviews were conducted with both researchers present, simply as a matter of practicality, as both of us were available and were eager to participate because we had time the specific day they were conducted. During the rest of the interviews, only one of us were present at the time the interviews were conducted to adapt and prioritize the scheduled time use. The interviews were conducted in Norwegian to avoid creating unnecessary language

barrier for well thought out and accurate answers (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018, p. 65). The idea behind that is that the fear of having to participate in a foreign language can inflict how many was willing to participate and that they could explain more in-depth in their mother tongue, giving the focus on the information rather than having to concentrate on how they are going to answer the questions (Welch & Piekkari, 2006, p. 428). This was also later confirmed, considering many asked questions of what language it was supposed to be in and seemed nervous of having to speak English in the interviews.

The purpose of the interviews was not to document their English language performance, but rather to explore young L2 learners' opinions and views of learning English, their choices behind language use, accents, and social practices of English. The questions were presented to the participants individually and their answers informed us of what questions to ask next, rather than insisting of robotically following the interview guide, which you can see in appendix D. Brinkmann and Kvale (2018) suggest that this is an effective way to make more flow and pave way for deeper understanding of answers for us to analyse (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018, p. 95). This also made it feel more natural and less formal, where it felt more like a conversation than an interview. We observed that conducting the interviews alone, made the interviews slightly less in-depth, compared to the ones conducted together, because we were no longer two people to come up with follow-up questions on the spot that could be relevant to the topic. The participants were all given introduction questions as a conversation starter. This proved to be very useful as we were able to use that question to build further on to the topic naturally. However, almost every participant answered the same core questions that were made, and many got extra questions depending on their answers and willingness to elaborate further.

4.3.2   Observations

Non-participatory observation (see Befring, 2007, p. 123) was conducted during two separate sessions lasting for 50 minutes each, where the two of us were present to take observation notes in the classroom. These observation notes serve as secondary data, given our primary focus on students' experiences and the relatively short duration of observation, leading to less substantial data than desirable.

While we were not directly present by participating in the session, we did not seek to interfere with the lesson or insert ourselves into the social space either. During the second session there was another student teacher present to observe, who was sent as part of mandatory field practice through a university. Although unrelated to our study and visit itself we infer through

this that the students in each of the classes we observed have experienced temporary visiting individuals in the classroom before. As such, the concept of us as observers might not have been foreign to the students. Regardless, we cannot rule out that our presence might still have influenced classroom participation, because of the observer effect (Martyn & Paul, 2007, pp. 176-177). The reason being students appeared to be paying attention to us every so often during the lesson. Lastly, to perform in front of strangers might seem daunting for various reasons pertaining to a notion of social expectation.

While the conditions of our observation were explorative in nature, we did not make a set structure of how or what we were trying to observe (see Befring, 2007, p. 123). In this regard, we were curious if what we observed could give us additional context or insight in our research question or useful perspectives. We did request through email to prepare a lesson where the students would need to participate with orally as we thought it would increase the chance of observable data. However, we also emphasized that the teacher was in no way obliged to follow through with this request. Whilst the lesson itself was not heavily focused on student participation, the theme of the lesson was world English. Thus, the students were given tasks thematically related to our research question. On the other hand, the theme itself did not contain any focus on the students' own perspectives but mostly entailed searching for and writing specific information about countries with English as L2. The teacher conducted the lesson in a regular way without any specific adjustments other than possibly altering the lesson plan to fit our wishes of oral participation, to our knowledge.

4.4   Ethical Considerations

Our study has been reported to the Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research (NSD/SIKT) and all the materials that has been gathered has been handled according to their guidelines. Application was approved late February 2023. We have also followed the guidelines from The National Committee for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and the Humanities (NESH, 2022), which constitutes what ethical obligations we have. We made a description of our project and a summary of why and what we were looking for with a signature form the students and the parents had to sign for us to be able to collect data. The students were also given some information through our physical introduction in the class before receiving the consent form. Many approved, however, some parents were interested in more information who called and were reassured that this project was purely for research purposes and our master thesis. After collecting the consent forms, we conducted the interviews during their English lessons at school in separate, and private rooms. The recordings of the interviews were made through an app called "Nettskjema-Diktafon". The phone was set to airplane mode before the interview to ensure no interference could occur during the recording. The sound files were then uploaded to the secure and password protected "nettskjema.uio.no" which encrypt the files. The participants recordings were then transcribed by hand by us using Office Word. The files were uploaded to the OsloMet encrypted cloud (Oslomet, 2023) for us to analyse later. The observation notes were made by hand and written onto Word right after it was done and uploaded to the OsloMet cloud.

Our goal was to keep the interviews as comfortable as possible without influencing the answers from the participants. The participants were again fully informed of our goals behind the project and made sure they were aware that no one else would hear or see their answers. To reassure them, we also informed them that any answer would be the perfect answer, as it is their honest answer. The participants were not paid with any incentive and were participating completely out of voluntary. Questions in relation to the interview from the students were mainly how much time it would take, if they could speak in Norwegian, and if they could participate together with another person.

4.5 Data analysis

Our approach for data analysis is an inductive thematic content analysis, which is an attempt to reflect on reasons or meaning from comments. Since this is an inductive analysis, we decided to focus on semantic codes to identify patterns of meaning, rather than relying solely on the data to support our assertions (Clarke & Braun, 2021, p. 57). This is to say to focus reflectively on what the content of the comments might infer or inform us of. This approach is more viable as we have qualitative data based on individual opinions and we are to rationalize different statements by itself and with each other. Although the method of analysis is based on different reflections while inserting our own reflections, assumptions and expectations, thematic analysis cannot be done without this (Clarke & Braun, 2021, pp. 12-13). This also fits with the explorative nature of this thesis' qualitative approach where relevant questions could be further examined or delved into.

4.5.1   Step 1. Transcribing the interviews.

Transcribing is considered the first step of the analysis of the raw collected data, because the process is interpretive and involves judgments throughout all the different transcriptions (Bailey, 2008). Our decisions through the process of transcribing were made under assumptions of our methodological design and as a result we chose what level of detail we needed to acquire to be able to answer our research questions. In selecting our transcribing processes, we made underlying assumptions about the type of data we were going to acquire, and we ruled out insignificant data, as suggested by Bailey (2008). We chose to exclude details such as tone of voice, pauses, laughter, and timings, which would not provide directly relevant information for our research questions. This decision decreased the complexity of transcribing in a way that we only needed to transcribe at the level of detail that would indicate relevant themes.

Transcribing involves paying close attention throughout the listening and being careful with what words has been used as to transfer the oral into written form (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018, pp. 108-114). Sound quality, background noise, speech and speed variation and somewhat unintelligible words are not unlikely complications during transcribing. To ensure consistency in our transcriptions, we chose to transcribe the recordings ourselves, with one person doing all the transcribing, even if there were a likelihood of grammatical errors in the work. Even though the transcripts were not centred on analysing linguistic language but rather on the content of the comments given by the participants. The transcriptions took into consideration the fact that conversations could overlap. In such cases, we reorganized the utterances to place

the participants' sentences under the relevant question. Where the grammatical errors have caused uncertainty, both of us have examined and corrected the transcript according to the recorded audio.

Overall, the transcribing process is an essential step in our analysis of raw collected data. By making careful judgments and decisions based on methodological assumptions, we can ensure that the level of detail in the transcriptions is sufficient to answer our research questions.

4.5.2   Step 2. Rough content analysis.

After transcribing the interviews, we conducted semantic coding to identify relevant categories related to our research questions. The coding process involved sorting comments into coded samples based on similar wording or phrasing, such as "talk with a specific accent" or "pronounce things properly." This allowed us to gain a general understanding of the interviewees' perspectives and served as rough categories to consider. We further refined the categorization for quantification purposes, such as grouping "write properly" under the category of "grammar" as shown in the figure below:
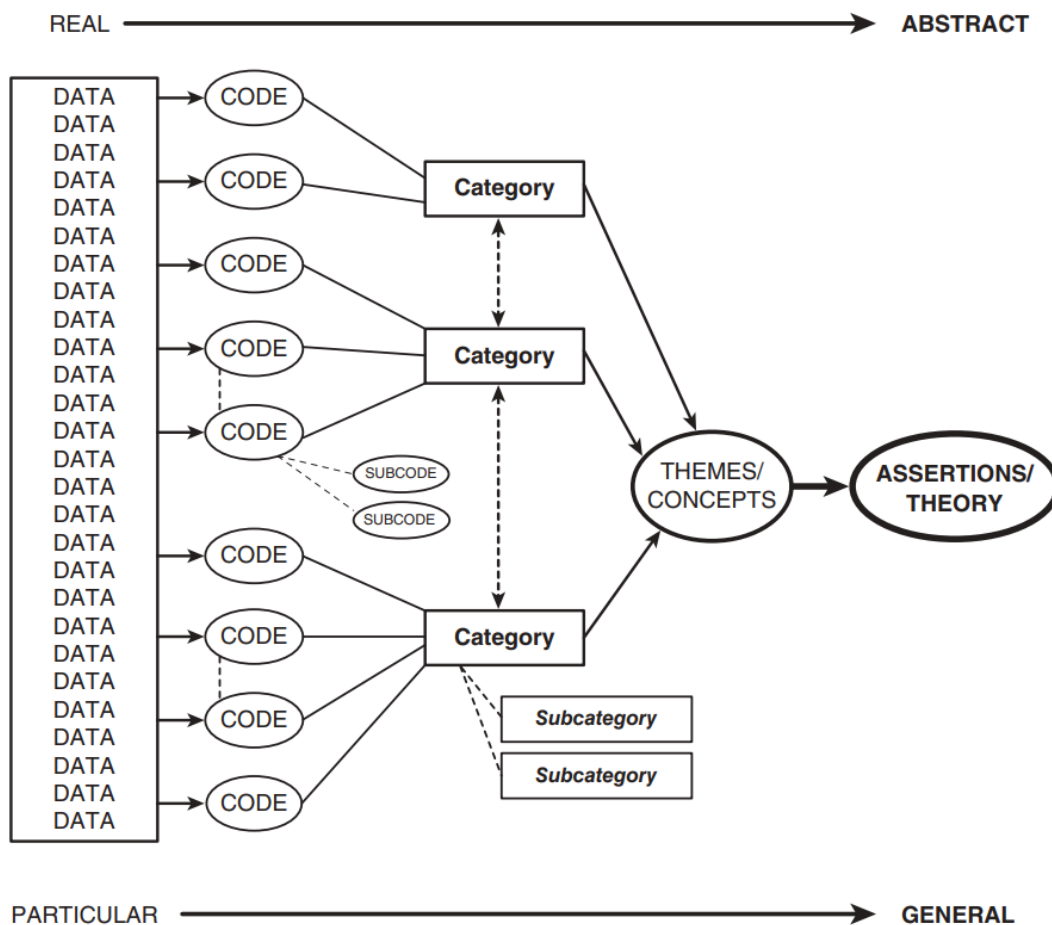

Figure 1 – Codes-to-theory model for qualitative inquiry (Wertz, 2014, p. 14)

We thematically considered different categories and grouped them based on relevance to our research question. Through coding, we identified patterns of meaning and categorized them into themes. These themes align themselves to be relevant, both "good English" or "grammar" fits within the theme "English proficiency". This process was done manually on physical paper and digitally thereafter.

We used this approach to identify patterns and recurring answers related to different interpretations. Our interpretations and codes are subjective and based on mostly semantic meanings of the comments (Clarke & Braun, 2021, p. 57). We will cover the difference between semantic and latent meaning in 4.5.5 step 4: coding. We then categorized and connected the interpretations to related themes for our research question and made assertions from these themes.

4.5.3 Step 3. Thematic content analysis.

We used Clarke and Braun (2021) six phases of reflexive thematic analysis as a systematic guideline for our thematic content analysis (Step 4-9). However, due to time constraints and the available data, we followed the phases as guidelines rather than strict rules (Clarke & Braun, 2021, pp. 34-36). It's important to note that these steps were not followed linearly and were adjusted to suit our analysis for this thesis.

4.5.4 Step 4: Familiarizing with the data.

This was mostly done during the initial rough analysis, we listened to recordings and re-read transcripts to identify relationships between them. We selected a few participant answers as examples for detailed analysis, requiring us to re-read and focus on specific relevant parts of the transcripts.

4.5.5 Step 5: Coding

In this phase, we conducted detailed thematic content analysis by identifying interesting, relevant, and meaningful phrases or words related to our research question. We also analysed latent meanings, which are our subjective interpretations of implicit meaning in the data that we wish to assert.

An example to this would be coding the excerpt about ways to ease participation in class:

Participant 2:   "*You can just talk in Norwegian, but then some of the reason goes away. Though it is fine to use it occasionally for translations and such.*"

Semantic codes in this sense are "*Ease of participation with Norwegian*" and "*Norwegian can be used to learn words in English.*" More latent codes to this excerpt are: "*Norwegian is easier to use*" and "*Norwegian use in the classroom is acceptable depending on its contextual use*" (Clarke & Braun, 2021, p. 57). The latent codes we created here are subjective analysis of attitudes, which may not be definitive. However, we included them to inform us of relevant attitudes for our research questions, alongside semantic coding. The table illustrating these codes can be found in appendix C (Clarke & Braun, 2021, pp. 116-118).

The codes will be presented in tables relevant to each section. An inductive approach was used to connect the different codes to a relevant theme (see appendix 1 and 2). The connections between categories were not all illustrated for the sake of time, but an illustrative figure is provided (see appendix A and B). The codes connected to several transcripts provided in each section of the findings (5.0) are written under appendix C.

4.5.6   Step 6: Creating the categories.

The categories developed in this phase connect codes and help us address our research questions. Some categories, such as self-confidence, pressure, social context, and identity, were already identified during the rough analysis and may recur in the detailed thematic content analysis. A mind map was used to identify recurring categories in the transcripts and discussions. We believe that the themes identified in the rough analysis should not be disregarded, even if new themes emerged in the detailed analysis. We provide a summary of the categories in Figure 7 in Section 5.5.

4.5.7   Step 7: Development and review of themes.

We revised the thematic structure to streamline the findings section by creating a pattern that made coherent sense. This involved changing themes like grammar to "Accuracy" to better fit the answers and focusing on tying themes together and effectively showing their connection. We also noted the difference in participant responses regarding accent, which will be discussed as a finding.

4.5.8   Step 8: Refine, define and ordering themes.

The order and combination of themes were revised and streamlined to better reflect our findings. This resulted in a shift from chronological order of research questions to an overall view of findings. The structure of the data presented is now determined by the themes, rather than the order of questions in the interview. This means that some excerpts may have different questions pertaining to specific themes, instead of a connection such as answering accent

related questions first, then followed by proficiency related questions, then lastly accent related questions plus participation. We would section these appropriately and not chronologically according to the flow of the interview. The findings are not presented in a chronological order based on when the question was posed or a conversational flow, and the implications of this will be discussed in the validity section (4.6).

4.5.9 Step 9: Choosing our findings after analysis.

The last phase involves weaving together the analysis of subjective semantic and latent codes through inferences and analytical takes. For example, the code "Norwegian use in the classroom is acceptable depending on its contextual use" paired with "Norwegian can be used to learn English" infers an understanding that English is typically used in the classroom as the norm. This approach can also be applied in reverse such as: "English can be used to learn Norwegian". The reverse codes are not written in appendix C for the sake of limiting the amount of codes.

4.6 Credibility

The credibility of research is of utmost importance, as it determines the trustworthiness and accuracy of the findings. To assess the credibility of research, we discuss reliability and validity. Further we go through transferability and limitations of the study.

4.6.1 Reliability

The reliability of a study refers to the consistency of the study. Hammersley (1992, p. 67), refers it as: "The degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observer on different occasions". In our observation the data collected is mainly to confirm and back up the answers that were given in the interviews and to see if there were any obvious indication of the answers being influenced somehow. Another central part of reliability in qualitative methods is how transparent the process has been throughout the research (Silverman, 2006). Obtaining this we have attempted to explain our thoughts and beliefs throughout this methodology chapter by going through step by step our choices in sampling, methods, design and collecting and handling of the data. We have attempted to show specific interpretations and choices and how they are considered over other options. This is a way of attempting to improve the reliability according to Silverman (2006), through theoretical stances explaining how interpretations take place.

The interviews were transcribed, to ensure that we have a written record of the participants' responses, which can be revisited and checked multiple times to ensure accuracy. This allows

for a joint examination of the data by both of us, which can help to reduce the risk of misinterpretation or subjective bias (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018). Additionally, transcribing the interviews can help to identify any inconsistencies or errors in the original recordings, which can then be addressed before analysis.

While only one of us did the transcribing, both of us went through the transcriptions and made codes individually, which was then compared and agreed on which one to use. To maintain the validity and reliability standards associated with qualitative research, it is essential to establish clearly defined and rigorous coding procedures and consistently apply them throughout the coding process. This is crucial in ensuring the integrity of the analysis (Williams & Moser, 2019, pp. 45-55). By using a well-defined set of codes and ensuring that the codes are applied consistently and accurately, we were able identify any discrepancies or inconsistencies in the coding process and allowed us to make adjustments to the coding scheme.

4.6.2   Validity

Here we are explaining how our well our results represent what it is actually supposed to measure. This study utilized a qualitative methodology that involved semi-structured interviews and classroom observations with younger language learners in their 8th year of primary school. The data collection methods were designed to minimize any potential sources of bias or error, such as conducting interviews in a neutral and non-leading manner with open-ended questions that allowed participants to freely express their thoughts and experiences (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018). We chose our research design and methodology to ensure that the study can address the research questions and objectives in an appropriate manner. The qualitative approach using semi-structured interviews and classroom observations was selected as it provides an opportunity for an in-depth exploration of the experiences and perspectives of the study participants (Silverman, 2006).

We are still confident that even with some questions being asked beforehand the interview effect was minimized by letting the participant lead the conversation. Questioning became a way to return from tangents more so than forcefully probing for answers. However, this meant that for some participants in the early phases of data collection, were not asked a relevant main question. This was a result from the unchronological conversation flow which inadvertently caused us to forget if we needed to ask certain questions. As we have analysed

and looked through the transcription, we have during the findings chapter (5.0) shown clearly where the amount of participant answers might differ for the sake of transparency.

Validity of the research is also a part of the transparency of our research, which takes considerations in how the methodology is investigating what it is supposed to investigate (Silverman, 2006). For data analysis, an inductive thematic content analysis was utilized to identify patterns of meaning through semantic and latent codes. However, it should be noted that our inferences are based purely on our interpretation of the data collected and cannot be claimed as factual. Additionally, that the inferences made in this analysis are subject to the understanding that data analysis can never truly be considered finished, as the process is always ongoing (Clarke & Braun, 2021, p. 91). There might be possible interpretations that may have been omitted, this have not been done intentionally (Clarke & Braun, 2021, p. 71). Presenting the analysis in a non-chronological order may impact the internal validity of the study because it could make it difficult to accurately determine cause and effect relationships between transcripts. If the data is not presented in a logical and chronological order, it may be harder to determine which factors influenced which answer. We believe this could lead to inaccurate conclusions being drawn from the data. As we are aware of this, we have not wilfully manipulated the presentation of the excerpts, but only interpreted data connecting transcripts back and forth, which is a part of thematic content analysis (Clarke & Braun, 2021, p. 200). The excerpts are accurately presented with chronological conversation flow as to prevent data manipulation. This means answers have not been scrambled to fit a false conversational flow.

In this study we have used inferences that draw data which present its relations to ELF practices in Norway, or lack thereof. Specifically in lower secondary school as well as considering students' accommodations when speaking English, including other Norwegians and how their attitude affects their willingness to participate in English speaking activities.

4.7 Transferability

Claiming generalizability is not an option which we want to emphasize and is important to note. According to Brinkmann and Kvale (2018) a research generalizability has to consider how the interpretations and inferences can be used in different groups or other contexts (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018, p. 99 & 147). This study uses inferences that draw data which present its implications for ELF practices. Specifically in lower secondary school as well as

considering students' accommodations when speaking English, including other Norwegians and how their attitude affects their willingness to participate in speaking English. With a sample size this small one cannot use this research to generalize the Norwegian population. Because of the qualitative method it gives insight in a local area.

However, our study is transferable in the sense that it provides valuable insights and implications for ELF practices in lower secondary schools and for students' accommodations when speaking English. Although the small sample size limits the generalizability of the findings, the insights gained from the study can potentially be applicable in similar contexts or settings. Additionally, the emphasis on local insights and interpretations provides a valuable contribution to the existing body of literature and could be valuable input in further and broader research on the topic.

4.8   Limitations

As noted above, due to the small group of participants, our study does not provide grounds for statistical generalization. Due to the individual interview format, the study may have lacked some depth in comparison to interviews conducted with both researchers present, as only one person was present to come up with impromptu follow-up questions. Despite the use of audio recording to capture the interviews, technical issues with the recording occurred in three situations, leading to a repeat of those interviews. This could have influenced the participants' responses and the accuracy of the data collected.

The questions we have could have delved much more into were the questions regarding "How do you think English proficiency impact oral participation in English?" and "Does accent have any impact on English proficiency?". The first question is also supported with an alternative question (see appendix D), but it could have been tied more closely to the previous question by readjusting the question to "Which English proficiencies do you think impact oral participation in English?". The adjusted question might not have changed the overall difficulty of the question, but it could make it easier to elaborate on the answers given. The second question "Does accent have any impact on English proficiency?" does not elaborate on what kind of accents the students were to think of or the knowledge of the different kinds of accents. For the sake of transparency this is could open avenues for new insights and findings we have not considered until after we have written the thesis. In hindsight by looking through student excerpts it does not indicate that the participants were aware of other English accents than the established L1 varieties. If the question were framed in a way that included Indian-

English accents maybe it would have changed their perceptions and answers. This is a very interesting point that we would like to add on suggestions for future research. While at the same time the likelihood of it being set aside for the sake of the scope and time constraint of the study is not unlikely.

We consider that a questionnaire could have been used as a complementary data source to the interviews. It would have allowed participants more time to reflect on their answers and provided a larger pool of opinions to draw from. Yes or no questions could have been used to supplement the interview questions for more directly comparable and structured data to be collected. This would have provided quantitative data to complement the qualitative data collected from the interviews. However, using a questionnaire would have produced different data and may not have necessarily resulted in better data.

If we were to do this again without the use of questionnaires, some follow-up questions could have been added as main questions. With more interview time, we learned to become more efficient in asking key questions. The semi-structured interview worked well, but improvements can still be made. After reviewing the transcripts, we found that the latter half of the interviews were more extensive and detailed. If we had more time, we could have conducted pilot interviews to better calibrate our supplementary questions and find ways to ask follow-up questions (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018, p. 52). Examples to this would becoming aware of avenues where follow-up questions could be asked if the answer was a simple refutation or affirmative.

Although questionnaires could have been used to supplement some of the data, the interviews produced a significant amount of information on the topic. Conducting questionnaires prior to the interviews could have influenced the participants' answers. The interviews provided insights into the participants' choices and desires regarding accents and pronunciation, as well as their individual conceptions of desirable oral English.

5.0 Findings

This chapter presents findings related to the qualitative interview questions generated codes, categories, and themes, as well as observation data where it is relevant for the sectioned theme.

> RQ 1: How do students conceive of desirable oral English proficiency?

> RQ 2: How do students' attitudes towards accent and proficiency relate to oral participation?

We identified four main patterns based on the data material gathered:

> 1. Students have an unspecified ideal standard for pronunciation in speech, possibly based on perceptions of L1 language models.

> 2. Students express the tension between fluency and accuracy by pointing out a need for both, by having "effective communication" as a common theme.

> 3. L1 English accent is not a significant factor in how participants perceive their identity as English speakers but is to some still a factor for English proficiency.

> 4. It appears that students do not judge others' oral proficiency directly. Instead, they internalize notions that others do which influence their own assumptions, stemming from apprehension about potential social consequences.

5.1 Pronunciation and accent in relation to English proficiency

The findings presented in this section pertain to the tension between the notions of correctness and standardization in pronunciation and accent within context of English proficiency. The participants' perception of what is desirable and acceptable seems to influence their understanding of these concepts, which may be linked to variations in English accents. Our findings indicates that American and British accents are viewed as desirable. We will elaborate on this assertion by discussing our findings and exploring the interrelationship between pronunciation and accent as perceived by the participants.

Out of the 14 participants, a significant number considered pronunciation to be the most important aspect of good English, with 12 agreeing on this point. Additionally, over half of the participants mentioned the importance of grammar and speaking with a L1 English accent, while 6 agreed that "keeping a conversation without having to think about it" was important.

In contrast, vocabulary was ranked the lowest, with only 5 participants considering it to be an important aspect. It should be noted that some participants indicated that more than one category was important, resulting in overlapping numbers.

Figure 2 will show the overall distribution of how the participants conceive of English proficiency during the whole interview.
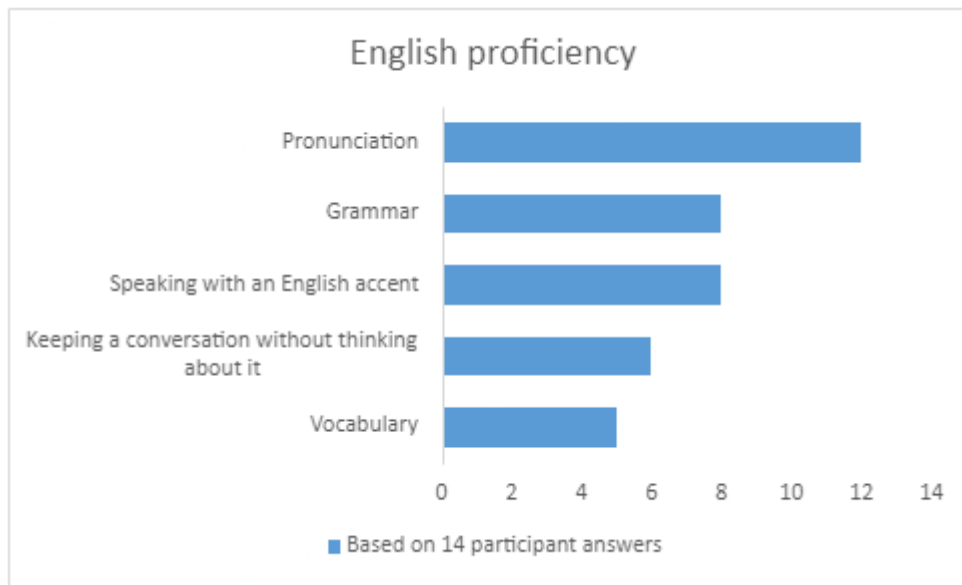
Figure 2 – How the participants conceive of English proficiency.

In our research, accent and pronunciation are important factors to consider, particularly in relation to our first research question, hence the figure informs us of the participants perceptions. However, it is noteworthy that listening or hearing skills were not explicitly mentioned by the participants, which may indicate a lack of emphasis on this aspect in English language learning. Furthermore, it could be interjected that "keeping a conversation" naturally means listening is a prerequisite of this. However, this is our interpretation based on the lack of this being mentioned or elaborated on.

We found that there are divergent understandings when it comes to accent and pronunciation, but there is still a general perception that adopting an English accent is a marker of English proficiency. Some students confirmed that, in certain cases, the Norwegian word "uttale" (meaning pronunciation) is being used to refer to accent, suggesting that there may be confusion or overlap between these terms. Even if this is not the case and a clear demarcation between the terms are made, some will still express the opinion of "correct" pronunciation. This suggest that there might be a belief that English-accented ways of pronunciation are the

correct manner of speech intonation. Where phonological aspects of individual sound should emulate specific English L1 accents that have little significance on intelligibility (see Derwing, 2003, p. 559), some participants explicitly mention intelligible or good pronunciation as important. This is also related to pronunciation through participation statements.

We identified that participants have mixed understandings of the relationship between pronunciation and accent. Some participants mentioned pronunciation and accent interchangeably, while others made a clear distinction between the two. The code "Good accent is related to English proficiency" was made when the participant had mentioned accent in some format during the interview in relation to oral proficiency. However, the category "pronunciation" contains a lot of different answers that we wish to show further down in the excerpts. Answers such as: *To be understood, pronounce things correctly and make no spoken mistakes* is also included in the category "pronunciation". As this variable is a lot more ambiguous in terms of what "pronounce things correctly" or "to be understood" entails we had to investigate this through other queries to and answers given from the students. Only a few participants (2, 6, and 8) mentioned specific examples of pronunciation, such as minimal pairs like "hair" vs "here," but this was not a commonly discussed topic. We conducted the interviews separately, so it was coincidental that two of the participants mentioned the same example.

Here are three representative transcripts that signal a clear distinction between accent and pronunciation:

Excerpts:	
Interviewer*:*	*Do you feel that having an accent has any impact on English speaking skills?*
Participant 3*:*	*Not so much, speaking with different accent doesn't have much impact. It's actually just the pronunciation that is important.*
Interviewer:	*What does it mean to be good at English in general?*
Participant 9:	*Pronounce* [words] *correctly, correct grammar and so on.*
Interviewer:	*What do you think about accents, does it have any impact on* [English] language *proficiency?*
Participant 9:	*Not really, the most important is that one pronounce it correctly after the accent they want to have.*

Interviewer: *What does it mean to be good at English?*
Participant 12: *Not much really, accent is not that important, but it's important to know the words themselves though.*

Table 1 – Excerpt from participant 3, 9 and 12

The participants here show a clear demarcation between pronunciation and accent when it comes to oral proficiency. For example, Participant 12 does not mention pronunciation at all during the interview and instead highlights the importance of vocabulary. In contrast, Participants 3 and 9 agree that accent is not necessarily indicative of oral English proficiency, but Participant 9 also emphasizes the importance of pronunciation for achieving a desired accent. This will be related to our first finding as "*pronounce it correctly*" is being used here in relation to accent aim.

Furthermore, there are two participants for whom this distinction is less clear where more elaboration is needed. However, they are still aware that a distinction exists:

Excerpts:
Interviewer: *How would you describe your teachers' oral English proficiency?*
Participant 4: *He's good in English. He's good with words and talks with good pronunciation and accent.*
Interviewer: *What do you think about Norwegian-English?*
Participant 4: *It's perfectly fine, most* [people] *do it, I do* [use] *it too.*
Interviewer: *Does accent have any significance for being good at English?*
Participant 4: *Yes, if you can do it, then you are pretty good at English, but that you don't mix between them so you must not speak a little British and then suddenly a little American and so on.*
[…]
Interviewer: *Are you trying to have any accent yourself?*
Participant 4: *No and I have not tried it either.*
Interviewer: *Is accent used in assessment* [when assessing English]*?*
Participant 4: *No*
[…]
Interviewer: *Anything else I should know?*
Participant 4: Maybe stick with one's own accent and not switch it maybe? I think it's a bit strange to just switch.

Interviewer*:*	*When you choose to use your English* [accent] *do you still feel that you're understood?*
Participant 6*:*	*Yes, I have the correct pronunciation, but not the correct accent that I am satisfied with.* […] *Kind of American, but a little bit of Norwegian as well, because I think its fine to sound a little Norwegian.*
Interviewer:	*Is it encouraged to use accent in class?*
Participant 6:	*No, not really as long as you talk understandably.*
Interviewer:	*Does it affect assessment in English?*
Participant 6:	*No, but pronunciation does.*

Table 2 – Excerpt from participant 4 and 6.

The excerpts we have selected illustrate the distinction between accent and pronunciation through the use of follow-up questions. Both participants express the view that accent is a part of oral English proficiency, while also believing that it does not affect their English assessment grades. Most of the interviewees also share the opinion that accent does not influence their grade in any way. Despite this, some interviewees still stress the importance of correct pronunciation and accent, indicating an awareness of the two as separate yet interrelated terms. Participant 4 expresses the importance of not mixing between the accents because it is "strange". How exactly it is strange is not explained as phonemic differences in accented speech for L2 English users should not impede intelligibility or comprehensibility (Derwing & Munro, 1997, pp. 13-15). Participant 6 mentions that accent is not being encouraged while stating: "*as long as you talk understandably*". This implies that some types of English speech may not be easily understood. These observations will be discussed in the upcoming discussion chapter.

Lastly, here are some excerpts that show accent and pronunciation is used interchangeably:

Excerpts:	
Interviewer:	*How does oral English skills effect participation?*
Participant 7:	*Little mixed* [depends]*, I know many who are very good* [at English] *but do not dare to participate, so I do not think so. It's more about the pronunciation really. There are some who are really good at English, but they only have bad pronunciation which makes them hesitant to speak. They are not quite able to produce the sound, but they are still* [skilled] *good.*
Interviewer*:*	*And when it comes to pronunciation, what are you thinking about?*

Participant 7:	*Accent really, and not have like a Norwegian accent. I think that's because we haven't learned as much about how to pronounce words correctly to sound less Norwegian and how to conjugate them.*
Interviewer:	*Is it encouraged to use accents in school?*
Participant 8:	*Yes, he* [teacher] *says it is good when one pronounces it* [words] *correctly and so on.*

Table 3 – Excerpts from participant 7 and 8

The interchangeable use of the terms pronunciation and accent may be due to their shared focus on the production of sound. In this excerpt participant 7 also links "bad pronunciation" to accent. Furthermore, "not being able to make the sound" could imply intonation, which can be "correctly done" (Götz, 2013, pp. 51-55). However, the ambiguity between these two terms creates a dichotomy between intonation for the sake of desired pronunciation according to accent aim, and intonation for the sake of intelligible pronunciation (Derwing, 2003, p. 559). Additionally, "bad pronunciation" in relation to "not quite able to produce the sound" gives us an indication of the code that: "One can sound correct". This implies an internal standardization of how to pronounce words, although the exact details of this standardization are not explained.

We can see perspectives on the relation between pronunciation and accents in this respective transcript:

Excerpts:	
Interviewer:	*Where did you learn to use English?*
Participant 2:	*Learned mostly from my English teacher that was from America. He was really strict about saying things correctly. And watch YouTube and English stuff.* [...]
Interviewer:	*What does it mean to be good at English?*
Participant 2:	*I would say pronunciation has quite a bit to say, and flow, but if you're also good at writing then that's well and good too. Though if you speak in a way that almost sounds American, then I would say that you are quite good at English.*
Interviewer:	[are there] *some other accents* [you would like to include]*?*
Participant 2:	*British, Canadian sounds a bit more straightforward, less intonation.*

Table 4 – Excerpt from participant 2

The link between pronunciation and perceived proficiency in accented English is observable in this excerpt. This is due to the code "If you sound like an L1 English user, you're good at English" being made from the interpretation that if by sounding American means one is quite good at English, the same attitude might exist for other L1 English-speaking accents.

Pronunciation is followed by an accent aim, which could stem from when the focus was shifted towards writing, so participant might have wanted to emphasize the speech aspect more. To be specific, the native-sounding phonological aspect is perceived as an even higher level in terms of oral English proficiency. The link could allude to a natural step from focusing on pronunciation to a native level sound production, or it could have been alluding that accent as an extension of pronunciation is more indicative than being good at writing. However, it's important to note that phonological aspects of speech may not necessarily be related to intelligibility, as certain accents may still be intelligible despite deviating from standard pronunciation (see Derwing, 2003, p. 559). Some participants explicitly mention some native accented speeches are less intelligible which will also be represented in excerpts in e.g., section 5.2 see table 5.

Throughout the various perspectives on how pronunciation and accent are related to English proficiency, we can observe a tendency to associate certain pronunciations or accents with greater intelligibility or correctness. However, there is a lack of explanation or clarification regarding what is meant by "correctness". Despite participants being able to differentiate between the two terms, there is still a standard or perceived notion of "correctness" that remains unaddressed. What is shared in this thought is that a combination of notion of "correctness", "standardization" and "intelligibility" is getting closer to language attitudes that is covered in the theory (Cazden, 2011, p. 367). Through this we can also infer the notion that these three aspects of English proficiency are desirable or acceptable for some reason. This will be explored further in section 5.3, which delves into accent and identity.

5.2   Balance accuracy and fluency

The findings in this chapter show that some students express the tension between accuracy and fluency by pointing out a need for both. Though the common theme is effective communication, there seems to be an understanding of a balancing act between "avoiding being wrong or misunderstood" and "make occasional errors for the sake of flow and conversation". This tension could be further emphasized by the implications it might have on

the participants in terms of willingness to show a perceived inadequate language proficiency and dare to speak for the sake of becoming fluent and practice language fluency.

Overall, while accuracy is consistently mentioned as an important aspect of being good at English, there is variation in the emphasis placed on fluency and accent/pronunciation among the participants. While some participants do not see accent as an important factor in English proficiency, most of them mention the importance of proper pronunciation and understanding of the language for being good at English. This suggests that accuracy is more important than fluency for these participants when it comes to speaking English. Pronunciation was identified as a crucial aspect of English proficiency by some participants, as it allows for clear communication and understanding in conversation.

However, if we bring attention to "speak in a way that almost sounds like an Amercian" from the previous chapter we can also infer aspects that go beyond just accurate sound production. For instance, this would possibly include the use of specific phrases or idioms that are associated with American speech mannerisms. Extending this to L1 speech in general it would involve social and cultural understanding which is interdependent on the context in which the speaker is in. This would fall under fluency, as people would have to navigate between different speakers involving appropriate speech.

These excerpts show how the participants connected English proficiency to accuracy and fluency:

Excerpts:
Interviewer: *What does it mean to be good at English?*   Participant 14: *It's about being able to speak basic English to keep a conversation going, but also a bit of grammar so it doesn't sound wrong and isn't misunderstood easily.*
Interviewer: *Would you say it is important to have pronunciation and accent?*   Participant 7: *Yes, definitely, writing is important too. Though talking is more important because when you are doing something at work etc., you'll have to speak in English. And it is important when those who are good at English* [who] *aren't able to pronounce something that makes it hard to understand sometimes.*
Interviewer: *What does it really mean to be good at English?*

<u>Participant 1:</u>	*That maybe you can pronounce it properly so that if you pronounce it wrong, you can perhaps say another word than the one you actually said.*
	[…]
<u>Interviewer:</u>	*What is the most important aspect of being good at English?*
<u>Participant 1:</u>	*Pronunciation and maybe write properly and understand so that you can understand what you write and what you say.*

Table 5 – Excerpts from participant 1, 7 and 14.

In these excerpts the participants' focus is less on accent or pronunciation and more on considerations towards how oral English proficiency reflect on its pragmatic use. The first sentence "*able to speak basic English to keep a conversation going*" depending on the intent of the language user can diverge between purely *functional* or *meaningful* in its intent (see Chvala, 2018 on functional communication and meaningful use). In this way the conversation in the classroom setting could be the goal itself, a monologue in this case could be argued to be sufficient. The conversation itself could therefore be the vector of English proficiency without regarding how the listener engages with the conversation. This could also be observed during the lesson in which students would participate in conversation about specific terminology related to the lesson topic within 30 second intervals.

During this activity most conversation ended after a definition of said terminologies were given, usually by one speaker. Though the silent listeners did not show clear signs of agreement or disagreement. The silence itself might be a social cue on acceptance of an adequate answer, though we are not sure whether this is a set social norm or a common consensus that 30 seconds simply was not enough time. If the latter is correct, then that might also indicate that the students have done similar communicative activities before. An avenue for listener engagement would require reiterating the content of what was spoken, which could also be facilitated in the classroom. Ultimately, students are using the language in unrehearsed contexts to facilitate fluency (Brown, 2006, p. 214).

The focus on functional use of the language is also expressed by participants mentioning "[…] so it doesn't sound wrong and isn't misunderstood easily" and "pronounce it wrong". The evaluative words used here indicates a focus on accuracy as indicative of oral English proficiency. The latent codes we have made in relation to accuracy and fluency is "being misunderstood relate to phonology" and "accuracy might be correlated towards fluency", tying accuracy towards oral fluency. In this case pointing out that conversation would not be done well without some form such as correct tenses.

The meaningful aspect would be more related towards a social purpose or what we will choose to call "social stake", something to be attained through the means of the conversation. Not only authentic in its intent, but also execution. An apt example to this could be unintended small talk between students with meaning outside of just learning outcomes. This can also facilitate for fluency as accuracy would only be the means to convey their intention and would thus be the most authentic conversation.

However, the abovementioned distinction is not meant to separate *functional* and *meaningful* communication as clashing of two separate entities. Fluency is not necessarily without accuracy and vice versa. The suggestion is merely if the intent of the conversation is meant to act as a means to an end for oral English proficiency. Which often becomes the case in a school setting for all intents and purposes facilitating language learning.

As closing points to "keeping the conversation going" the question for how long a conversation should be kept rises. If the conversation only manifests in a monologue and with little engagement, mean that English proficiency also entails means outside of just having basic English? In essence to facilitate continuation of a conversation would it not also require social skills? Our interpreted conclusion to this is not only the pure semantic meaning, but also includes a latent meaning of self-confidence with a foundation to facilitate the language learning journey. "Keeping a conversation going" will intrinsically contain meaningful aspects which are ideas, thoughts, and emotions. These could serve as a social motivating factor for communication. In the same vein the exchange itself will therefore be kept going without focusing on external factors such as the accuracy of the language and time constraint. Albeit external factors should not be disregarded, as they might influence the "social stake" and confidence.

While the "basic English" can hint towards a latent code in which "Keeping a conversation going is related to English proficiency" to have a conversation and by extension "communication is more important than high level English" (see appendix C for codes and related transcripts). Though what specifically basic English entails cannot be easily inferred.

5.3   Accent and L2 identity

Our third finding suggest that L1 English accent is not a significant factor in how participants perceive their identity as English speakers. Conversely, an L1 accent is still viewed as related to good English proficiency by most of the participants. In the interviews the participants do not seem to prioritize a specific accent or pronunciation, with some even stating that they do

not try to speak with an accent. Instead, they focus on correct grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation in their use of English. This suggests that for the participants, their identity as proficient English speakers, is based on their own ability to communicate effectively rather than on a particular accent or pronunciation style. While at the same time holding L1 accents in positive regard.
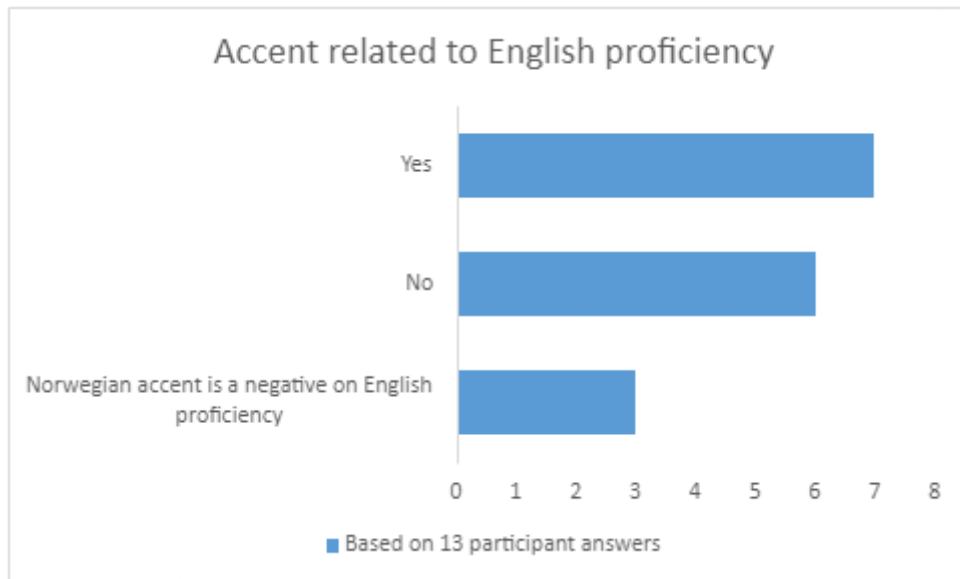

Figure 3 – Dialects or accents' relations to oral English proficiency.

There is no clear consensus on whether accent has a significant impact on English language proficiency. Little over half of the participants (7 out of 13) think that there is relation between accent and English proficiency while 6 out of 13 do not think so. However, there are also participants (3 out of 13) who think that a Norwegian accent has a negative impact on English proficiency. We have also included mentioning the word dialect to let the participant understand our question related to variations of speech and not pronunciation of words. We also supplement follow-up questions related to accent aims with figure 4 (5.3.1). Reason being a discrepancy between the notion that accent have a relation to oral English proficiency and personal accent aims.

While there were some differing opinions on the importance of accent, the interviews suggest that accent choice may not be a significant factor in their perception of English proficiency for some. Accent choice seems to be a conscious choice that the individual takes on preference. As such participants expressed a preference for certain accents because they thought it

sounded better. Reasons for this could be attributed to traits or cultural identity, which will also be covered in the next section.

These interviews show some participants who answered "No" on relations to English proficiency:

Excerpts:
Interviewer*:* *Do you feel accent has any impact on oral English skills?* Participant 3: *Not much, to speak in different accents doesn't matter much. It's really just the pronunciation that is important.* Interviewer: *Do you try to have a specific accent or pronunciation?* Participant 3: *No, I do it sometimes just to joke around, but not to talk like that. I normally do not try to speak with an accent.*
Interviewer: *Would you say accent have any impact on being good at English?* Participant 5: *No.* Interviewer: *Do you try to use an accent?* Participant 5: *No, I have not thought much about it really.* Interviewer: *Have you tried?* Participant 5: *No.*
Interviewer: *What does it mean to be good at English?* Participant 12: *Not much really, accent is not that important, but it's important to know the words themselves though.* Interviewer: *Does accent have any impact for* [English] *proficiencies then?* Participant 12: *No, one can have whatever accent they want.*

Table 6 – Accent on oral proficiency – Excerpts from participant 3, 5 and 12

These excerpts suggest that the participants do not see accent as a significant factor in relations to proficiency. They seem to put more emphasis on pronunciation while downplaying the importance of accents, and rather highlight the importance of understanding and clear communication. One participant mentions doing it for fun and another mentioning importance of vocabulary and pronunciation, giving accent to individual choice which indicates that "accent use is a personal conscious endeavour" as our code suggest, while another says they have not thought much about accents, which indicates the opposite. This again could mean that these participants do not feel any pressure to conform to a specific

accent. Overall, the ones highlighted the importance of accents in relation to proficiency seem to have made a conscious choice of their accent use which will be shown in the next excerpts.

The next set of interviews, will be of those who are on the other side, and thinks that accents do have an influence on proficiency of any form:

Excerpts:	
Interviewer:	*Do you try to use any specific accents?*
Participant 2:	*I have tried to use the American* [accent*), it is a bit easier than the British. Also, it is a bit strange to suddenly speak British. It would be a bit strange to be completely Norwegian* [sounding] *and then suddenly a British!*
Interviewer:	*Does accent matter for English proficiency?*
Participant 2:	*Yes, if you talk in Norwegian-English then you're not really good at English.*
Interviewer:	*Do you speak differently outside of school than in school?*
Participant 2:	*I may speak a bit more American outside of school to make myself a bit more intelligible.*
Interviewer:	*What do you think about Norwegian-English?*
Participant 4:	*It's perfectly fine, most* [people] *do it, I do* [use] *it too.*
Interviewer:	*Does accent have any significance for being good at English?*
Participant 4:	*Yes, if you can do it, then you are pretty good at English, but that you don't mix between them so you must not speak a little British and then suddenly a little American and so on.*
Interviewer:	*Is it important to have an accent?*
Participant 7:	*I can talk with both British and American* [accent] *because I have a stepmother who speak British and father who talk American, so when I speak everything is in American* [accent]. *Though I can talk in British* [accent] *too if I want. I mix accents a little and talk in the accent that the one I speak with has or that* [accent] *which easiest for the others to understand. Because some do not speak as good English and then I try to make it the easiest for them.*
Interviewer:	*Does it matter if you have a Norwegian accent?*
Participant 7:	*Not really important, but a bit since it can be difficult to understand some of the words that don't completely match. When you are used to hearing certain*

> *words pronounced in specific ways and then suddenly not* [pronounced] *in a normal way, it can be difficult to understand.*

Table 7 – Accent on oral proficiency – Excerpts from participant 2,4 and 7

On the contrary to the first set of interviews these participants do see a relation between accents and proficiency, and are using their experiences, in terms of their own personal use of accent and how they perceive others use of accents. The consensus between these participants seems to be that not having an accent could lead to misunderstandings and difficulty understanding. Specifically mentioned is a difficulty in understanding Norwegian accent, in terms of certain words and that it is considered bad proficiency. A consistency in an accent can help on these two points. However, switching between accents in conversations can be confusing to some, others use different accents depending on who they talk to ease the understanding between interlocutors.

By connecting the two sets of interviews there is not a specific consensus on the relationship between accent and proficiency, however the clear agreement between the answers is the importance on clear communication, including pronunciation and understanding.

Our findings suggest that accent use and choice can be related to their identity through characteristics pertaining to accents. Some of the participants are interested in learning certain accents and views it as a desirable achievement for speaking English. However, those participants can also experience social pressure and embarrassment from others who comment on their accent, causing them to switch to an American accent which is more socially acceptable. This highlights the complex social dynamics at play in language learning and the influence of social norms and expectations on accent choice. The participant's desire to continue with a British accent despite the social pressure also suggests a potential link between accent and identity, as the participant may view a British accent as aligning with their sense of self and identity. Overall, this highlights the nuanced relationship between accent and identity.

Figure 4 shows a summary of participants accent aims they reported in the interviews:
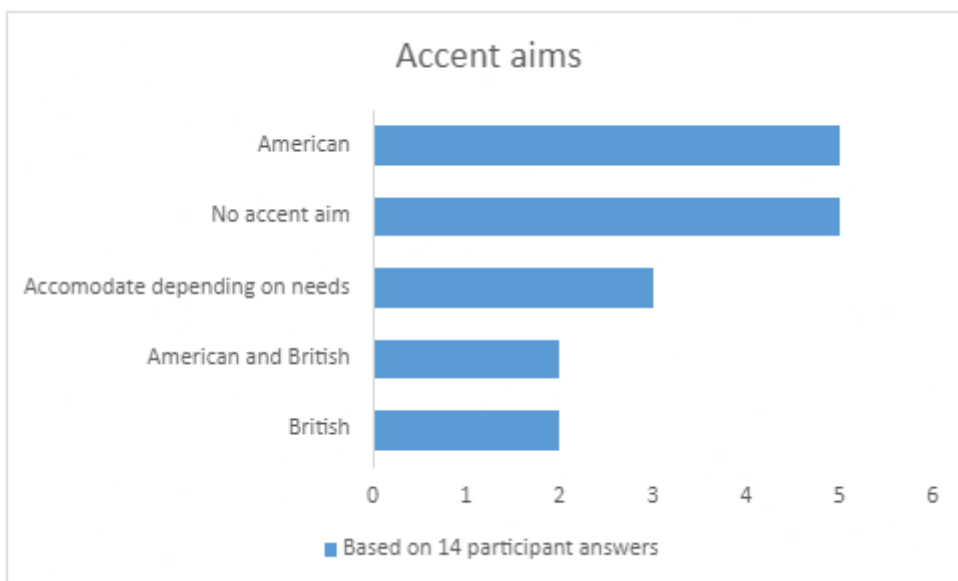
Figure 4 – Participants' accent aims.

Overall, the majority have some preference for a specific accent, with some including more than just one, which is separated. Three of the participants also chose to add accommodating depending on needs and two suggesting both accents as their aim, which leads this graph to have more than 14 variables. The number of people saying, "no accent aim" (35%) as their choice is therefore our basis for our hypothesis on change in attitudes towards accents which will be discussed later.

These excerpts show how the participants identity plays a role in choice of accent:

Excerpts:
<u>Interviewer:</u> *Do you feel that dialects or accent have any say on English proficiency?*   <u>Participant 1:</u> *Not really, no.*   <u>Interviewer:</u> *What kind of accent or pronunciation are you trying to use in English?*   <u>Participant 1:</u> *A bit more American than British.*   <u>Interviewer:</u> *Why is that?*   <u>Participant 1:</u> *Because I think British is a little more, polite, yes, it sounds a bit better in my opinion.*
<u>Interviewer:</u> *What kind of accent do you try to use?*   <u>Participant 6:</u> *Like American, but also bit like Norwegian because I think it's fine to sound a little bit Norwegian.*   <u>Interviewer:</u> *Why is that?*   <u>Participant 6:</u> *I am from Norway, so it is fine to sound a little Norwegian too, and I choose this on purpose.*

Interviewer:	*Is it like you want to hold on to it to show that you are Norwegian?*
Participant 6:	I kind of appreciate being Norwegian and want to show it to people I talk to.
Interviewer:	*When you choose to use your English* [accent] *do you still feel that you're understood?*
Participant 6:	*Yes, I kind of have the right pronunciation, but not the right accent that I am satisfied with.*
Interviewer:	*What do you think about accents, does it have any impact on* [English] language *proficiency?*
Participant 9:	*Not really, the most important thing is that one pronounces it correctly after the accent they want to have.* […]
Interviewer:	*Do you try to use an accent?*
Participant 9:	*Yes, I use an American accent.* […] *I try British accent sometimes, because I think I sounds cool.*

Table 8 – Accent on identity – Excerpts for participant 1,6 and 9

The participants express similar attitudes towards accent aim and their relationship to identity. Accents can carry subjective traits in which the participants base choices of accent on the sounding nature of the preferred accent. Choosing to retain some of their Norwegian accent because they want to express their national identity when speaking English is a sign of self-expression in relation to identity, in which the participant (6) think it is fine to show where they're from by sounding somewhat local. For others it is simply a matter of personal preference and personal endeavour where accents could indicate different desired characteristics, which one would want to achieve. Regardless of accent, the majority thinks that pronunciation is to be prioritized over accent but at the same time hold accent to be indicative of English proficiency for a slight majority.

5.4   Participation

Our findings suggest that most do not seem to judge others' participation, but it rather is an influence on one's own assumptions for fear of social consequence. Participation shows relations to how the students feel a sense of pressure and dissatisfaction with their own language aims. The importance of mitigating this to create a comfortable and supportive learning environment that encourages participation comes into question. Pressure that is created by internal and external factors in. Additionally, their own expectations reduce their

self-confidence which leads to less participation. The participants' way of increasing self-confidence is to avoid comparisons of proficiency to other peers. There seems to be a consensus that "participating more" and "using English more" is the goal with their suggestions and argumentation towards making it easier to participate.

These excerpts show connections the participants made to participation, and how it could make it easier for them and others to participate:

Excerpts
Interviewer: *Is there anything that would make it easier to participate in English speaking?*   Participant 6: *Yes, smaller groups are good because it's easier to speak without so many people listening.*
Interviewer: *How does oral English skills effect participation?*   Participant 7: *Little mixed* [depends], *I know many who are very good* [at English] *but do not dare to participate, so I do not think so. It's more about the pronunciation really. There are some who are really good at English, but they only have bad pronunciation which makes them hesitant to speak. They are not quite able to produce the sound, but they are still* [skilled] *good.*   Interviewer: *What would make it easier to participate in the classroom?*   Participant 7: *Maybe speak with people who have different levels of skills, like sitting next to someone who speaks excellent English, then you might feel a bit worse than that person and maybe not dare to speak because then I will sound bad. Try to be on the same level and in smaller groups, etc. Then it becomes less awkward and less difficult.*   *Interviewer:* *Anything else I should know?*   *Participant 7:* *Simply just consume a lot of English where you can instead of avoiding it like many does.* […] *Comparing to others, like, feeling that others are better, and you can't produce the same, leading to low self-confidence, so working in groups, I think would help.*
Interviewer: *What could make it easier to participate verbally in class?*   Participant 9: *Perhaps if we divided into groups sometimes, we watched a movie once and talked about it afterwards in groups, that was good because then many dared to participate and talk about it.*

Interviewer: *What makes one not want to participate?*
Participant 12: *It's about us not being used to it and not speaking it* [English] *enough, which makes it uncomfortable to feel that we're not good enough. It's a bit of performance anxiety.*
Interviewer: *What should schools/teachers do to make learning English easier?*
Participant 14: *Group tasks! So that everyone must participate and use as much English as possible in smaller groups.*

Table 9 – Analysis on participation – Excerpts from participant 6, 7, 9, 12 and 14

In these excerpts the participants suggest groupwork and by talking to peers who are considered to have high proficiency in English the fear of being worse than them might make participants feel inferior and not want to speak up. They suggest being in smaller groups and where everyone is on the same level, which would make it less awkward and less difficult to participate. This indicates the importance of creating a comfortable and supportive learning environment to encourage participation by reducing the pressure they feel and the fear of failure.

Excerpt
Participant 14 continues with a strong opinion on participation in the classroom and argued:
Participant 14: *Most people who speak English at home or alone are those who participate more and are the ones daring to answer questions, while the others are holding back because they think they might not pronounce things right.*
Interviewer: *Why don't they want to participate?*
Participant 14: *Because they can't bother or just don't like the subject maybe, but it's not like it's dangerous to pronounce things a little wrong, I do that myself. Many probably think they are bad and don't dare to show what they really can. So, I think it comes down to self-confidence, I think.*

Table 10 – Participation opinion – Excerpt from participant 14.

Participant 14 went into detail on what they thought was the reason for participating or not participating in the classroom and argued that self-confidence was the root problem. This coincides well with participant 12, on having little practice which increases the performance anxiety. They suggest that some individuals may hold back from participating in English-speaking activities due to a fear of mispronunciation or a lack of confidence in their English abilities. Which coincides with participant 6 and 7 mentioned about how of the social stake in relation to self-confidence. This fear may stem from a desire to conform to a particular accent

or pronunciation style that will be socially accepted in the context of the classroom, which can create pressure to perform and fear of judgment from others (Derwing & Munro, 2009).

In collecting the relevant answers, we found total number of suggestions from the participants on what would make it easier to participate in the classroom as shown in figure 5:
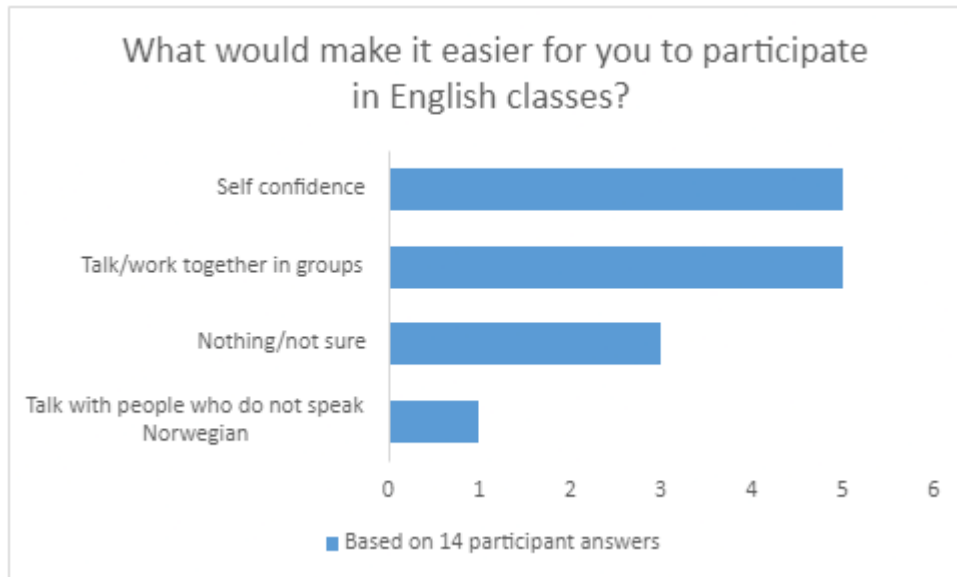
Figure 5 – What would make easier to participate in English classes.

The majority of the participants had specific ways of making it easier for them and peers to participate in the classroom. Working together in groups was the most suggested in-class activity to ease participation in the classroom. With the reasoning that it would encourage more participation. One participant also mentioned practicing English with someone who doesn't speak Norwegian to improve their language skills. While others mentioned improving self-confidence in order to participate more.

We found that there are fewer who are influenced by accent in relation to participation. Some of the participants are interested in learning certain accents and views it as a desirable achievement for speaking English. While most of the participants seek to imitate specific accent, our findings did not suggest that it has significant impact on participation in the classroom, however some of the participants specified how it could be influencing either themselves, or others in different ways for various reasons.

This figure shows how many thoughts accent was related to participation after interpreting the interviews:
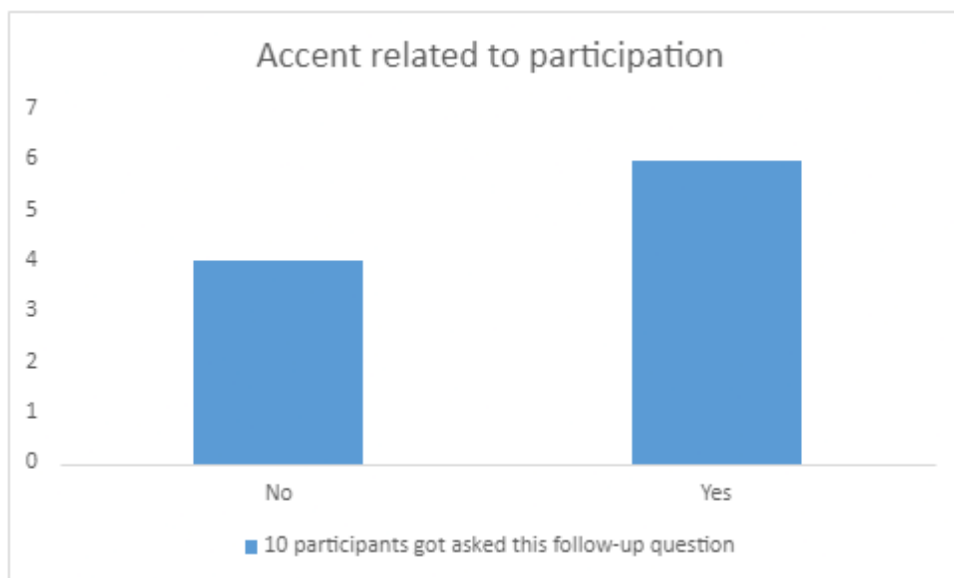
Figure 6 – Accent relation to participation.

From figure 6 we see that only ten participants received this follow-up question, or mentioned accent in relation to participation, however, we want to highlight some explanations from the participants, because of the great differences in opinions from "yes" to "no".

Four of the participants explained why accents mattered on participation:

Excerpts:	
Interviewer: *Does accent matters in terms of oral participation?*	
Participant 2: *Maybe, if it was encouraged to use American English, there might have been fewer people who dared to participate, but at the same time, maybe we would have become a little better.*	
Interviewer: *Do you feel that accents affect oral participation in class?*	
Participant 6: *I think it can, because it can be a bit scary to sound like an old man trying to speak English, kind of like when you haven't learned much English, etc.*	
Interviewer: *Does accent affect participation?*	
Participant 12: *Yes, a little. I don't have a good accent, and it affects me a bit because I don't like to speak when I know my accent isn't good.*	
Interviewer: *Does accent matter on English proficiency?*	
Participant 14: *Yes, personally since I am not that happy with Norwegian-English. I am most happy with British accent, and I try to use it myself, but when I do it there are*	

many that comment on it and I become a little embarrassed and then it turns a little Norwegian-English again.
Interviewer: *Why do they think it* [British accent] *is strange?*
Participant 14: *They are used to Norwegian-English and maybe think it is strange that one talks a little different than them, but I want to learn to talk British, but others think like why do I do that? then I just speak more American. So, I mostly speak British with my Turkish friend instead of in the classroom.*
Interviewer: *Why do you choose to use an American accent instead after, then?*
Participant 14: *TikTok, and because many others do it and that's what most people have heard before and I've just done the same and followed that and heard a lot from video clips.*
Interviewer: *So, you just adapt after the response you get?*
Participant 14: *Yes, but I kind of want to continue with British, but it's hard to not care about being commented on.*
Interviewer: *Why do they do it, you think?*
Participant 14: *I think it's because its new and unusual to them, hearing an accent from someone this young. So I adapt* [to the context] *like American or Norwegian* [accent] *when that happens.*

Table 11 – Participation relation to accent – Excerpts from participant 2, 6, 12 and 14

We found that the feeling of being stigmatized because of an accent could result in less participation. The two excerpts from participant 2 and 6 and suggests that accent aims and the pressure to conform to a particular pronunciation style can impact one's self-confidence and willingness to participate in English-speaking activities. Participants 12 and 14 seem to agree with the statement, however, they speak directly from own personal experience on how either their accent is bad (12) and it impacts their participation because of low self-confidence, or they use an accent (14) and receive feedback from peers resulting in similar feelings of embarrassment. They both avoid participating or communicating in their preferred accent, and participant 14 seem to give up on it and practice her preferred accent with a foreign friend.

Conversely, the explanation from those who said "no" to the same question:

Excerpts:
Interviewer: *Does it* [accent] *matter for participation?*
Participant 3: *No, everyone speaks the same* [amount].

Interviewer:	*Does it* [accent] *matter for participation?*
Participant 5:	*No, it's not important in our class.*
Interviewer:	*Does accent matter in English proficiency?*
Participant 10:	Yes, it matters a little bit […]
Interviewer:	*Does it* [accent] *matter for participation?*
Participant 10:	*Those with an accent do* [Participate]*, maybe a little more, but it doesn't matter, I think.*

Table 12 – Participation no relation to accent – Excerpts from participant 3, 5 and 10.

The excerpts show that those who do speak English confidently and participate more in English-speaking activities may be doing so because they are less concerned with conforming to a particular accent or pronunciation style. We make this assumption because none of the participants who said "no" went into further detail as to why other than "it's not important", indicating that they do not care or do not notice the differences, while four out of six wanted to elaborate on their opinions. Participant 10 seems to indicate that the major factor in participation is proficiency and self-confidence, rather than the accent itself. This highlights the potential tension between conforming to a particular accent or pronunciation style and expressing one's own identity and voice in English-speaking contexts.

5.5   Summary

The findings suggest that students use accent and pronunciation interchangeably to point towards an ideal English reminiscent of L1 English speech. Accuracy is consistently seen as important, but there is variation in the emphasis placed on fluency and accent/pronunciation among the participants. Participants do not prioritize a specific accent or pronunciation in terms of their identity as English speakers, and instead focus on clear communication and understanding in conversation. The pressure to conform to a particular accent or pronunciation style can impact self-confidence and willingness to participate in English-speaking activities. Additionally, there is a potential tension between conforming to a particular accent and expressing one's own identity and voice in English-speaking contexts. The complex social dynamics at play in language learning and use suggest a nuanced relationship between accent, social dynamics, and identity.
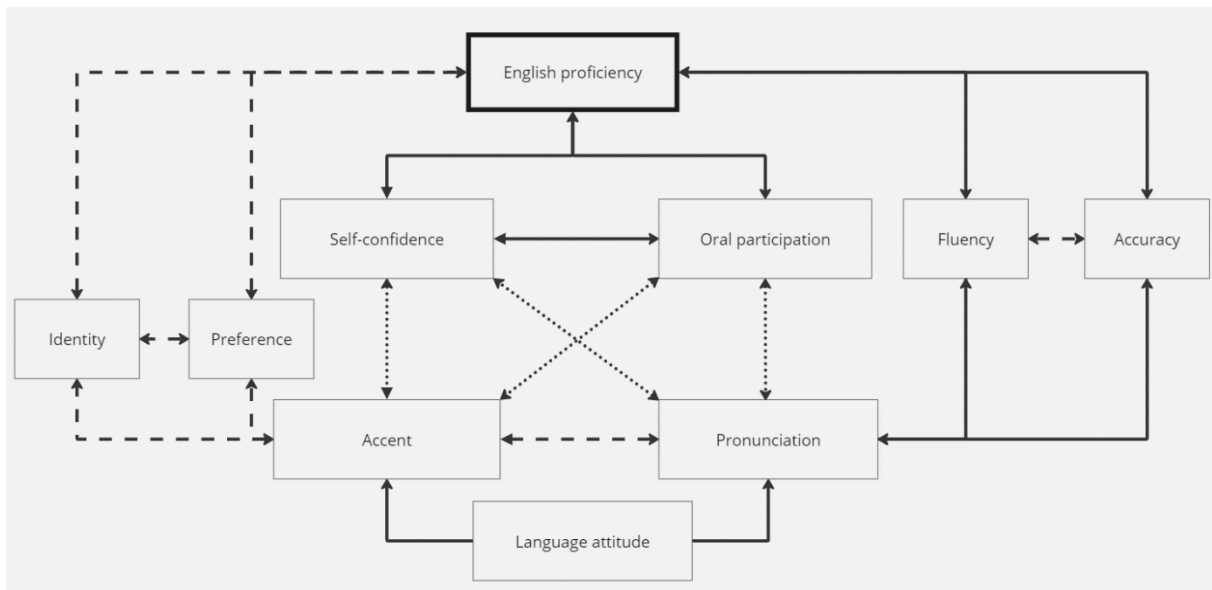
Figure 7 – Perceived Oral English proficiency conceptual model

This model is an explanation of the connections our codes and findings have made. It is separated into three different connections according to theoretical framework and participant responses. Looking at the solid line, we can see the connections the participants made that have a direct relation to the theoretical framework paired with clear participation consensus. The dashed line is the connections that the participants made that are slightly outside what the theory suggests. E.g., the thoughts behind ELF and Global English suggest there should not be hard relations between accent and English proficiency other than the issue of intelligibility (Derwing & Munro, 2009). The dotted lines are the connections the participants made; however, the answers are not shared, and there is no clear consensus between the participants.

Through this model we wish to show the connections students make of English proficiency and what we have covered thus far. The ambiguity between accent and pronunciation exist in which ideal pronunciation is sometimes related to ideal speech. In which case both have been mentioned to related to English proficiency. In the case where balance between accuracy and fluency is tied to how effectively one can communicate in which the pragmatic use of English is tied to English proficiency. Accent is not seen as an important factor for their own identity as English speakers, though the majority still ties accent indicative for English proficiency. We also see a significant minority which think it is fine or desirable to use the local accent. Thus, all the participants express an individual choice in terms of their accent aim. Participation seems to be mixed when it comes to its relation to one's own thoughts about personal accent, pronunciation, or self-confidence. Consequently, it leads to less participation based on fear of social repercussions. Suggested remedy seem to be improving one's own

self-confidence or decrease the pressure by changing the social context in which English can be used. In the end tying up all these categories towards English proficiency and how they relate to each other.

6.0 Discussion

This chapter will discuss our findings for this master's thesis in light of relevant theory and previous research. The most important findings from this study were:

1. Students have an unspecified ideal standard for pronunciation in speech, possibly based on perceptions of L1 language models.

2. Students express the tension between fluency and accuracy by pointing out a need for both, by having "effective communication" as a common theme.

3. L1 English accent is not a significant factor in how participants perceive their identity as English speakers.

4. It appears that students do not judge others' oral proficiency directly, but rather internalize notions that others do as an influence on their own assumptions, which stem from apprehension about potential social consequences.

As a result of our analysis, the findings lead us to begin this chapter by (6.1) discussing the status of English in Norway. This section will explore how English proficiency is perceived by Norwegian students and how accent and pronunciation relate to English proficiency. The chapter will also (6.2) examine the relationship between accent and identity, including how social pressure and expectations can influence accent choice and impact on one's willingness to communicate. Furthermore, the chapter will (6.3) discuss accuracy and fluency in terms of oral English proficiency.

6.1 The status of English in Norway

English has become a language that is widely used and influenced by many different communities for a variety of purposes. It is now the go-to global language of communication for people who speak different native languages. European English speakers typically use English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), in a way that they acquire English from an early age through formal education and intercultural communication rather than by interacting with native English speakers as their first language (Jenkins, 2006). Norway is no different, and as a result, English is used in many aspects of a student's life. In addition, English is also commonly used in casual conversations between Norwegians, particularly among younger generations. This is partly due to the popularity of English-language media, such as music, movies and TV shows not being dubbed, as well as the widespread use of the internet and

social media. The high level of English proficiency among Norwegians is also reflected in the country's ranking in English language proficiency indexes. According to the 2022 "Education First" (EF, 2022) English Proficiency Index, Norway ranks fourth out of 111 countries in English proficiency index.

While students of Norway may be achieving good scores on the English proficiency index, it seems that there are differences in conceptions of what good proficiency means among the students. There is a difference between perceptions of one's English accent, and perceptions of one's overall proficiency, as having an accent is not necessarily indicative of overall proficiency (Derwing & Munro, 2009, p. 478). Our findings, suggest that the participants in the study perceive correct pronunciation and accent as important aspects of good English proficiency, while vocabulary was ranked lowest. This shows that the students' perceptions are not necessarily based on what proficiency is but on what they think is expected of them. This could mean that students may not have enough information of what proficiency is expected of them. On the other hand, one's perception of accent of accent may be affecting one's overall view of proficiency (see Munro & Derwing, 2006), which could indicate that the students, are simply mentioning what their opinion on proficiency are and what proficient English is "supposed" to be measured by, rather than their knowledge behind the term. Interestingly listening or hearing skills were not explicitly mentioned by any of the participants, which may be an indication that the students' language learning may have less emphasis on this aspect. "Keeping a conversation going" naturally includes listening is a part of it. However, this is our interpretation based on the lack of this being mentioned or elaborated on.

Additionally, there appears to be a discrepancy in the interpretation of the term's "pronunciation" and "accent", but there is still a general perception that adopting an English accent is an indication of English proficiency. Several students confirmed that the Norwegian word "uttale" (which translates to "pronunciation") is used in some cases to refer to accent, indicating that there may be some confusion or overlap between the two concepts. Even if this is not the case and a clear distinction between the terms are made, some still expressed the opinion of "correct" pronunciation. This implies that there might be a belief that English-accented ways of pronunciation are the correct manner of speech intonation. This coincides with a notion that foreign accented speech is viewed more negatively than what is perceived to be a "standard" (Anisfeld et al., 1962, p. 230). Three of the participants specifically mentioned this as well, alongside the majority indicating that accent has direct influence on

proficiency. The interchangeable use of accent and pronunciation may be because they both relate to the production of sounds. However, this ambiguity can create a divide between intonation that is aimed at achieving a certain accent and intonation that is aimed at achieving intelligibility.

A heavily scrutinized example of heavy accented speech in Norway was from Thorbjørn Jagland. He served as a chairman of the Norwegian Nobel Committee from 2009 to 2015 and received criticism of his heavily accented Norwegian-English in one of his congratulatory speeches, which caused an uproar and was reported in Norwegian tabloid news due to negative reactions from online netizens (Lilleås, 2009). This incident highlights how an accent perceived as being far from the standard can elicit negative reactions from listeners of the same country as the speaker (Anisfeld et al., 1962, p. 230; Derwing, 2003, pp. 548-549). Our findings suggest that the broad view that the heavily L1 Norwegian accented English is looked upon negatively is shifting where some participants are consciously choosing the "Norwegian" option. Some participants with accent aim other than L1 Norwegian English accent also express that the L1 Norwegian accented speech is of no concern, which suggests a possible change in language attitude (see table 2 and 7). This differs from the study Rindal (2014a) where none chose this option. Though it could be discussed if the results could be different if we also opted for a matched-guise test with an evaluation form. In which case we would wish to include a L1 Norwegian accented English variety and would mean a completely different study altogether. Reasons for this change will be discussed in section 6.2.2. In any case, as this shift in opinion is shared by the majority of the participants, we do not dare to suggest a broad paradigm shift, but only a shift in attitudes by a significant minority.

Another criticism towards non-standard accent use is related to intelligibility, with heavy foreign accents being specifically targeted (e.g., Derwing, 2003, p. 551; Jenkins, 2006, p. 175; Munro & Derwing, 1995, p. 291). However, this view has been challenged by some researchers who argue that high levels of accentedness do not necessarily lead to reduced intelligibility or comprehensibility (e.g., Derwing & Munro, 1997; Munro & Derwing, 2006, pp. 529-530). While it has been argued that phonological aspects of individual sounds have little impact on intelligibility when emulating specific English L1 accents (Derwing, 2003, p. 559), some participants still emphasized the importance of having intelligible *or* good pronunciation. This will be elaborated on in relation to functional use of the language section 6.3.1.

The notion of "bad pronunciation" being related to the inability to produce certain sounds suggests that there is an internal standardization for how words should be pronounced and that one can "sound correct". However, the specific details of this standardization are not clarified. This standardization could be a result of teachers themselves not being clear enough on what they specifically assess on English oral proficiency. Bøhn and Hansen (2017) conducted a study on teachers' perceptions on assessment criteria on oral English exams in Norway. It was a general consensus among the teachers regarding the primary components of student's performance. However, there was a disagreement in more specific components. The study revealed mixed opinions on the relevance of English accented speech despite teachers' strong preference for English language teaching for intelligibility. Furthermore, there was uncertainty in identifying errors that could affect intelligibility, with some teachers placing less emphasis on pronunciation and intonation (Bøhn & Hansen, 2017, p. 65). With such results, it is understandable that students may be unsure of what is "correct English" and unsure of the weight or meaning of the different terms, when they may be receiving different perspectives depending on the teachers they have had, or currently have. Bøhn and Hansen (2017), suggest introducing a national rating scale guidelines and rater training among teachers. First, a better definition for the pronunciation construct for teaching and assessment purposes. Secondly, a need for deciding on the L1 English accent principle. Lastly, that teachers are advised to allow for the practice of higher-order thinking skills in the classroom. These suggestions could not only be effective for teachers' consistency but having consistency in conceptions of good English proficiency form the teachers, for the students, may give them more specific goals to work towards, rather than their own conceptions of what good proficiency is. On the other hand, students will always have different preferences on what "sounds good", which they must be able to explore as well. This will also be elaborated on in meaningful use of the language section 6.3.2.

6.2 L2 accent and identity

Conforming to L1 English accented speech is not a significant factor in how participants perceive their identity as English speakers. The broader issue of language and identity, and how language learning and use is how it impacts one's sense of self and belonging. Based on our findings, the use and selection of accents could be associated with one's identity, which can be characterized by various accent-related features. Some participants express interest in learning specific accents and perceive it as a desirable accomplishment in English language proficiency. Nonetheless, some of these participants may face societal pressure and

embarrassment when their accent is commented on, leading them to switch to an American accent which is deemed more socially acceptable. Furthermore, the participants' inclination to persist with a British accent despite social pressure implies a possible correlation between accent and identity, as the participant may associate a British accent with their sense of self and personal identity. This coincides with studies pertaining to accent anxiety where the people have to alter their speech to prevent social tension and fit in with others (e.g., McKenzie, 2008; Spencer-Oatey & Stadler, 2009, p. 31). Some participants also mentioned choosing to keep "a little bit of Norwegian accent" to express their national identity when speaking English. This highlights the nuanced relationship between accent and identity and the importance of understanding the personal motivations behind accent choice. The desire to steer clear of associations with L1 speakers is consistent with Rindal's (2010) research, which indicated that Norwegian learners not only assess English accents but also judge each other based on the type of English accent they employ (Rindal, 2010). It also is consistent with Rindal and Piercy (2013) study where her findings suggest that "Native accents are associated with values and attributes that learners of English might not wish to convey" (Rindal & Piercy, 2013, p. 224). In looking at these data's, personal motivation and identity has indicated relations to accent choice, it is also influenced by social norms, identity, and expectations (e.g., Giles & Rakić, 2014; Rindal, 2016).

Our findings show accent choice is not the most significant factor in the perception of English proficiency for some individuals in Norway. However, some participants choose to adapt their accent according to the recipients. This could be an indication on attempts at convergence in communication to make it more efficient and cooperative as Whaley and Samter (2007) suggest. The participants who strive to learn certain accents (Or both) like American and British accent, could be trying to converge with the interlocutor to validate their own way of expressing themselves while at the same time ease recipients understanding. The aspect of accent choice in this context relates to identity in terms of the participants' desire to converge with their interlocutors through the adoption of certain accents. By adopting a particular accent, they are attempting to validate their own way of expressing themselves and establish a sense of identity that aligns with the interlocutor's expectations. This convergence can be seen as a form of social identity negotiation, where individuals adapt their linguistic behaviour to fit within the norms and expectations of the group they are communicating with. The emphasis on effective communication through correct grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation reflects the participants' desire to convey their message clearly and efficiently,

which can also be linked to their identity as effective communicators as shown by participant 7 of our findings (5.3):

Participant 7: *"[…] I mix accents a little and talk in the accent that the one I speak with has or that* [accent] *which easiest for the others to understand. Because some do not speak as good English and then I try to make it the easiest for them"*

On the other hand, some negative outcomes could come of full convergence can be met with distrust, especially in foreign language communication, as it can seem controlling (Preston, 1981). Thus, the motive for converging or diverging is crucial to whether it spikes a positive or negative reaction. Therefore, in the case of Norway, it is crucial to consider the power differentials between the teacher and students, as students may upward converge, and teachers may downward converge. However, the findings could also suggest that there can be a power differential in the case of perceived proficiency. While full converging can be perceived as disrespectful or condescending it can also be a means to induce anxiety and performance anxiety, as specifically mentioned by participant 12 in section 5.4, where the proficiency differences are perceived noticeable:

Participant 12: *"[…] It's about us not being used to it and not speaking it* [English] *enough, which makes it uncomfortable to feel that we're not good enough. It's a bit of performance anxiety"*.

The power differential in the case of perceived proficiency relates to identity in terms of the impact it has on individuals' sense of self and self-esteem. When individuals perceive a proficiency difference, it can lead to anxiety and performance anxiety, which can affect their willingness to engage in communication or participate in class. This anxiety can stem from the fear of feeling inferior to others or being perceived as such. The power dynamic at play in this context can also relate to social identity and how individuals view themselves in relation to others. If an individual feels that they are not proficient enough in a particular language, it can affect their sense of identity as a language learner or communicator. This is in line with the theories from Macintyre et al. (1998), who states that accent anxiety can greatly impact one's motivation to learn the target language and reduce willingness to engage in English speaking activities because of lack of self-esteem and confidence in one's own abilities to speak the L2. This highlights the potential tension between conforming to a particular accent or pronunciation style and expressing one's own identity and voice in English-speaking contexts.

6.2.1 Social consequences of participation

Norwegian students may be feeling unnecessary pressure of accent anxiety and insecurities because of conceptions of accent proficiency. Our findings suggest that, while we do not show an agreement on no accents being perceived as low proficiency, the majority do think that L1 accents indicate higher proficiency. However, some did specify Norwegian accent as bad and low proficiency. Accent anxiety can result in a lack of confidence in one's ability to speak the L2, which can further impede language learning and use (Derwing & Munro, 2009). Some may refrain from participating in English-speaking activities due to a fear of mispronunciation or a lack of confidence in their English proficiency, which is in line with the experiences shared by participants 6 and 7 (5.4):

Interviewer: *Do you feel that accents affect oral participation in class?*

Participant 6: *I think it can, because it can be a bit scary to sound like an old man trying to speak English, kind of like when you haven't learned much English, etc.*

Interviewer: *What would make it easier to participate in the classroom?*

Participant 7: *Maybe speak with people who have different levels of skills, like sitting next to someone who speaks excellent English, then you might feel a bit worse than that person and maybe not dare to speak because then I will sound bad. Try to be on the same level and in smaller groups, etc. Then it becomes less awkward and less difficult.*

This fear may arise from a desire to conform to a particular accent or pronunciation style that is socially accepted in the classroom, leading to performance anxiety and fear of being judged by peers (Derwing & Munro, 2009). On the other hand, the positive view towards certain L1 accents, such as the American or British accent, could also be a motivator for some individuals to strive towards achieving those accents and improve their English proficiency. This again could lead to increased participation in English-related activities to improve more on their target accent. Creating an inclusive and supportive environment for English learners in Norway, where personal preferences and motivations are respected and celebrated, can be an effective way to apply different ideas to promote effective communication (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). Our study supports the notion that working in smaller groups can ease participation in the classroom and encourage more participation; The majority of participants

do not tend to judge the participation of others, but rather use it as a basis for their own assumptions due to a fear of potential social consequences. Additionally, the level of willingness to communicate seems to be related to the degree of which students feel pressure or dissatisfaction with their own language goals. The participants solution to the issues was: Working in smaller groups, where everyone is on similar levels, can make it less awkward and less difficult to participate. In addition to working in groups, participants suggested practical solutions to increase participation and improve self-confidence, such as practicing English with someone who does not speak Norwegian to improve their language skills and simply consume, and use English as much as possible, and not trying to avoid it.

6.2.2 Change in accent attitudes?

The study by (Shibata, 2021) investigates Danish and German speakers' attitudes towards their English accent and found that most participants were happy with their accent. Participants from both groups expressed a great desire to achieve a L1 accent in English. While we did not want to infer that the same indications of results to a Norwegian context our hypothesis was that our younger participants would be on similar opinions. This because participants from the two countries share a very similar percentage of answers to almost all of the items and are the countries closest to Norway. By looking at our findings we see similarities in which our participants, who are at least six years younger, also have a desire to achieve an L1 accent. However, the percentage amount differs quite a bit. While a whole 98% of Danes and 81,4% Germans agreed to a desire for a L1 accent, our study shows only 65% desire for L1 accent. Taking a deeper look, we found that this is also in contrast to previous research by Rindal (2014a) (However a smaller margin), which found that 75% of participants chose an accent (or 25% not choosing one). We consider that even a 10% difference is great enough to suggests that there could be a shift in attitudes by a significant minority regarding accents among younger English learners in Norway and a definite difference based on the countries mentioned. None of the participants chose Norwegian accent as their preference in response to this question (see Rindal, 2015), which she suggested as being an indication that participants have a notion for what is considered "correct", or at det very least "incorrect" English. However, it should be noted that we did not clarify what the participants meant by "no accent", which could have shown different results as well. To dive deeper into the investigation of accent attitudes we want to include specific accent choices between the British accent and American accent.

In Rindal's studies (2014a, 2015) British English was not the preferred accent for most participants aiming to learn a second language. Around 30% of the participants stated their desire to learn British English pronunciation, while nearly 40% aimed to acquire American English pronunciation. While our study also suggest that American accent was the popular choice, we found a greater difference between the two accents. Four participants (28%) specifically chose British accent and seven (50%) choosing American accent. What we see is an increased difference of choice, between American accent and British accent. Some of the differences between Rindal's (2014a) data and our collected data (Excluding sample size and method) are age of participants, and the year of which data has been collected. Our study focusses on students in the first year of lower secondary school, meaning they have only completed 7 years of mandatory English lessons, while 17-year-olds in turn have completed 11 years of mandatory English lessons. However, we also keep in mind that Rindal's (2014a) study is nearly 10 years old. This could mean a few things: 1. Accent choice differentiate depending on where in the course of language learning you are. 2. Younger L2 learners view the two accents differently than older learners because of differences in practical use. And 3. There is a shift in accent attitudes from the year 2014 to the year 2023. While all three could possibly be true, we cannot pinpoint exactly what the answer is based purely on our findings. If hypothesis 1 or 2 is to be correct, then consideration towards how conscious the students are of ELF and language attitudes would need to be addressed. Conversely, rather than suggest a shift in language attitude, this could indicate that the younger student's might not have reached an age where they are more generally aware of language attitudes as a concept. The concept of language attitude might be something that one has to consciously consider before they make individual stances on their own accent use or claim such have been shifted. It could mean that due to either the natural course of ELF and language attitude stance through the curriculum or considerations towards how relevant English is to the students, they might already be burdened with just coming to grips with learning the language itself. Therefore, the significant minority addressing language attitude in a more reflective manner could indicate a different level of oral English proficiency. This is something we are not able to substantiate through our findings and is merely a hypothesis due to the age difference between our thesis and Rindal (2014a) study.

However, we argue that number 3 is most likely to be the case and here is why:

According to (Giles & Rakić, 2014), language attitudes can be influenced by cultural norms, historical context, personal experiences, education, media, and political discourse. In Norway,

the status of a language can also influences how people perceive certain varieties of the language, where dialects or accents may be seen as prestigious, while others might be stigmatized, leading to a possible change in perception and use of languages in social interactions. As we established earlier, L1 accents are perceived as prestigious in this study as well. However, we want to highlight cultural norms, personal experiences, and social media as the main influence on language attitudes in our previous statement on shift in attitudes between 2014 and 2023. So, what have changed?

A study by Jensen (2019, p. 78), focused on engagement of Danish 7- to 11-year-olds with English activities outside of school, found that "Based on content and language, most of the children clearly stated that they preferred to watch YouTube videos mediated in English rather than Danish". Based on the extensive consumption of TV shows, films, and various forms of social media by younger Norwegians, we infer that there are similar attitudes towards consumption outside of school in Norway. While this is not necessarily a significant change in of itself, our findings in 5.3 and 5.4 suggest a considerable difference: TikTok.

Participant 14: *"TikTok, and because many others do it and that's what most people have heard* [American] *before* […] *and heard a lot from video clips".*

Participant 2: *"I have tried to use the American [accent], it is a bit easier than the British* […]*"*

The first quote is suggesting an explanation of external factors that can influence people's choice of American accent over British accent, while the second participant quote commented on the two different accents in the form of ease of use. Our hypothesis is that the attitudes related to American accent being easier to use, stems from the increased amount of social media use and exposure, and TikTok, of which American English is more commonly used. As students involve themselves with international exposure, they are also more likely to pay attention to pronunciation of the L2 they consume, which in this case is accented English (Mercer & Williams, 2014, p. 35). This, in turn, could be reasons for some of the participants to change their accent aim in favour of American accent influenced through more exposure to international media, more so than as of approximately 10 years ago.

6.3 The tension between accuracy and fluency

Through our findings we have found comments that express thoughts on using English to communicate while at the same time understanding there needs to grammatical accuracy for

effective communication (see table 5). The tension between fluency and accuracy is not as such that these are dichotomies, but rather how the balance between these might be skewed due to the context of English language learning. While there the literature points out to specific aspects to fluency and accuracy that have been standardized to some point (e.g., Brown et al., 2005; Tsagari & Demetriou, 2022), it is important to be cognizant of what the students themselves find important within the aspects of fluency and accuracy and discuss why. In terms of accuracy the students expressed how one should avoid being "incorrect" or "misunderstood" while fluency is expressed by the participants as "keeping a conversation going" or "talking is more important because when you are doing something at work" paraphrased we interpreted it as talking is more important because it is used at work (see table 5). The latter suggests meaningful and pragmatic use of the language, but the accuracy part focuses on the formal functional use of the language.

6.3.1 Functional use of the language

Participant 14 expressed to be good at English in section 5.2 in table 5 to be related, paraphrasing: to keeping a conversation going while keeping a bit of grammar so it doesn't sound wrong and isn't misunderstood easily. The last sentences related to grammar are also used in tandem with "not sounding wrong" and decrease the chance of misunderstandings. The two latent codes we have made "being misunderstood relate to phonology" and "accuracy might be correlated towards fluency". External factors, such as correct tenses, can prevent the meaning of the conversation from being lost. The conversation would functionally still be able to continue, but the intent of the communication might be hampered. Language proficiency therefore includes factors such as being intelligible to others in not creating errors and comprehensibility in terms of being understood (see Derwing & Munro, 2009 for intelligibility and comprehension). This is not expressed through accent or pronunciation specifically in the transcription, but it can be related. We believe participant 14 also mentioned "grammar" to mean being correct in terms of sentence structures, to prevent being considered wrong or easily misunderstood. In essence, this could be understood as a nod towards to at least some accuracy for the sake of conversation.

We argue that the formal functional use of the language is what we see the most at school, which in terms of social stake is tied more towards being grammatically accurate. What is the goal with being grammatically accurate, is it to be perceived as a good speaker, is it to be assessed? Reasons to avoid making a mistake would not only to avoid being incorrect and misunderstood, but avoiding consequences that it could lead to for the students. In which case

we will argue is the social consequences. The focus on correct speech, and as a consequence how to effectively emulate correct speech itself might discourage the willingness of the student to communicate in a social context (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 110). The accuracy aspect that students express in the interview is also similar to evaluative words that have already been addressed, just that we reverse it, more specifically "correct" and "understood". These terms should be evaluated as being correct or understood is something that has to be perceived by others, ambiguity could create confusion (see Cazden, 2011, p. 367). Though who are to decide what is correct or understood, might inevitably be up to the stakeholders (see Chvala, 2020), but for the students in the social context that might be the peers as well. While studies cover the tension between intelligibility and accent use to be of little relevant to each other (e.g., Derwing & Munro, 1997; Hymes, 2001; Jenkins, 2006), we can only interpret our findings in 5.1 that some of it might be influenced by one's own thoughts on pronunciation or accent choice. There is also an argument that these thoughts do not just perpetuate within oneself but is also expressed through the socialization and social awareness (see Fantini, 2000; Spencer-Oatey & Stadler, 2009; Tajfel & Turner, 2004). The focus on accuracy in this sense might impede WTC and focus on how one is perceived in front of others and how to be close to a supposed standard. Consequently, the focus and goal of English proficiency is less about communication and more about being perceived as correct and understood. Moreover, the hesitation to speak due to grammatical errors is also shared by the teachers themselves, which leads us to believe that such notions are shared socially even though one does not explicitly express it towards others (*English Didactics in Norway - 30 years of doctoral research*, 2019, pp. 410-411).

However, we do not argue how we should remove the notion of grammatical accuracy in itself, but rather a reflection on how an imbalanced focus on accuracy might have consequences on oral English proficiency. It has been mentioned that a person can still be good in English even if a word is pronounced wrong. This is perhaps an aspect of fluency expressed through participant 1 in section 5.2 table 5:

Interviewer: *What does it really mean to be good at English?*

Participant 1:   *That maybe you can pronounce it properly so that if you pronounce it wrong, you can perhaps say another word than the one you actually said.*

In this case, one could argue that errors could be corrected while communicating without being perceived as lacking oral English proficiency. In most spontaneous speech, self-

corrections and filled pauses occur quite frequently and is not picked up as less fluent for a listener but perceived as a natural phenomenon (Götz, 2013, p. 38). In such cases the focus is not to gauge the speaker's accuracy but also how one can effectively communicate to listeners. The communicative aspect of fluency is therefore expressed through the acceptance that people should be allowed to make mistakes without it being deemed as inappropriate because the grammatical errors in communication could be seen as natural (Appendix C, see code: "Even proficient users of English can fumble on pronunciation and accent"). We believe that participant 1 could suggest acknowledging authentic English use without gauging how peers' language ability manifests without any "errors". Therefore, questions could relate to how practitioners could address this issue and if there is time and effort allocated to how to perceive of grammatical errors. After all, this might have a direct consequence on speakers' willingness to participate and involve themselves in language learning.

6.3.2 Meaningful use of the language

As mentioned in the findings section, we suggest the meaningful aspect is related less on the grammatic accuracy of the one's communication, but rather if its meaning is conveyed to the listener. Where the goal of communicative competence is to not being perceived with good oral English proficiency, but rather its use in contexts where it is deemed necessary. Where aspects of fluency have been defined and standardized it seems to focus less on the pragmatic intent of the communication, but notions of how the communication should flow based on set criteria (Brown et al., 2005; Tsagari & Demetriou, 2022). Götz (2013) mention that most of the fluency-related research connect fluency to aspects such as: temporal variables, use of formulaic language, performance phenomena to a perception of naturalness in native speech and other global variables in native speech, such as accuracy (Götz, 2013, p. 2). Hence, the focus of fluency by many is set on what we decide to introduce this as functional use of the language.

However, Hymes (2001) points aptly out as a critique to Chomsky: "*'Fluency'* would appear to mean different profiles of ability in different communities, and indeed would seem not to be the most appropriate label everywhere for the abilities considered those of an ideal speaker (-hearer)." (Hymes, 2001, p. 46). Thus, challenges the definition of oral fluency proficiency through a "native speaker" norm (see Brown et al., 2005, p. 37). Although Götz (2013) brings relevancy to pragmatic fluency to take into account of the contexts surrounding the communicative situation it is fraught with native and non-native English perspective. The areas of cultural and linguistic differences between speakers or learners are still relevant when

it comes to pragmatic fluency. Conversely, to the criteria toward fluency, there are no conventions or rules developed for the classroom in teaching and learning pragmatic fluency. Students might therefore pick this up and emulate from L1 speaker communicative contexts (Götz, 2013, pp. 61-63; Sylven & Sundqvist, 2012).

However, we would like to argue that the lack of conventions, or possibly the confusion of multiple interpretations (see Cazden, 2011, p. 367) should not necessarily be seen as something to be amended. As practitioners find safety in standardization based on stakeholder needs, we should not disregard how pragmatic fluency should serve a meaningful authentic use for its users. Since perceptions of fluency are based on interpretations of criteria, shouldn't individuals seek their own interpretation for what is deemed "appropriate"? This should not be seen as a norm, but as a conscious choice they make. A criticism to this would be the discord it could create from "incorrect" or "misunderstood" speech, but as English is a language in flux what might constitute as "incorrect" or "misunderstood" might change (see Chvala, 2020; Jenkins, 2015). In ELF terms as well, incorporating the multilingual nature one can argue what is "incorrect" or "misunderstood" can bring language learning and discuss different ways of conveying meaning, and where such meanings are co-constructed (Jenkins, 2015, pp. 73-76). In a sense, approaching standardization and conventions should not necessarily be frowned upon and at the same time we think such notions should also be set aside for what the real purpose of English proficiency is based on. Are the learners not a most valuable stakeholders in of itself, where they are to decide when to take ownership of English and with less normative pressure (Mercer & Williams, 2014, p. 35)? Rindal (2014a) brings up that the role of English will emphasize personal development and identity. In which will involve its learners and suggesting hybridity and variability in pursuit of communicative competence rather than a focus on perceived proficiency. We think the meaningful use of English of the language should encompass this perspective of language use and learning.

7.0 Conclusion

In this seventh and final chapter we will summarise the main findings of our study along with contributions. In addition, we will give suggestions for further research.

This master's thesis is based on a qualitative research design that primarily utilizes interviews with 8th-grade Norwegian students as the main source of data, complemented by observations as a supplementary data source which then will analyse participants' responses related to their conceptions of desirable oral English proficiency, and whether these conceptions are related to accent or pronunciation. The overarching research questions were:

1. How do students conceive of desirable oral English proficiency?

2. How do students' attitudes towards accent and proficiency relate to oral participation?

We found that...

While English is widely used in Norway, and Norwegians generally score high in English language proficiency indexes after finishing mandatory English lessons, we found that students' conceptions of good English proficiency are based more on what they believe is expected of them, rather than on what the term proficiency mean by definition. Correct pronunciation and accent were perceived as important aspects of good English proficiency, while vocabulary was ranked lowest. Interestingly, listening or hearing skills were not explicitly mentioned by any of the participants. Additionally, there appears to be a discrepancy in the interpretation of the term's "pronunciation" and "accent," but there is still a general perception that adopting an English accent is an indication of English proficiency, even though accents are not a part of the assessment criteria in the Norwegian curriculum. Bøhn's (2017) study on teachers' perceptions of assessment criteria showing us the differences in opinion on accented speech among them, shows a need for a clear distinctions and agreement on criteria the teachers assess. We believe it would be effective for the students as well. By making the students' conceptions more consistent, it could reduce their conceptions of specific accents as desirable oral English proficiency, or rather make accent a part of personal preference, choice and identity.

It is essential to recognize accent aim and identity and consider their relations to each other and the student's sense of self and confidence. Accent choice is influenced by personal motivations and social norms, as well as the desire to communicate effectively and establish a sense of identity that aligns with the interlocutor's expectations. With this can performance

and accent anxiety, form, where any sort of feedback on one's accent can result in embarrassment and loss in self-confidence, leading us to believe there may be tension in conforming to a specific accent and expressing one's own identity in English speaking activities. This in turn, may reduce some student's perceptions of own proficiency. Perceiving one own's proficiency could hinder students in participation in English speaking activities, where some even chose to practice outside of school to feels less pressure and fear of judgment. Working in smaller groups with individuals of similar levels can also be a helpful solution to ease participation and improve self-confidence according to the students. However, overall, it is important to create an inclusive and supportive environment where individuals' personal preferences and motivations are respected and celebrated, and where they feel comfortable to practice and use their English skills without fear of judgment. Where Bøhn's (2017) suggestions yet again could be a helping factor.

Tension between accuracy and fluency is less connected to accent explicitly, still the focus and majority opinion towards accuracy might still be influenced by native speaker norms and standardization on fluency. As terms connected to correctness and intelligibility is used to weighing towards what is expected of their speech rather than what they themselves expect from their speech. When it comes to functional language use, the tension between accuracy and fluency is focused on how it is perceived by others whilst meaningful use of the language has been set aside. This might be due to a conception of what the students themselves expect of their English language proficiency in relation to what others expect of them. Avenues for new perspectives may be to understand how this might impact WTC and possibly seek to discuss conscious language choices and attitudes.

7.1 Suggestions for future research

As one of our reasons to research this topic being that there is limited research on this topic involving the younger generation and their view an attitude on proficiency and participation in L2 learners. Further research is needed on this topic of the younger learners, and a larger sample than this master thesis covers. Some of our specific suggestions to further research are as follows:

A study's method and its scientific quality are not determined by whether they are qualitative or quantitative, however they are determined by whether they are appropriate to the specific research purpose (Silverman, 2006). This means that this study's intentions of using these methods were based on our belief that they would be able to meet the objectives of our

research. The research designs resulting in a qualitative method with observation in a small degree and interviews as main source of data. Combined, we attempt to answer all our research questions and propose avenues that could be used in further research. However, a mixed method with questionnaire, intervention, further observations, and a bigger sample size could have increased the possibilities, affirmation, and the complexity.

Further research avenues that we might have overlooked could be examined by broadening the scope and may have had a positive influence on these research questions. This in regard to how we could be more specific in questions regarding English proficiency such as student elaboration on what pronunciation entails. There is also an especially important avenue of how cognizant students are of different English accent varieties and how we could have investigated this. One perspective is to address the lack of English accent variations answers outside of known L1 varieties, which suggest that students might not even considered due to how we framed our questions or did not elaborate this. On the other hand, this is might open an opportunity to investigate this in a Norwegian context for future research into ELF and the status of L2 accent and identity. (2014a) study on accent aims and thoughts around L1 accented speech of older student informs us of how pronunciation might be related towards more than just how speech might sound, but also what connotations are made with it. In terms of accented speech outside of the ones covered such as the standard British accent or generic American, connotations made of accent is still highly relevant. These connotation might also be shared by teachers and its sociological implication have been delved into by Chvala (2020).

We also suggest research on how teachers prepare their students for the different types of speech outside of school in comparison to classroom conversation. This means we think that students are taught a formal language in school and conversations usually revolve around certain topics, whereas talking outside of school usually is more casual and informal, depending on the situation. Newer studies which cover standardization and assessment in Norway looking at what teachers find indicative in terms of oral English proficiency (e.g., Bøhn & Hansen, 2017; Brevik & Rindal, 2020; Chvala, 2020; Tsagari & Demetriou, 2022) is also covered and we think is relevant towards this topic. Although the communicative competence covered by Brevik and Rindal (2020) and Chvala (2018) states that in Norwegian contexts, there seems to be concern about the lack of authentic communicative situations in school which might justify interventional studies on this topic. While pragmatic fluency is

highly relevant literature (see Götz, 2013), it might be prudent to approach in a multilingual perspective.

Considerations of a multilingual perspective adding in different language influences could also be an avenue for future research. There have been few studies on how this can impact classroom participation and if considerations around language attitudes are still prevalent in even younger learners. For instance, in-depth studies where students themselves elaborate on what would constitute as proper pronunciation, what is considered "correct", what could be misunderstood and what English is to them. Canagarajah (2013) delves into translingual practices of English communications and how communicative practices where grammatical norms are co-constructed in a social context, which is highly relevant to this.

There is also the lack of perspectives of how the listener fits in when it comes to perceived English proficiency, and questions regarding the perspective of regarding a listener comes in when it comes to communicative competence. This would also open avenues to evaluate and approach pragmatic fluency and communicative competence. Which would seek to combine previously mentioned literature, if not more, together.

7.2 Concluding Remarks

This MA thesis have given us an opportunity to delve into some of the challenges we also faced during our own English language learning experience. While oral English proficiency understanding might be fraught with future revisions of what we already learned, we think that through this thesis we are able to approach questions regarding proficiency differently. As educators it is not only important to take a few steps back to examine what is truly expected of us as teacher, but also allow the students to have room to do the same. As we are more aware of our own language choices it might become easier to strive for student participation.

While it might be idealistic to expect things to change quickly, it is easier to be a part of a shift in how we approach English language learning if we can accept where there is room for paradigm shifts. As students will still individually take ownership of English in their own way, we must also remember that this journey is not supposed to be taken alone or by the few. While we all might be unsure of what others think of our language proficiency and what the future holds, we can very safely say that from the exceptional contributions we have seen and heard from the participants, we are optimistic.

References

Anisfeld, M., Bogo, N., & Lambert, W. E. (1962). Evaluational reactions to accented English speech. *J Abnorm Soc Psychol*, *65*(4), 223-231. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0045060

Bailey, J. (2008). First steps in qualitative data analysis: transcribing. *Family Practice*, *25*(2), 127-131. https://doi.org/10.1093/fampra/cmn003

Befring, E. (2007). *Forskningsmetode med etikk og statistikk* (2. opplaget 2010 ed.). Samlaget.

Bøhn, H., & Hansen, T. (2017). Assessing Pronunciation in an EFL Context: Teachers' Orientations towards Nativeness and Intelligibility. *Language assessment quarterly*, *14*(1), 54-68. https://doi.org/10.1080/15434303.2016.1256407

Bourhis, R. Y., Giles, H., & Lambert, W. E. (1975). Social Consequences of Accomodating one's style of speech: A crossnational investigation. *1975*(6), 55-72. https://doi.org/doi:10.1515/ijsl.1975.6.55

Brevik, L. M., & Rindal, U. (2020). Language Use in the Classroom: Balancing Target Language Exposure With the Need for Other Languages. *TESOL quarterly*, *54*(4), 925-953. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.564

Brinkmann, S., & Kvale, S. (2018). *Doing interviews* (Vol. 2). Sage.

Brown, A., Iwashita, N., & McNamara, T. (2005). AN EXAMINATION OF RATER ORIENTATIONS AND TEST-TAKER PERFORMANCE ON ENGLISH-FOR-ACADEMIC-PURPOSES SPEAKING TASKS. *ETS Research Report Series*, *2005*(1), i-157. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2333-8504.2005.tb01982.x

Brown, H. D. (2006). *Principles of language learning and teaching* (5th Edition ed., Vol. 4).

Canagarajah, S. (2013). *Translingual Practice: Global Englishes and Cosmopolitan Relations*. London: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203073889

Cazden, C. B. (2011). Dell Hymes's construct of "communicative competence". *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, *42*(4), 364-369.

Chvala, L. (2018). What are the core aims of English as a school subject? A study of teacher understanding in lower secondary school. *Acta Didactica Norge*, *12*(1), 11. https://doi.org/10.5617/adno.6181

Chvala, L. (2020). Teacher ideologies of English in 21st century Norway and new directions for locally tailored ELT. *System*, *94*, 102327.

Clarke, V., & Braun, V. (2021). *Thematic analysis: a practical guide*.

Cook, V. (2016). *Second Language Learning and Language Teaching*. Routledge.

Cunningham, C. (2020). Beliefs about 'good English' in schools. *Ontologies of English: Conceptualising the Language for Learning, Teaching, and Assessment*, 142.

Derwing, T. M. (2003). What Do ESL Students Say about Their Accents? *Canadian Modern Language Review*, *59*(4), 547-566.

https://login.ezproxy.oslomet.no/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ671622&site=ehost-live&scope=site

Derwing, T. M., & Munro, M. J. (1997). ACCENT, INTELLIGIBILITY, AND COMPREHENSIBILITY: Evidence from Four L1s. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, *19*(1), 1-16. http://www.jstor.org/stable/44488664

Derwing, T. M., & Munro, M. J. (2009). Putting accent in its place: Rethinking obstacles to communication. *Lang. Teach*, *42*(4), 476-490. https://doi.org/10.1017/S026144480800551X

Dörnyei, Z., & Ushioda, E. (2011). *Teaching and researching motivation* (2nd edition ed.). Pearson Education Limited 2001, 2011.

EF. (2022). *EF English Proficiency Index*

A Ranking of 111 Countries and Regions by English Skills. Signum International AG. Retrieved 02.05.2023 from https://www.ef.com/wwen/epi/

English Didactics in Norway - 30 years of doctoral research. (2019). Universitetsforlaget. https://doi.org/doi:10.18261/978-82-15-03074-6-2019

Fantini, A. E. (2000). A central concern: Developing intercultural competence. *SIT Occasional Paper Series*, *1*, 25-42.

Giles, H., & Rakić, T. (2014). Language attitudes: the social determinants and consequences of language variation. In.

Götz, S. (2013). *Fluency in Native And Nonnative English Speech* (Vol. v. 53). John Benjamins Publisher Company.

Graddol, D. (2006). *English next* (Vol. 62). British council London.

Hammersley, M. (1992). *What's Wrong with Ethnography? Methodological Explorations*. London: Routledge.

Hymes, D. (2001). *Foundations in sociolinguistics: An ethnographic approach*. Psychology Press.

Jenkins, J. (2000). *The Phonology of English as an International Language*.

Jenkins, J. (2006). Current perspectives on teaching world Englishes and English as a lingua franca. *TESOL quarterly*, *40*(1), 157-181.

Jenkins, J. (2009). *World Englishes: a resource book for students* (2nd edition ed.).

Jenkins, J. (2015). Repositioning English and multilingualism in English as a Lingua Franca. *Englishes in Practice*, *2*(3), 49-85.

Jenkins, J. (2022). Accommodation in ELF: Where from? Where now? Where next? *The pragmatics in English as a lingua franca. Findings and developments*, 17-34.

Jensen, S. H. (2019). Language learning in the wild: A young user perspective. https://doi.org/10125/44673

Kachru, B. B. (1992). *The other tongue: English across cultures*. University of Illinois press.

Kramsch, C. (2014). Language and culture. *AILA review*, *27*(1), 30-55.

Lilleås, H. S. L., Øyvind. (2009). Presse-Norge mobbet Jaglands engelsk. *Nettavisen*.

Macintyre, P., Clément, R., Dörnyei, Z., & Noels, K. (1998). Conceptualizing Willingness to Communicate in a L2: A Situational Model of L2 Confidence and Affiliation. *The Modern Language Journal*, *82*, 545-562. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.1998.tb05543.x

MacIntyre, P. D., & et al. (1997). Biases in Self-Ratings of Second Language Proficiency: The Role of Language Anxiety. *Language Learning*, *47*(2), 265-287. https://login.ezproxy.oslomet.no/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ547537&site=ehost-live&scope=site

Martyn, H., & Paul, A. (2007). Ethnography: principles in practice. *New York: Routlege*.

McKay, S. L., & Hornberger, N. H. (1996). *Sociolinguistics and language teaching*. Cambridge University Press.

McKenzie, R. M. (2008). The Role of Variety Recognition in Japanese University Students' Attitudes Towards English Speech Varieties. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, *29*(2), 139-153. https://doi.org/10.2167/jmmd565.0

Mercer, S., & Williams, M. (2014). *Multiple Perspectives on the Self in SLA*. Multilingual Matters. http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/hioa/detail.action?docID=1605223

Læreplan i engelsk (ENG01-04) [English subject curriculum]. (2019).

Munro, M. J., & Derwing, T. M. (1995). Processing Time, Accent, and Comprehensibility in the Perception of Native and Foreign-Accented Speech. *Lang Speech*, *38*(3), 289-306. https://doi.org/10.1177/002383099503800305

Munro, M. J., & Derwing, T. M. (2006). The functional load principle in ESL pronunciation instruction: An exploratory study. *System*, *34*(4), 520-531.

NESH, T. (2022). Guidelines for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and the Humanities. In: The Norwegian National Research Ethics Committees.

Oslomet. (2023). *Storage*. Oslomet. https://ansatt.oslomet.no/en/web/tilsatt/storage

Preston, D. R. (1981). The Ethnography of TESOL. *TESOL quarterly*, *15*(2), 105-116. https://doi.org/10.2307/3586402

Raoofi, S., Tan, B. H., & Chan, S. H. (2012). Self-Efficacy in Second/Foreign Language Learning Contexts. *English Language Teaching*, *5*(11), 60-73.

Rindal, U. (2010). Constructing identity with L2: Pronunciation and attitudes among Norwegian learners of English 1: CONSTRUCTING IDENTITY WITH L2. *Journal of sociolinguistics*, *14*(2), 240-261. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9841.2010.00442.x

Rindal, U. (2014a). Questioning English standards: Learner attitudes and L2 choices in Norway. *Multilingua - Journal of Cross-Cultural and Interlanguage Communication*, *33*(3-4), 313-334. https://doi.org/doi:10.1515/multi-2014-0015

Rindal, U. (2014b). What is English? *Acta Didactica Norge*, *8*, 14. https://doi.org/10.5617/adno.1137

Rindal, U. (2015). Who owns English in Norway? L2 attitudes and choices among learners. *Attitudes towards English in Europe*, *2*, 241.

Rindal, U. (2016). 3.6 Pronunciation. In *Volume 6 Investigating English in Europe* (pp. 93-98). De Gruyter Mouton. https://doi.org/doi:10.1515/9781614518952-016

Rindal, U., & Piercy, C. (2013). Being 'neutral'? English pronunciation among Norwegian learners. *World Englishes*, *32*(2), 211-229. https://doi.org/10.1111/weng.12020

Rindal, U. E. (2013). Meaning in English: L2 attitudes, choices and pronunciation in Norway.

Shibata, M. (2021). L2 English Speakers' Perception of Their English Accent: An Investigation of European and Asian Attitudes. *English Language Teaching*, *14*(12), 126-143. https://login.ezproxy.oslomet.no/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ1323793&site=ehost-live&scope=site

Silverman, D. (2006). Interpreting qualitative data. Methods for analyzing talk, text and interaction. In (3. edition ed.): Los Angeles: sage Publications.

Spencer-Oatey, H., & Stadler, S. (2009). The global people competency framework: Competencies for effective intercultural interaction.

Sundqvist, P., & Sylvén, L. K. (2014). Language-related computer use: Focus on young L2 English learners in Sweden. *ReCALL*, *26*(1), 3-20. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0958344013000232

Sylven, L. K., & Sundqvist, P. (2012). Gaming as Extramural English L2 Learning and L2 Proficiency among Young Learners. *ReCALL*, *24*(3), 302-321. https://login.ezproxy.oslomet.no/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ985862&site=ehost-live&scope=site

http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S095834401200016X

Tajeddin, Z., Alemi, M., & Pashmforoosh, R. (2018). Idealized native-speaker linguistic and pragmatic norms in English as an international language: exploring the perceptions of nonnative English teachers. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, *18*(3), 300-314. https://doi.org/10.1080/14708477.2017.1413105

Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (2004). The social identity theory of intergroup behavior. In *Political psychology* (pp. 276-293). Psychology Press.

Trudgill, P., & Hannah, J. (2013). *International English: A guide to the varieties of standard English*. Routledge.

Tsagari, D., & Demetriou, T. (2022). Investigating the Parameters Accounting for Language Proficiency: the case of an English language test used for Academic purposes. *Research Papers in Language Teaching & Learning*, *12*(1).

Vincze, L., & MacIntyre, P. (2017). Accent stigmatization as a moderator of the relationship between perceived L2 proficiency and L2 use anxiety. *Applied Linguistics Review*, *8*(1), 61-78. https://doi.org/doi:10.1515/applirev-2015-2004

Welch, C., & Piekkari, R. (2006). Crossing Language Boundaries: Qualitative Interviewing in International Business. *MIR: Management International Review*, *46*(4), 417-437. http://www.jstor.org/stable/40836096

Whaley, B. B., & Samter, W. (2007). *Explaining Communication: Contemporary Theories and Exemplars*. Psychology Press.

Williams, M., & Moser, T. (2019). The art of coding and thematic exploration in qualitative research. *International Management Review*, *15*(1), 45-55.
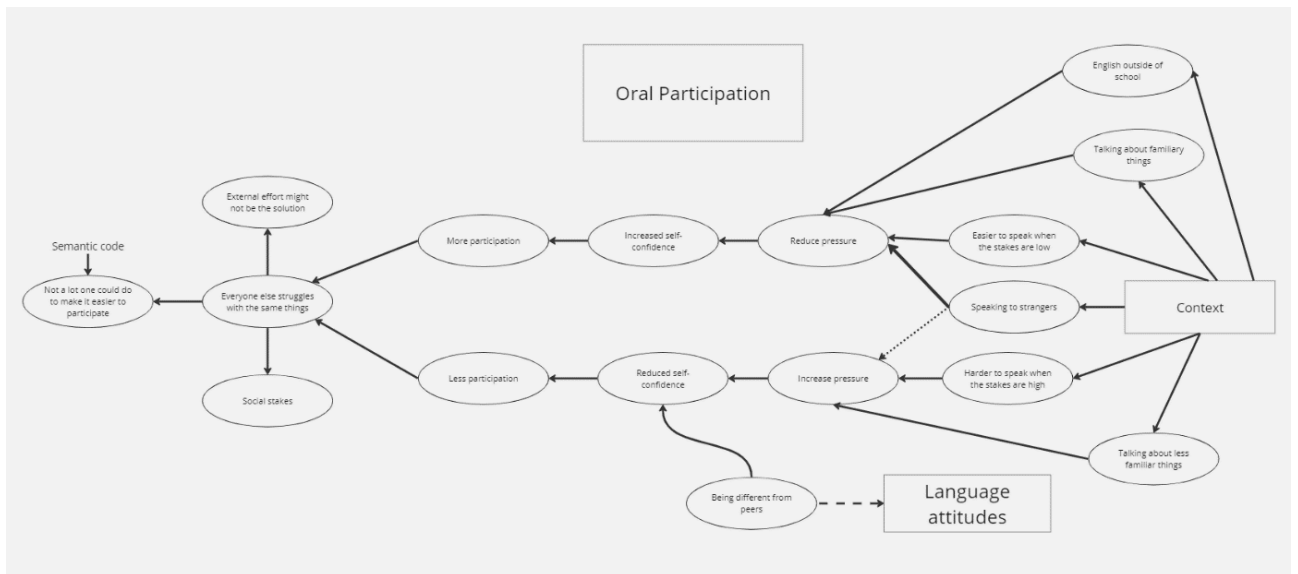
Appendix

A. Figure Language Attitudes
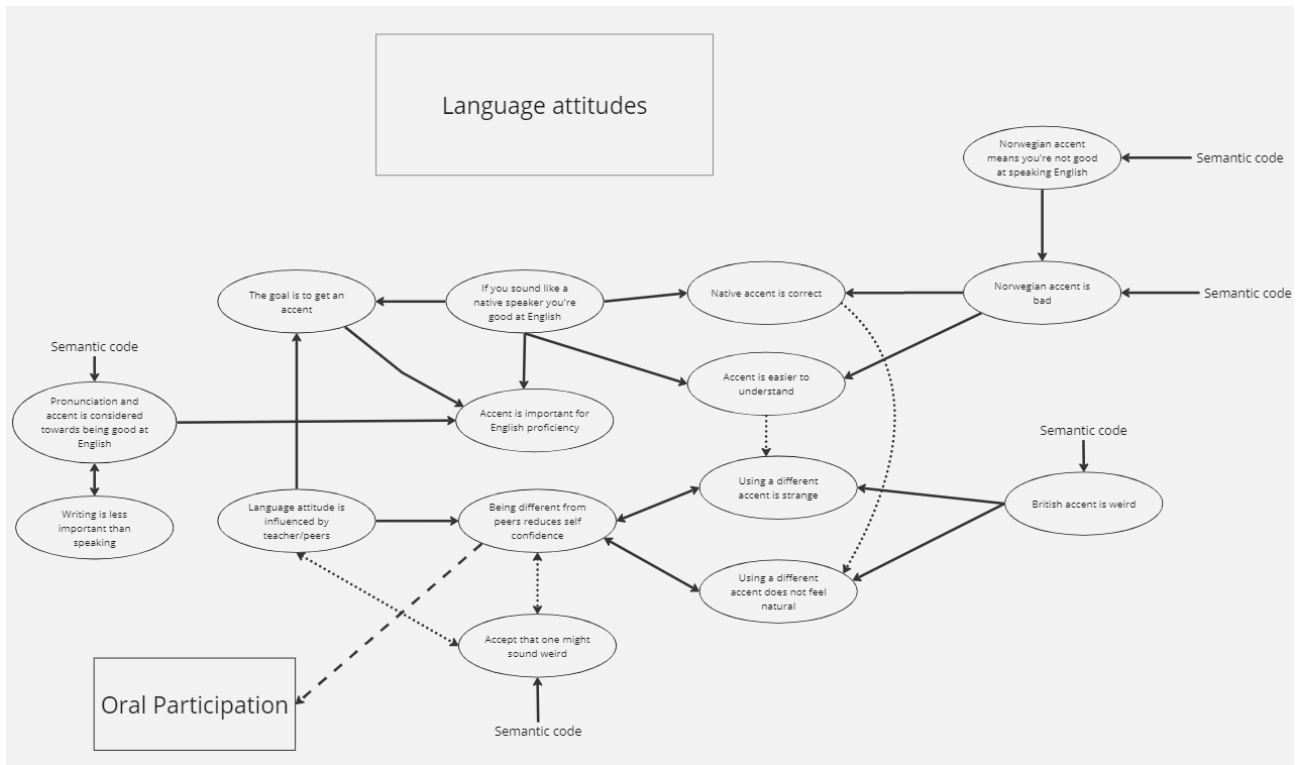
Appendix A - Figure illustrating early connections between early made codes

B. Figure Oral Participation

Appendix B - Figure illustrating early connections between early made codes

C. Table of codes made from excerpts featured in the findings

Code	Explanation	Excerpt example
Accent not important for oral English proficiency	The student expresses that accent is not an important part of determining oral English proficiency	Not really, the most important is that one pronounce it correctly after the accent they want to have. (Participant 9)
Accent needs correct pronunciation	The student expresses that one pronounce words correctly after a chosen accent.	
Pronunciation is important for oral English proficiency	The student express that pronunciation is important for oral English proficiency	Not so much, speaking with different accent doesn't have much impact. It's actually just the pronunciation that is important. (Participant 3)
Vocabulary is important for English proficiency	The student express that to know the words themselves are important.	Not much really, accent is not that important, but it's important to know the words themselves though. (Participant 12)
Correct pronunciation can be achieved even if one has an incorrect accent	The student expresses having a correct pronunciation, but a dissatisfaction of own accent	Yes, I have the correct pronunciation, but not the correct accent that I am satisfied with. (Participant 6)
Pronunciation does not correlate to accent	The student expresses that accent does not correlate, but pronunciation does.	No, but pronunciation does. (Participant 6 on accent affecting assessment)
Good pronunciation is related to English proficiency	The student expresses that his teacher talks with good pronunciation and accent. Clearly showing distinction between the two.	He's good in English. He's good with words and talks with good pronunciation and accent. (Participant 4)
Ambiguity between accent and pronunciation might relate to perception of what is correct or not	Inferred from the learning how to pronounce words according to an accent.	Accent really, and not have like a Norwegian accent. I think that's because we haven't learned as much about how to pronounce words correctly to sound less Norwegian and how to conjugate them (Participant 7)
Expectation to learn accented speech at school	Inferred through the students not yet learned as much about how to pronounce words correctly to sound less Norwegian.	
One can sound correct	It is inferred through the answer: it is good when one pronounces it correctly.	Yes, he [teacher] says it is good when one pronounces it [words]

		correctly and so on. (Participant 8)
Language attitude might stem from teacher/peers	Inferred from being told there is a way of saying things correctly from others.	Learned mostly from my English teacher that was from America. He was really strict about saying things correctly. And watch Youtube and English stuff. (Participant 2)
Writing is less important than speaking	Inferred from what is being considered as quite good whilst writing is in this context "well and good".	I would say pronunciation has quite a bit to say, and flow, but if you're also good at writing then that's well and good too. Though if you speak in a way that almost sounds American, then I would say that you are quite good at English. (Participant 2)
If you sound like an L1 English user, you're good at English	Student expresses a sounding American is indicative of being good at English	
Intonation is related to production of accented speech	Student expresses how certain accents sounds more straightforward.	British, Canadian sounds a bit more straightforward, less intonation. (Participant 2)
Basic English to keep a conversation going	Student expresses basic English can be sufficient to keep a conversation going.	It's about being able to speak basic English to keep a conversation going, but also a bit of grammar so it doesn't sound wrong and isn't misunderstood easily (Participant 14)
Communication is more important than high level English	Inferred from "being able to speak basic English to keep a conversation going"	
Keeping a conversation going is related to English proficiency"	Student expresses this through the question of what does it mean to be good at English.	
Bad pronunciation sound wrong and can be misunderstood	Student expresses that pronunciation can be done wrong.	That maybe you can pronounce it properly so that if you pronounce it wrong, you can perhaps say another word than the one you actually said. (Participant 1)
Accuracy might be correlated towards fluency	Inferred from the statement to use another word instead of pronouncing things wrongly.	
Communication has meaningful use	Inferred from how talking is more important when the	Yes, definitely, writing is important too. Though talking is

		social context demands for it.	more important because when you are doing something at work etc., you'll have to talk in English. And it is important when those who are good at English [that] aren't able to pronounce something that makes it hard to understand sometimes. (Participant 7)
Even proficient users of English can fumble on pronunciation and accent		Student expresses that those who are good at English aren't able to pronounce something.	
Serious accent use is not normally used		Student expresses that accent is just to joke around.	No, I do it sometimes just to joke around, but not to talk like that. I normally do not try to speak with an accent. (Participant 3)
Switching/changing/mixing accent(s) is strange		Student expresses it is a bit strange to suddenly speak British from a Norwegian-English accent. There are other participants who have expressed similar comments as well.	I have tried to use the American [accent], it is a bit easier than the British. Also, it is a bit strange to suddenly speak British. It would be a bit strange to be completely Norwegian [sounding] and then suddenly a British! (Participant 2)
Some accents can be harder than other accents		It is inferred through the comment that the American accent is easier than British.	
Norwegian-English is indicative of bad proficiency		Student expresses this through the comment.	Yes, if you talk in Norwegian-English then you're not really good at English. (Participant 2)
L1 English accent is more correct		Inferred from several transcripts in relation to good/correct speech.	
Accent is used for ease of communication		Student expresses they use American to make oneself more intelligible	I may speak a bit more American outside of school to make myself a bit more intelligible (Participant 2)
Accent is dependent on social context"		This is inferred from the context of which an accent is consciously used.	
Having a Norwegian-English accent is fine		The student expresses having the Norwegian-English accent is fine.	I am from Norway, so it is fine to sound a little Norwegian too, and I choose this on purpose. (Participant 6)
Accent use is related to identity		The student follow this up by saying it is because they are Norwegian.	I kind of appreciate being Norwegian and want to show it to people I talk to. (Participant 6)

Accent is a personal conscious endeavor	It is inferred since the student expressed their way of speech is a choice they have made.	
Relations influence accent aims	Student expresses accent aims use in relation to family connections. Other students have expressed similar opinion regarding family connections or past teachers.	I can talk with both British and American [accent] because I have a stepmother who talk British and father who talk American, so when I speak everything is in American [accent]. Though I can talk in British [accent] too if I want. I mix accents a little and talk in the accent that the one I speak with has or that [accent] which easiest for the others to understand. Because some do not speak as good English and then I try to make it the easiest for them. (Participant 7)
Accent can carry subjective traits, which are desired or undesired	This is inferred from comments about how accents sound a certain way that pertain to a characteristic.	Because I think British is a little more, polite, yes, it sounds a bit better in my opinion. (Participant 1)
Self-confidence can be increased by reducing pressure	This is inferred from suggestions on how it can be easier to speak.	Yes, smaller groups are good because it's easier to speak without so many people listening. (Participant 6)
Work more in groups would help with learning English	This is a shared opinion by several students regarding ways to increase participation.	
Self-perception of accent use affects participation	If we infer this with previous codes relating to ambiguity between accent and pronunciation, our hypothesis is that this relates to own perception of accent proficiency as well. This is also confirmed through participant 12 further down this table.	Little mixed [depends], I know many who are very good [at English] but do not dare to participate, so I do not think so. It's more about the pronunciation really. There are some who are really good at English, but they only have bad pronunciation which makes them hesitant to speak. They are not quite able to produce the sound, but they are still [skilled] good. (Participant 7)
Pronunciation is the biggest factor in participation	It is inferred from comment that students do not dare to participate due to pronunciation.	

Self-view of proficiency relates to participation	Student expresses that there are some who hesitate to speak due to their bad pronunciation.	
Comparing English with peers who have high proficiency reduces self-confidence	Students expresses that if someone who speaks excellent English is near someone, they might not dare to speak due to a perception of how they sound.	Maybe speak with people who have different levels of skills, like sitting next to someone who speaks excellent English, then you might feel a bit worse than that person and maybe not dare to speak because then I will sound bad. Try to be on the same level and in smaller groups, etc. Then it becomes less awkward and less difficult. (Participant 7)
Smaller groups increase participation	Students express that smaller groups will make it less difficult and awkward.	
Tie extracurricular activity with class group work	It is inferred through activities that isn't specified to be related to English. Thus can extend to other subjects or activities.	Perhaps if we divided into groups sometimes, we watched a movie once and talked about it afterwards in groups, that was good because then many dared to participate and talk about it (Participant 9)
Little practice decreases participation	Student express that it is uncomfortable speaking English because it's about not being used to speaking it.	It's about us not being used to it and not speaking it [English] enough, which makes it uncomfortable to feel that we're not good enough. It's a bit of performance anxiety. (Participant 12)
Performance anxiety	Student expresses they don't like to speak when they know their accent isn't good.	Yes, a little. I don't have a good accent, and it affects me a bit because I don't like to speak when I know my accent isn't good. (Participant 12)
L1 English use improves proficiency	The student expressed that if it was encouraged to speak American English, they might become a little better in English.	Maybe, if it was encouraged to use American English, there might have been fewer people who dared to participate, but at the same time, maybe we would have become a little better. (Participant 2)
Talking differently than peers is strange	Student express that they refrain from speaking with an accent aim because they will get comments from others.	Yes, personally since I am not that happy with Norwegian-English. I am most happy with British accent, and I try to use it myself, but when I do it there are

		many that comment on it and I become a little embarrassed and then it turns a little Norwegian-English again. (Participant 14)
Norwegian accent is the norm	It is inferred through the accent it "turns a little Norwegian-English again" that this is the normal accent spoken by peers.	
Speaking with an American accent is more acceptable than British accent in Norwegian classrooms	Student express that American is also something they speak more because British is less acceptable.	They are used to Norwegian-English and maybe think it is strange that one talks a little different than them, but I want to learn to talk British, but others think like why do I do that? then I just speak more American. So, I mostly speak British with my Turkish friend instead of in the classroom. (Participant 14)
Speaking with foreigners reduce pressure	It is inferred through being able to use their chosen accent outside of the classroom and with a different friend that do not have the same norms.	
Social media relates to accent acceptance/normalization	This is inferred through several transcripts regarding the use of social media and their personal use of English.	TikTok, and because many others do it and that's what most people have heard before and I've just done the same and followed that and heard a lot from video clips. (Participant 14)

D. Interview guide

Semistrukturert intervjuguide

Innledning – formidles før intervjuet

- Presentere seg
- Informere om prosjektet
- Gå igjennom hvordan man vil dokumentere intervjuet, og hva som blir gjort med datamaterialet når prosjektet er avsluttet
- Garantere anonymitet
- Informere om informantens rett til når som helst å avslutte intervjuet
- Antyde hvor lenge intervjuet vil vare

Introduksjonsspørsmål:

Hva liker du å gjøre i fritiden eller hva slags interesser har du?

Overgangsspørsmål:

Hvor har du lært å bruke/snakke engelsk?

Når bruker du engelsk?

Hvordan ville du beskrive læreren din sine muntlige ferdigheter i engelsk?

Kan du fortelle meg om noen du syns er flink til å snakke engelsk? (uten navn)

> Ev. Hva er det gjør at du syns denne personen er flink i engelsk?

Nøkkelspørsmål:

Hva vil det si å være flink i engelsk?

Hvordan mener du at engelskferdigheter påvirker muntlig deltakelse I engelsktimene?

> Ev. Er det noe som ville gjort det enklere å delta muntlig i engelsk?

Vil du si at aksent har noe å si for engelskferdigheter?

Hva slags aksent eller uttale prøver du å bruke på engelsk? Hvorfor?

> Ev. Har du prøvd å tilnærme deg en britisk/amerikansk/osv. aksent?

Har aksent blitt brukt som en del av vurdering i engelsk? Hvordan?

> Ev. Oppmuntres det til å uttale ord med aksent i klassen, har du noen eksempler?

Vil du si aksent eller uttale påvirker muntlig deltakelse i engelsktimene?

Snakker du annerledes online enn på skolen?

Ville du lært engelsk fra noen utenfor klasserommet? Fra en fra engelskspråklig land eller ikke?

Er det noe mer jeg burde vite?

Avslutning:

Takke for intervjuet.

Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet
"Eierskap i engelsk"?

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er å undersøke hvem som kan sies å "eie" engelsk. I dette skrivet gir vi deg informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.

Formål

Forskningsprosjektet har som hensikt å undersøke hva lærere og elever mener engelskferdigheter innebærer, mer spesifikt muntlige engelskferdigheter.

Med «Eierskap i Engelsk» ønsker vi å forske på oppfatninger av hva det vil si å være flink i engelsk og mulige forbindelser til valg av aksent og vurdering.

Dette forskningsprosjektet er en del av en masteroppgave ved OsloMet - storbyuniversitetet og gjennomføres av to studenter med en veileder fra OsloMet.

Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?

OsloMet – storbyuniversitetet er ansvarlig for prosjektet.

Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?

Du får spørsmål om å delta fordi du er elev på ungdomstrinnet.

Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?

Hvis du velger å delta vil vi kunne observere noen av engelsktimene i klassen og skrive observasjonsnotater av det som skjer i en uke. Vi vil også intervjue deg i ca. 30 minutter om dine meninger om hva det vil si å ha gode muntlige engelskferdigheter.

Foreldrene/foresatte til elever som deltar vil ha muligheten til å se spørsmålene og intervjuguiden på forhånd.

Det er frivillig å delta
Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet. Hvis du velger å delta, kan du når som helst trekke samtykket tilbake uten å oppgi noen grunn. Alle dine personopplysninger vil da bli slettet. Det vil ikke ha noen negative konsekvenser for deg hvis du ikke vil delta eller senere velger å trekke deg.
Dette har ingen påvirkning på din karakter i faget.

Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger

Vi vil bare bruke opplysningene om deg til formålene vi har fortalt om i dette skrivet. Vi

behandler opplysningene konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

- Observasjonsnotater vil bli anonymisert fortløpende etter observasjoner.
- Transkripsjoner av intervjuopptak vil anonymiseres, og intervjuopptakene vil slettes etter prosjektet er avsluttet.
- Tilgangen til dataene vil være begrenset til Thomas Berseth, Aron Xue (studenter) og Ingrid M. Rodrick Beiler (veileder).
- Intervjuopptak gjennomføres ved hjelp av sikker forskningsapp (Nettskjema-diktafon).
- Dataene lagres på sikker skylagring med databehandleravtale (OsloMet OneDrive).

Hva skjer med personopplysningene dine når forskningsprosjektet avsluttes?

- Prosjektet vil etter planen avsluttes senest 31. Desember 2023.
- Etter prosjektet er ferdig vil alle opptak og koblingsnøkkel mellom navn og pseudonymer slettes.

Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

På oppdrag fra Oslomet - Storbyuniversitetet har Personverntjenester vurdert at behandlingen

av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Dine rettigheter

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 Ingrid M. Rodrick Beiler
Telefon: 932 71 530   E-post: ingrid.rodrickbeiler@oslomet.no

Thomas Berseth
Telefon: 99560459   E-post: s306079@oslomet.no

Aron Xue
Telefon: 48502668   E-post: s310334@oslomet.no
Vårt personvernombud:

Ingrid S. Jacobsen

Hvis du har spørsmål knyttet til Personverntjenester sin vurdering av prosjektet, kan du ta kontakt med:
Personverntjenester på epost (personverntjenester@sikt.no) eller på telefon: 53 21 15 00.

Med vennlig hilsen

Ingrid Rodrick Beiler, førsteamanuensis (veileder)

Thomas Berseth (student)   Aron Xue (student)

Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjonen om prosjektet *Eierskap i Engelsk* og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til:

☐ Å delta i intervju med lydopptak
☐ Klasseromsobservasjon med notater

Jeg samtykker til at mine/elevens opplysninger behandles frem til prosjektet er avsluttet

----

_____   _____

Prosjektdeltaker (elev)   **Dato**

_____   _____

Foresatte/Verge   **Dato**

F. Agreement on co-writing

Avtale om samskriving

For studenter som ønsker å skrive masteroppgave i felleskap, gjelder følgende:

Institutt for grunnskole- og faglærerutdanning (GFU) ved OsloMet legger de såkalte Vancouver-kriteriene til grunn for hva som kan regnes som felles forfatterskap innenfor master i Grunnskolelærerutdanning (MGLU). GFUs kriterier for samarbeid om masteroppgave er:

1. Alle parter må levere et substansielt bidrag til konsept eller idé og innsamling av data og analyse og fortolkning av data.
2. Det kreves at alle deltagere har deltatt i utformingen av masteroppgaven, og at alle deltagere har levert en substansiell del av tekstmaterialet.
3. Det settes krav til at alle forfattere skal ha godkjent den versjonen som sendes inn for publisering.

Alle tre kriteriene må være oppfylt. Alle forfattere er gjensidig ansvarlig for at masteroppgaven følger gjeldende regler for sitering og bruk av andres materiale.

Veiledningen skal i hovedsak være felles om to eller tre studenter gjennomfører og/eller skriver masteroppgaven sammen.

Studentene forplikter seg til å bruke uenighet produktivt. Det forventes at studentene skal ha som målsetning om å komme fram til en felles forståelse om hva som tjener arbeidet med masteroppgaven best. Dersom det oppstår konflikt i arbeidet, forplikter studentene seg til å ta dette opp med veileder for så raskt som mulig for å komme fram til en løsning slik at framdriften opprettholdes.

Dersom en student blir syk i løpet av arbeidet med masteroppgaven, trenger permisjon eller ikke følger planlagt progresjon, kan den/de andre studentene fortsette og ferdigstille arbeidet uten den som trekker seg. Dette må skje etter avtale med veileder. Studenten som ikke følger planlagt progresjon, vil kunne bruke allerede innsamlet data som grunnlag for sin masteroppgave, men da med en annen tematisk vinkling.

Om to eller tre studenter gjennomfører og/eller skriver masteroppgaven sammen, skal det legges ved en medforfatterklæring, jf. emneplan MGMO5900:

"For studenter som velger å gjennomføre masteroppgaven som gruppearbeid, skal det gå tydelig fram i egen redegjørelse hvordan arbeidet er fordelt, og hvordan hver enkelt oppfyller kravet om selvstendig vitenskapelig arbeid. Her benyttes en medforfattererklæring som begge eller alle tre parter signerer."

Studentene bekrefter herved å ha gjort seg kjent med de retningslinjer som gjelder for samarbeid om masteroppgaver, og forplikter seg med dette til å følge opp sin del av plikter og retningslinjer ved skriving av masteroppgaven:

Dato: 23 sign.: _Thomas Bersoth_   Dato: 20.02.2023 sign.: _Ann_

Dato:_____ sign.:_____

98