

# “Fluency and stuff”

*Perceptions of oral competence in English among  
teachers and students in Vg1*

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Mastergradsavhandling i engelsk fagdidaktikk ved institutt for  
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# Abstract

The present thesis investigates the perceptions of aspects of oral competence among teachers and students at the Vg1 level in English. Previous research has shown variation in teachers' perceptions of oral competence, leaving the student perspective somewhat unexplored. Therefore, this thesis focuses on both teacher and student perceptions as knowledge about possible misconceptions might be useful so that creating a common understanding of aspects of oral competence in the classroom is possible.

This is a qualitative study, and individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with five teachers and 15 students at five different schools in the Eastern part of Norway. By using assessment as context and competence aims as stimulus, the participants provided rich and insightful answers connected to their perceptions of oral competence. The interview data was analysed inductively, although the interview guides and competence aims suggested possible themes.

The findings suggest that both teachers and students are concerned with avoiding breakdown in communication, and view the same aspects as important in relation to oral competence, although in different ways. In addition, students express uncertainty as to what competence aims *are* and what aspects in them *refer to*. The teachers are concerned with intelligibility, but cannot dismiss the notion of nativeness completely in connection to pronunciation and intonation. Interestingly, the students do not comment on nativeness, suggesting that the competence aims do not trigger aspects connected to accent. Fluency, in connection with appropriateness, is viewed as important, but the findings suggest inconsistencies in the way teachers and students operationalize the aspect of fluency.

An additional aspect of fluency that arose from the analysis of the interviews is interactional fluency. Four of five teachers conducted group discussions as their assessment situation, and while being dialogue-based, none of the participants commented on interactional fluency or something similar to it. This is interesting and important, as interactional fluency might be considered to be fundamentally different from individual fluency.

The implications of this thesis include suggestions for guidelines of oral competence to be made available and understandable for both teachers and students, due to the variation in perceptions of oral competence and the inconclusiveness connected to intelligibility and nativeness. In addition, fluency-enhancing tasks and dialogue-based assessment are recommended in the English classroom where the emphasis on communicative competence is strong.



# Sammendrag

Denne masterstudien undersøker læreres og elevers oppfatninger om aspekter ved muntlighet i engelsk på Vg1. Tidligere forskning har vist at det er variasjon i læreres oppfatninger om aspekter ved muntlighet, mens elevperspektivet er noe utforsket. Derfor ser denne studien på både lærer- og elevperspektivet, da informasjon om eventuelle misoppfatninger mellom lærere og elever kan være nyttig å adressere slik at man har muligheten til å skape en felles forståelse av aspekter ved muntlighet i klasserommet.

Dette er en kvalitativ studie der fem lærere og 15 elever ved fem forskjellige skoler på Østlandet i Norge har blitt intervjuet ved bruk av individuelle semi-strukturerte intervju. Ved å bruke vurdering som kontekst og kompetansemål som stimulus, bidro deltakerne i studien med rike og innsiktsfulle svar rundt deres egne oppfatninger om aspekter ved muntlighet. Dataene som ble samlet inn ble analysert gjennom en induktiv tilnærming, selv om intervjuguidene og kompetansemålene foreslo potensielle temaer.

Resultatene fra analysen viste at både lærere og elever er opptatte av å unngå at kommunikasjonen bryter ned, og anser de samme aspektene ved muntlighet som viktige, men på forskjellige måter. I tillegg uttrykte elevene usikkerhet rundt kompetansemålene, både med tanke på hva de *er* og hva innholdet i dem *betyr*. Lærerne er opptatte av forståelighet (intelligibility), men klarer ikke å se helt bort fra morsmålsnærhet (nativeness) med tanke på uttale og intonasjon. Interessant nok kommenterer ikke elevene på morsmålsnærhet, noe som kan indikere at kompetansemålene ikke trigger aspekter knyttet til aksent. Flyt, i kombinasjon med hensiktsmessig tilpasning, ble ansett som viktig, men resultatene indikerer uoverensstemmelser i måten begrepet blir operasjonalisert av lærere og elever.

Et annet aspekt ved flyt som oppsto i analysen av intervjuene var interaksjonsflyt. Fire av fem lærere hadde gjennomført en fagsamtale som vurderingssituasjon, og selv om dette er en dialogbasert vurderingssituasjon kommenterte hverken lærere eller elever på aspektet interaksjonsflyt eller noe liknende. Dette er både viktig og interessant da interaksjonsflyt kan regnes som å være fundamentalt forskjellig fra individuell flyt.

Implikasjonene av denne masteroppgaven er blant annet at det trengs retningslinjer for muntlighet i engelsk som blir formulert på en forståelig måte og gjort tilgjengelige for både lærere og elever, nettopp fordi det finnes variasjon i oppfatningene til lærere og elever, samt tvetydighet knyttet til forståelighet og morsmålsnærhet. I tillegg anbefales flytforbedrende oppgaver og dialogbaserte vurderingssituasjoner anbefales i det engelske klasserommet der kommunikativ kompetanse står sterkt.





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SSDGM

Emilie Bakka Aalandslid

Blindern, May 2018





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# 1 Introduction

As a novice English teacher in upper secondary school in Norway, I have relatively short experience with teaching. However, in this relatively short time I have experienced that students have different perceptions of aspects connected to English, in particular related to spoken English. Two girls in my class spoke to each other in a heavy accented Norwegian-English, clearly trying to make it sound as if they spoke English in Norwegian. When they discovered that I listened to them, they started laughing and explained that they were just joking around. At this point in time, I had just started my MA specialization in English didactics, where I was presented with the findings of Haukland's (2016) master thesis. His findings suggested that Norwegian-accented English is regarded as intelligible by both Norwegian and non-Norwegian listeners. I told my students about the findings in Haukland's (2016) thesis, and what followed was a conversation where they told me that their former teacher in lower secondary school had expected them to speak either British English or American English. At this point I realized just how important it is for my students that I have a conversation with them at the beginning of each term talking about what is expected of them, as they cannot know how I perceive aspects of oral competence without me letting them know.

These contradictive perceptions found between research and perceptions in my English classroom made me conduct a small pilot study in the spring of 2017, where I investigated whether teachers and students perceived assessment of oral competence differently, and the findings indicated that the perceptions of assessment differed. However, what all assessment of oral competence is based on is the perceptions *aspects of oral competence* that are assessed. Previous research has mainly been focused on the teacher, and the teacher's perceptions of assessment of oral competence and at the oral English exam at the Vg1 level (Borch-Nielsen, 2014, Bøhn, 2016; Yildiz, 2011), leaving the student aspect unexplored. The findings of these studies suggest that there is variation among the teachers interviewed, which in turn might affect the reliability and validity of oral examinations in English. Further, the findings in Bøhn (2016) showed that the teachers interviewed had a similar understanding of the main constructs to be assessed in the oral exam, but disagreed on the more narrow aspects connected to performance. This thesis is not a study into *assessment*, but it has implications for assessment as it seeks to explore teachers' and students' perceptions of aspects of oral competence. In this thesis I have interviewed five teachers and 15 students to investigate their perceptions of

aspects of oral competence to gain insight into how students perceive aspects of oral competence seen in relation to what teachers perceive. Knowledge about their perceptions is valuable as it will provide insight into the understanding of the aspects according to which teachers have to teach and assess.

## **1.1 The status of English: globally and locally**

English is regarded as a global language, and the status it has achieved is largely due to globalization. It can be said to be the first language of such reach and magnitude, with the number of speakers being around two billion, and the status of English suggests that everyone who uses it can be said to *own* English (Crystal, 2012; Rindal, 2015). Furthermore, English is the first or second language in many of the world's biggest countries, such as the USA and India.

As stated, almost one quarter of the world's population speak English and Norway is no exception. Due to its geographical location, Norway has had contact with English-speaking countries for centuries through shipping and business. With exposure through internationalization of education, business and vacations, Norwegians are very familiar with the English language (Simensen, 2011). Nowadays, Norwegians are exposed to English through audio and audiovisual media, as well as through travelling (Rindal, 2014). English is regarded as necessary in the Norwegian society, both as a tool and means of communication and also to strengthen democratic involvement as well as co-citizenship (KD, 2006, 2013). Even though English holds a unique position amongst the foreign languages in Norway, being separated from German, Spanish and French in the curriculum, it is still not regarded as a second language in the Norwegian context. Rindal (2015) argues that English in Norway exhibits considerable characteristics of a second language. The status of a language affects the way we perceive aspects of that language, and hence the way it is taught and assessed in an educational context.

## **1.2 English as a school subject**

English is taught as a compulsory subject in Norwegian schools from grade 1 to grade 11. As mentioned above, English as a school subject has its own curriculum, separated from the other foreign languages. The very first sentence of the *Purpose* of the English subject curriculum states that "English is a universal language" (KD, 2006, 2013: 1), and the curriculum is heavily



influenced by the *Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR)* with a clear emphasis on communicative competence in English (Rindal, 2015; Simensen, 2011). The curriculum is divided into four main subject areas being: *Language learning, Oral communication, Written communication* and *Culture, society and literature*. Under each of these subject areas there has been developed specific competence aims describing what students should be able to do after having received training in the subject (KD, 2006, 2013). In relation to oral communication, the students should be able to “express oneself fluently and coherently in a detailed and precise manner suited to the purpose and situation” and “use patterns of pronunciation, intonation, word inflection and various types of sentences in communication” at the end of their training in English at the Vg1 level. Both of these competence aims give little direction as to what the teacher should look for in regard to fluency and pronunciation. The English subject does not mention any specific L2 accent(s), and does not state what reference to assess students after in English language teaching (ELT). By not providing teachers with specific guidelines for assessment, teachers may develop their own assessment criteria based on their interpretation of the competence aims in the English subject curriculum (Rindal, 2015). Therefore, this study will investigate teachers’ and students’ perceptions of aspects of oral competence by presenting them with two specific competence aims from the English subject curriculum under oral communication.

### **1.3 Research question**

As prior research and related studies have shown inconsistencies within groups of teachers, it would be interesting to see if there are inconsistencies between teachers and students as well. Given the lack of specific guidelines for assessment of oral competence in English there is reason to believe that teachers *do* assess differently. It would be interesting to see if there are inconsistencies between both teachers and students as well. Therefore, this master thesis will focus on both the teachers’ and students’ perceptions of aspects of oral competence in English. With English at the VG1 level being the last year of compulsory English teaching the need for a common reference for assessment is even greater. Students come from different schools having had different teachers, and most likely, having different perceptions of what these teachers value in an assessment situation. The need for a common understanding of aspects of oral competence is necessary as it has implications for both teaching and assessment. Although previous research has investigated the teacher perspective, it would be interesting to compare the teacher and student perspective, as the need for the student perspective is present. What

this might contribute with is useful knowledge for teachers about how their students perceive aspects of oral competence, so that they can discuss these perceptions and if necessary address possible misconceptions

Based on the need for studies exploring both teachers' and students' perspectives of aspects of oral competence in relation to assessment, the research question of this thesis is:

*How do teachers and students perceive aspects of oral competence in English at the Vg1 level?*

The aim of this study is to gain insight into the perceptions of oral aspects of English that exists in English classrooms in Norway. In order to answer this question, I have interviewed five teachers and 15 students at five different schools. All interviewees have been shown two specific competence aims from the English subject curriculum under oral communication, as well as asked about perceptions regarding assessment of oral competence as assessment was used as context in the interviews. The teacher participants all teach English at the Vg1 level in the general studies programme, and it is their own students that have been interviewed.

## **1.4 Structure of the thesis**

This thesis consists of six chapters. First, the introduction chapter with reasons for choosing to conduct this study, as well as background information and related studies. In Chapter 2, the theory and previous research relevant for this thesis is presented through looking at the status of English world, before a comparison of English as a foreign language (EFL) and English as a lingua franca (ELF) language learning paradigms. In addition, oral competence will be explored through looking at the English subject curriculum, CEFR and central aspects of oral competence. Lastly, assessment theory connected to oral competence will be accounted for. Chapter 3 will provide a detailed account of the methods applied in the study including issues of research credibility, and chapter 4 will present the results. In chapter 5 the results will be discussed in light of relevant theory, as well as related studies. Finally, chapter 6 provides the conclusion with both implications and suggestions for further research.

## 2 Theory and previous research

This chapter will provide an overview of relevant theory and research that makes up the theoretical basis for this MA thesis. The status of English in the world will be outlined showing both historical and recent developments (2.1.1). Two language learning paradigms, that of English as a foreign language (EFL) and English as a lingua franca (ELF), within English language teaching (ELT) will be compared (2.1.2), and the status of English in Norway and the English subject curriculum will be accounted for (2.1.3). Then, oral competence as a concept will be explored, through looking at both CEFR and English subject curriculum (2.2.1), before presenting important aspects of oral competence emphasised in both documents (2.2.2-2.2.3) In addition, assessment practices and assessment of oral competence, will be presented with an emphasis on the Norwegian context (2.3). Lastly, an account of relevant studies on perceptions and assessment of oral competence will be presented (2.4).

### 2.1 The status of English

This section will provide a presentation of the status English has in the world, and in Norway. Looking at the status of a language is important as its status will affect our view of it and what we deem important with it, as well as the local need for it. The status English has in a country can be reflected in different language learning paradigms, and the curriculum indicates what kind of a status the language has in the Norwegian context.

#### 2.1.1 English in the world

The status of English has changed over the course of time, and is today regarded as a global language. There is an estimate of nearly half a billion native speakers of English (Graddol, 2006) in the world, supplemented with the same number of speakers using it as a second language. Around 2 billion people – nearly one quarter of the world’s population – are now fluent or capable of communicating in English (Crystal, 2011). Due to the large number of non-native speakers, English is regarded the lingua franca of the world and therefore it is used as a *world language* where its speakers usually communicate with other non-native speakers (Jenkins, 2006). With only one-fifth being native speakers, there is a clear majority of non-native speakers, and most interactions in English does in fact take place between non-native speakers (Dürmuller, 2008).

An attempt to categorize English according to its speakers, was presented by sociolinguist Braj Kachru (1986) through his model *The Concentric Circles of English*. In the *inner circle*, we find countries such as the UK and USA where English is the first language, thus defining its people native speakers of English. In the *outer circle*, English has the status of an official second language and is usually dominant in the domains of education and government, as well as in higher social classes. The English used in these countries has been influenced by local languages, thus making for instance Indian English a recognizable concept with its own model of pronunciation. Lastly, the *expanding circle* countries have usually looked to the inner circle countries with its native speakers as models for pronunciation. It is in this expanding circle that the Scandinavian languages, including Norwegian, historically have been placed although we are generally fluent in English even though the language has an official status as a foreign language.

At the time of Kachru's categorization, the native speakers of English in the *inner circle* was regarded as practically owning the language (Simensen, 2014). If we look at the status of English today, being a global language spoken by almost a quarter of the world's population, the notion of it belonging solely to the native speakers is outdated and cannot illustrate present day English. The model fails to show the importance English has to speakers in both the outer and expanding circle, and even Kachru himself criticized the model for being too centrist and proposed a re-definition of criteria for categorization within the *circles* (Graddol, 2006).

The status given to English affects the way it is taught, as a language's status can be reflected in the language learning paradigm followed in a country. A language learning paradigm consists of ideas and beliefs about the language, and is followed to make criteria for both teaching and assessment.

### **2.1.2 Language learning paradigms**

The status attributed to English affects the way it is taught, and can be reflected in policy documents and teaching practices, which have been developed based on ideas and beliefs about the language. Such ideas and beliefs might be more or less conscious. This section will present dominant ideas and beliefs as *language learning paradigms*.

Although the teaching of English in Norway has traditionally followed a English as a foreign language (EFL) language learning paradigm, the English subject curriculum is influenced by another language learning paradigm; English as a lingua franca (ELF). The language learning paradigm followed in a country will influence the teaching of English, and beliefs about language will be present through the criteria developed for both teaching and assessment, giving specific characteristics to aspects of spoken language; especially pronunciation and intonation.

In countries where English is regarded as a foreign language, the teaching methods have developed along the line of research on second language acquisition (SLA). The research field proposes an *order of acquisition* of a new language, and the development of an *interlanguage* on the way to reaching native-like proficiency in the target language (Ellis, 1997). Within the EFL paradigm the aim of instruction is for students to achieve native-like proficiency, indicating that you are a learner and not a speaker of the language until reaching this goal. However, most learners will end up at an interlanguage level as it is suggested that only around five per cent of learners go on to develop the same linguistic competence as native speakers (Ellis, 1997).

The field of English as a lingua franca (ELF) study has been thriving over the last decades, and ELF is defined as “any use of English that among speakers of different first languages for whom English is the communicative medium of choice, and often the only option” (Seidlhofer, 2011: 7). This definition comprises both native and non-native speakers of English, and the fluidity and hybridity of ELF is reflected in the new emerging Englishes influenced by its speakers’ own sociocultural identity (Seidlhofer, 2011; Rindal, 2014). These nativized Englishes of the outer circle, as well as the lingua franca English found in the expanding circle, are not being taught or learned in order to communicate with native speakers from the inner circle. Therefore, focusing on communicative competence might be a possible aim of instruction, not measuring learners up against native speaker models as a point of correctness (Jenkins, 2006).

ELF as a teaching standard has been criticized as the variety is not codified, and due to the great variation found in the different *Englishes* used by different groups (Dürmüller, 2008; Mollin, 2006). The field of ELF study has also been a controversial topic, both as a phenomenon and due to claims of being ideologically motivated (Seidlhofer, 2011). Timmis

(2012) has criticised ELF, and states that it is not *self-evident* what ELF research has to offer: can there be provided a norm, or an alternative core of norms, for learners of English? A challenge with ELF from a teaching point of view, is being able to keep teachers updated on the variety in use of ELF today, and to agree on a set of criteria to assess students' competence in English (Simensen, 2014).

Conversely, lingua franca scholars did not intend for ELF to be used as a teaching standard, but rather as a perspective reflecting the variation in use of English in the world. This means that ELF is not intended to replace native speaker varieties as models of pronunciation, but that L2 instruction emphasises pragmatic strategies that students need to communicate across contexts and for different purposes (Simensen, 2014). However, as the goal of ELF is mutual intelligibility between speakers of English, Jenkins proposed a possible *lingua franca core* (LFC) based on research conducted in ELF contexts. This LFC includes features of English that “were likely to enhance mutual intelligibility” (Jenkins et al., 2011: 287) in communication. Though not intended as a model for ELF pronunciation, it can be seen as a set of guidelines to easier achieve mutual intelligibility in communication between non-native speakers of English (Jenkins et al., 2011). According to McKay (2010) an appropriate English as an international language pedagogy would be “[...] one that promotes English bilingualism for learners of all backgrounds, recognizes and validates the variety of Englishes that exists today and teaches English in a manner that meets local language needs [...] (2010: 113). This is relevant for countries defined as expanding circle countries, and this is where we find Norway.

### **2.1.3 The status of English in Norway and in the English subject curriculum**

According to the *English Proficiency Index* (EPI) by Education First, Norway was among the top five countries in the world when it comes to proficiency in English in 2016. Norway has been one of the top five countries in all six editions of the EPI reports, dating back to 2011 (EF, 2016). And, English holds a “...position unlike that of other foreign languages taught in school...” (Chvala & Graedler, 2010), and is a quite significant language in the Norwegian context. Hence, the competence level in English, especially with the younger generations in Norway, is very high as shown in the EPI reports, and the educational authorities even

emphasises English as a necessary skill in the Norwegian society (KD, 2006, 2013), proving the central role English has in Norway.

The English subject curriculum is separated from the other foreign languages; as Spanish, German and French, giving it a special position amongst the foreign languages taught in Norwegian schools (KD, 2006, 2013; Chvala & Graedler, 2010). *The Common European Framework of Reference for languages* (CEFR) has a clear influence on the curriculum, giving English the characteristics of a “universal language” (KD, 2006, 2013). In addition, there is no L2 target accent stated in the curriculum, indicating a move away from what has traditionally been the ELT norm in Norway. The influence on the curriculum is one more oriented towards ELF, as it looks at English as a universal language and opens up for use and exposure to various variations of English (KD, 2006, 2013). But, the EFL paradigm is still reflected in the curriculum through the use of the phrase “English-speaking countries” and “patterns for pronunciation and intonation” (KD, 2006, 2013). The latter indicates following what can be thought of as native standards for pronunciation, and a British or American intonation pattern. It is this influence of both paradigms that suggest the position of English in Norway to be in transition, moving towards becoming a second language (Rindal, 2013).

Without any clear paradigm to follow there is reason to believe that teachers have to interpret and develop criteria based on their perceptions of aspects included in the curriculum. Especially in connection to aspects of oral competence as these are perceived differently within different language learning paradigms.

## **2.2 Oral competence**

To give an account of what oral competence refers to, this section will look at how it is presented in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (2001) and the English subject curriculum (KD, 2006, 2013). Further, specific aspects of oral competence proven to be central in relation to perceptions and assessment of oral competence through research, will be presented in light of theory and their operationalization in the abovementioned documents. These three aspects are; pronunciation, intonation and fluency.

### 2.2.1 Oral competence and overall oral production

According to the Council of Europe, fostering a positive attitude towards linguistic diversity and the multilingual nature of Europe will have a positive influence on Europe's linguistic environment (Graddol, 2006). In addition, they promote the learning of several languages, suggesting that European citizens ideally should acquire two languages in addition to their mother tongue (Graddol, 2006). This ideological project has resulted in the document *The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment* (2001). This document has had an influence on the development of curriculums all across Europe (Graddol, 2006), with Norway being no exception (Simensen, 2011).

The Council of Europe has made a clear shift with CEFR where they focus on content and objectives in education, rather than the orientation towards teaching and learning methods. Instead of teaching methods, CEFR (2001) presents competence aims with a “can-do” aspect connected to what abilities students should attain at different levels, leaving behind the aspect of failure (Graddol, 2006). By doing this, the learners' individual development of competence, as well as the focus on different situations' demand for different competences is emphasized. Regarding learners achieved oral production (speaking), CEFR provides illustrative scales with different “can-do” characteristics for speaking skills. To illustrate, the descriptors for “overall oral production” is represented below in table 2.1, where the different levels of competence have been categorized as describing a: *proficient user* (C1, C2), *independent user* (B1, B2), and *basic user* (A1, A2). Norwegian students are expected to be independent users at the end of their training in English at the upper secondary level.

**Table 2.1:** CEFR's illustrative scale on “overall oral production”.

<b>OVERALL ORAL PRODUCTION</b>	
<b>C2</b>	<i>Can produce clear, smoothly flowing well-structured speech with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.</i>
<b>C1</b>	<i>Can give clear, detailed descriptions and presentations on complex subjects, integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.</i>
<b>B2</b>	<i>Can give clear, systematically developed descriptions and presentations, with appropriate highlighting of significant points, and relevant supporting detail.</i>
<b>B2</b>	<i>Can give clear, detailed descriptions and presentations on a wide range of subjects related to his/her field of interest, expanding and supporting ideas with subsidiary points and relevant examples.</i>



<b>B1</b>	<i>Can reasonably fluently sustain a straightforward description of one of a variety of subjects within his/her field of interest, presenting it as a linear sequence of points.</i>
<b>A2</b>	<i>Can give a simple description or presentation of people, living or working conditions, daily routines, likes/dislikes, etc. as a short series of simple phrases and sentences linked into a list.</i>
<b>A1</b>	<i>Can produce simple mainly isolated phrases about people and places.</i>

(CEFR, 2001: 58)

Rather than promoting a model for speaking, CEFR focuses on the ability to produce and structure information in relation to oral production. Avoiding a desired speaking model altogether makes CEFR clearly oriented towards the ELF language learning paradigm. There is a clear emphasis on communicative competence, as there is a focus on appropriateness and, at the highest level C2, the mention of a recipient. The competence necessary in communication was described by Hymes (1972) as knowing “when to speak, when not, as to what to talk about with whom, when, where and in what manner” (1972: 277), in addition to knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. He was also the one who coined the term communicative competence as including both *language knowledge* and *ability of use* (Rindal, 2014). So, communicative competence can be summarized as “[...] the knowledge of grammatical rules, the knowledge of how language is used to achieve particular communicative goals, and the recognition of language use as a dynamic process” (Bachman, 1990: 83). And this emphasis on communicative competence can be seen in the English subject curriculum in Norway.

The importance of communicative competence is already mentioned in the *Purpose*-section of the curriculum. Further, the curriculum states that the main purpose of the teaching of English is to strengthen both democratic involvement and co-citizenship (KD, 2006, 2013). Further, the curriculum is divided into four subject areas where oral communication is one of them. In addition, oral skills is listed as the first of five basic skills developed by the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (2012).

Oral communication stands strong in the curriculum, and the need for communicative competence is emphasised throughout the curriculum. In the *basic skills*-section under *oral skills* we find that students should be able to “listen, speak and interact using the English language.” (KD, 2006, 2013: 2). The way in which they use it involves “[...] evaluating and adapting ways of expression to the purpose of the conversation, the recipient and the situation” (KD, 2006, 2013: 2). And, under *oral communication* in the *main subject areas* there is a clear

emphasis on the ability of students to understand, listen to and use English in different situations where the communication needs to be done orally. An important element in these situations are “General politeness and awareness of social norms in different situations [...]” (KD, 2006, 2013: 2). Students are also to be able to distinguish between what is regarded as formal and informal language in spoken language (KD, 2006, 2013: 2).

As with CEFR, the English subject curriculum has clearly defined competence aims with a certain “can-do”-characteristic as “The aims of the training are to enable the student to” (KD, 2006, 2013: 10). They specifically state what the aims of the studies are to enable the students to be able to do after Vg1 – programmes for general studies. As this thesis seeks to investigate teachers’ and students’ perceptions of aspects of oral competence, two specific competence aims were chosen. The participants were presented with the competence aims in Norwegian, and the competence aims being in focus in this thesis are:

- express oneself fluently and coherently in a detailed and precise manner suited to the purpose and situation
- use patterns for pronunciation, intonation, word inflection and various types of sentences in communication  
(KD, 2006, 2013: 10).

The English translation will be referred to in the following sections and is as follows:

- uttrykke seg på en nyansert og presis måte med god flyt og sammenheng, tilpasset formål og situasjon
- bruke mønstre for uttale, intonasjon, ordbøying og varierte setningstyper i kommunikasjon  
(KD, 2006, 2013: 10).

These competence aims were chosen as they, out of the eight listed under oral communication, looks at specific sub-constructs that might be recognizable for teachers and students in assessment of oral competence as assessment was used as the context for retrieving information about their perceptions of aspects of oral competence. The curriculum gives no information as to how to teach or assess *fluency*, as emphasised by Simensen (2010). The same goes for to “use patterns for pronunciation and intonation”. However, the curriculum gives little guidance and direction as to what this *means*, and due to this somewhat *vague* phrasing it also opens the possibility for interpretation.

However, in a recently published article Iannuzzi & Rindal (2018) try to shed light as to what this phrasing refers to. They use the EFL and ELF language learning paradigms to illustrate

how this can be interpreted by teachers, with an EFL approach indicating using patterns of pronunciation connected to a native speaker model, while an ELF approach would not be concerned with accent and rather emphasise intelligible pronunciation (Iannuzzi & Rindal, 2018). If the main goal of instruction is intelligibility, Iannuzzi & Rindal (2018) propose looking to Jenkins' (2000) *lingua franca core* with its core features as a model for fostering intelligible pronunciation in communication.

### 2.2.2 Pronunciation and intonation

Pronunciation can be regarded as referring to both segmental (individual sounds) and suprasegmental (e.g. intonation, stress, rhythm) features of spoken language. Researchers have addressed the importance of pronunciation in successful communication, and language teaching experts agree on intelligible pronunciation as being an absolute necessity when it comes to pronunciation (Afshari & Ketabi, 2016; Fraser, 2000). While research has proved segmentals to be important for intelligibility, research on suprasegmental features are less conclusive, as it has proven both necessary and not necessary (Jenkins, 2000; Field, 2005). Both pronunciation and intonation are included as aspects of oral competence in the English subject curriculum in Norway (KD, 2006, 2013). However, it is not clear whether “pronunciation” here includes *includes* “intonation”, or whether “pronunciation” refers to segmental features (see section 5.2.1 and 5.2.2). In addition, both pronunciation and intonation are regarded as important aspects in relation to perceptions and assessment of oral competence in the Norwegian context (Bøhn, 2016; Haukland, 2016; Iannuzzi, 2017; Rindal & Piercy, 2013).

CEFR's illustrative scale describing phonological control also includes the aspects of pronunciation and intonation. At the independent user level (B1, B2) students are expected to have a clearly intelligible pronunciation and intonation (CEFR, 2002: 117).

**Table 2.2:** CEFR's illustrative scale on “phonological control”.

<b>PHONOLOGICAL CONTROL</b>	
<b>C2</b>	<i>As C1</i>
<b>C1</b>	<i>Can vary intonation and place sentence stress correctly in order to express finer shades of meaning.</i>
<b>B2</b>	<i>Has acquired a clear, natural, pronunciation and intonation.</i>

<b>B1</b>	<i>Pronunciation is clearly intelligible even if a foreign accent is sometimes evident and occasional mispronunciations occur.</i>
<b>A2</b>	<i>Pronunciation is generally clear enough to be understood despite a noticeable foreign accent, but conversational partners will ask for repetition from time to time.</i>
<b>A1</b>	<i>Pronunciation of a very limited repertoire of learnt words and phrases can be understood with some effort by native speakers used to dealing with speakers of his/her language group.</i>

(CEFR, 2002: 117)

The illustrative scale is in line with the intelligibility principle, as no speaker model is mentioned. Intonation is the aspect separating the B1 level from the higher levels, and occurrences of foreign accent and mispronunciations are restricted to the B1 level. However, research shows that the presence of a foreign accent does not necessarily disrupt intelligibility in communication (Munro & Derwing, 1999; Haukland, 2016; Bøhn & Hansen, 2017), and communication can be successful as there is no correlation between accent and understanding (Levis, 2005). In line with this research, the more advanced levels of CEFR for phonological control do not relate to nativelikeness.

Two contradictory principles have traditionally influenced pronunciation and pedagogy; nativeness and intelligibility (Levis, 2005). While the nativeness principle focuses on achieving native-like pronunciation in an L2, the intelligibility principle focuses on speakers of an L2 simply managing to make themselves understood in communication. The nativeness principle can be associated with the native speaker norm, but has been criticised for being the target of instruction and assessment in EFL contexts as the majority of English speakers are non-native speakers of English (Jenkins, 2000; Kirkpatrick, 2007; Seidlhofer, 2011). If one were to be assessed according to a native speaker standard, most students would fail, as it is very difficult for non-native speakers to reach this level of proficiency (Ellis, 1997), hence making it inappropriate as the target in L2 acquisition.

Since there is no mention of a native speaker model in the English subject curriculum, this document can be perceived as more oriented towards intelligibility in communication (KD, 2006, 2013). Jenkins (2000) proposed a *lingua franca core* (LFC) proposing a set of core features of English that most likely will enhance intelligibility in communication between non-native speakers of English. The core features are:

- Consonant sounds; with the exception of the dental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/, and the dark /l/
- Vowel length contrasts; e.g. “pitch” and “peach”

- Restrictions on consonant deletion; especially not omitting sound in the beginning and in the middle of words
- Nuclear stress production and placement
- The vowel /ɜ:/; as in “bird” (Jenkins, 2000).

This set of core features supports the importance of pronunciation of segmentals, while only including *sentence stress* as a suprasegmental feature important for intelligibility. Within an ELF language learning paradigm, these core features could be interpreted to reflect what is meant by the phrasing “patterns of pronunciation” (KD, 2006, 2013).

Pronunciation is often associated with accent and we tend to judge both native and non-native speakers on the basis of their pronunciation (Luoma, 2004). There are several native speaker accents of a language as widely used as English making it hard to have one standard for students to be assessed according to (Luoma, 2004). This might also be the reason for the avoidance of an L2 target accent in the English subject curriculum in Norway. In addition, accent is closely related to identity and some speakers do not want to be affiliated with certain native accents and are therefore aiming for a more *neutral* accent in their production of English (Rindal, 2016). However, a student’s grade might still be positively affected when graded by their teacher if they have what can be described as a near native-like pronunciation and intonation (Simensen, 2014). It could therefore prove necessary to provide teachers with guidance related to pronunciation (Rindal, 2013), as variation and hybridity define the status of English today.

As with pronunciation, the curriculum is also concerned with the students being able to “use patters” (KD, 2006, 2013) when it comes to intonation. Under the main subject area in the curriculum oral communication is accounted for, and in the Norwegian version it emphasises using “tydelig uttale og intonasjon” (KD, 2006, 2013: 2), while the English version has been translated into “to use the correct intonation” (KD, 2006, 2013: 2). The notion of correctness that has appeared as a result of a translation might suggest the curriculum being oriented towards an EFL language learning paradigm (Rindal, 2017), as nativeness long was associated with correctness in ELT based on SLA research (Ellis, 1997). It is therefore reasonable to believe that some teachers might interpreted “patterns of intonation” as referring to intonation patterns of either British English, or American English.

With the curriculum being influenced by both EFL and ELF language learning paradigms, the teachers are left with the responsibility of developing guidelines and assessment criteria

connected to their students using “patterns for pronunciation and intonation” (KD, 2006, 2013), which probably will be influenced by their perceptions of what these aspects of oral competence refer to.

### 2.2.3 Fluency

With the primary goal of most L2 instruction being to foster communicative competence, fluency is often listed as a proficiency criterion in connection to oral competence (Derwing et al. 2004; Simensen, 2010). This is also the case with English in Norway as the English subject curriculum emphasises communicative competence (KD, 2006, 2013), and fluency as a criterion of spoken English. Lennon (1990) defines fluency in a broad and narrow sense, where the broad sense refers to fluency as oral proficiency, while the narrow sense views fluency as a *component* of oral proficiency. In this narrow sense, it is isolated as a component and hence a student can be fluent, but have a limited vocabulary, or speak grammatically correct, but not fluent. It is this definition of fluency in its narrow sense that is often found in descriptors of oral examinations (Lennon, 1990). Lennon (2000, in Derwing et al. 2004) has proposed that “a good touchstone of acceptable fluency is the degree to which the listener attention is held” (2004: 673-674). The assumption of fluency developing naturally has caused it to become a neglected component in explicit language teaching (Torgersen, 2018; Rossiter et al. 2010).

CEFR has an illustrative scale of spoken fluency where they describe a speaker’s fluency at different proficiency levels. At an independent user level the student can express him or herself with relative ease and spontaneity, even though pauses or dead-ends might occur in communication, and the aspect of appropriation is included at the proficient user level.

**Table 2.3:** CEFR’s illustrative scale on “spoken fluency”.

<b>SPOKEN FLUENCY</b>	
<b>C2</b>	<i>Can express him/herself at length with a natural, effortless, unhesitating flow. Pauses only to reflect on precisely the right words to express his/her thoughts or to find an appropriate example or explanation.</i>
<b>C1</b>	<i>Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly. Only a conceptually difficult subject can hinder a natural, smooth flow of language.</i>
<b>B2</b>	<i>Can communicate spontaneously, often showing remarkable fluency and ease of expression in even longer complex stretches of speech.</i>
<b>B1</b>	<i>Can produce stretches of language with a fairly even tempo; although he/she can be hesitant as he/she searches for patterns and expressions, there are few noticeably long pauses.</i>

	<i>Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without imposing strain on either party.</i>
<b>B1</b>	<i>Can express him/herself with relative ease. Despite some problems with formulation resulting in pauses and ‘cul-de-sacs’, he/she is able to keep going effectively without help.</i>
	<i>Can keep going comprehensibly, even though pausing for grammatical and lexical planning and repair is very evident, especially in longer stretches of free production.</i>
<b>A2</b>	<i>Can make him/herself understood in short contributions, even though pauses, false starts and reformulation are very evident.</i>
	<i>Can construct phrases on familiar topics with sufficient ease to handle short exchanges, despite very noticeable hesitation and false starts.</i>
<b>A1</b>	<i>Can manage very short, isolated, mainly pre-packaged utterances, with much pausing to search for expressions, to articulate less familiar words, and to repair communication.</i>

(CEFR, 2001: 129)

Spoken fluency as defined by CEFR, refers to fluency in the narrow sense as a separate component of language. Fluency is also listed as a criterion in the English subject curriculum, and is included in one of the competence aims under oral communication in the English subject curriculum. It states that students should be able to “express oneself fluently” (KD, 2006, 2013: 10). However, there is no explanation as to what this refers to, and in how it can be observed in students’ speech production. A possible operationalization of the term might be to look at specific aspects of fluency as hesitation, pauses, fillers, false starts etc. (Brown et al., 2005), as fluency cannot be observed directly in students.

One possible operationalization of the term might be to look at specific aspects of fluency as hesitation, pauses, fillers, false starts etc. (Brown et al., 2005), as fluency cannot be observed directly in students. However, Lennon (1990) points out pauses as necessary in fluent speech, and Hilton (2008) sees pauses as necessary for a speaker to be able to organize thoughts and points as well as “to give the listener time to process incoming speech” (2008: 154). In her thesis exploring rater orientations evaluating oral proficiency, Borger (2014) found fluency to receive mainly positive comments, but comments on pauses and hesitation were predominantly negative. This mirrors results found in Brown (2007), but as Brown points out “lack of evidence cannot always be assumed to indicate non-mastery” (2007: 122). Therefore, one cannot assume that pauses and hesitations which arise from cognitive planning are predominantly negative, as they arise in native speakers’ speech as well. These pauses could then be perceived as natural,

and hence positive, in a second or foreign language context. A problematic issue concerning pauses and hesitations is that raters might make judgements of these as disfluency, hence being a sign of shortcomings in the L2 (Ginther et al., 2010).

Native speakers of English tend to locate their pauses after utterances where a pause would be natural, hence called *natural* pauses (Hasselgreen, 2004; Simensen, 2010). In addition, one hypothesis is that they have a broad arsenal of so-called “small words” which they employ in pauses to get time to think or organize new ideas. By employing these “small words”, such as “you know” and “well” they avoid the occurrence of mute pauses, which are often viewed as a sign of dysfluency (Hasselgreen, 2004; Simensen, 2010). By using these “small words” in communication, one may be perceived as more fluent and as higher achieving by interlocutors. Hilton (2008) explored the link between vocabulary knowledge and L2 fluency, and suggests that the greatest impediment to oral fluency in an L2 is the lack of lexical knowledge.

De Jong et al. (2015) explains how it is futile for an L2 speaker to strive for having a language where he or she uses very few filled pauses, if he or she in fact is an “uhm”-er in his or her L1. As the idea of transfer of fluency from an L1 to an L2 is complex, and “a straightforward relationship between fluency in the L1 and the L2 cannot be expected” (Derwing et al. 2009). Therefore, taking into account the speaker’s fluency in their L1 would give better insight into how a speaker would perform in an L2, even though research show that fluency transfer is not to be expected.

Accent is also an identity marker related to fluency in communication. A non-native speaker with a foreign accent is likely to be perceived as more dysfluent by an interlocutor if hesitation, pauses and self-corrections occur in speech, than if occurring in speech produced by a native speaker (Lennon, 1990). Research suggests that speech rated as more accented tends to be rated as less fluent (Pinget et al., 2014). However, increased fluency is less likely to be perceived as having a reduced degree of accentedness (Derwing et al., 2004). A possible reason might be that “...accentedness judgements are based more heavily on linguistic phenomena as segments and prosodic elements” (Derwing, et al., 2004: 674). Further, Derwing et al. (2004) argue that dysfluent speech may be disruptive for listeners, whether produced by L1 or L2 speakers, and may lead to a lack of attention on the listeners part. Hence, more fluent production of speech may give listeners an impression of increased intelligibility, simply because it is easier for a listener to attend to a speaker’s language that is not interspersed with pauses, hesitation and false starts (Derwing et al., 2004).



In communication, Ejzenberg (2000) suggests that L2 learners most likely will be perceived as more fluent when speaking with a native speaker. This due to the L2 learner being able to scaffold on the speech production of their interlocutor. Futher, Ejzenberg (2000) argues that when given a monologic task the speaker's fluency will be negatively affected due to the cognitive demand put on the speaker by the nature of the task. This then, indicates that L2 learners will be perceived as more fluent in dialogue-based tasks.

However, in interaction, as with dialogue-based tasks, there is a shared responsibility between the interlocutors to fill silences and what can be described as uncomfortably long pauses, which can be manifested in turn-taking (McCarthy, 2010). This is reflected in the CEFR, as it states that interaction with a native speaker should be relatively fluent and spontaneous "*without imposing strain on either party*" (CEFR, 2001: 129) at an independent user level. This is another type of fluency; interactional fluency. When investigating the relationship between individual and interactional fluency, Sato (2014) found that there was a difference in how pauses used individually and in interaction affected raters' perceptions of a speaker's oral fluency. He concludes that the constructs of individual and interactional fluency might be "fundamentally different" (Sato, 2014: 88), and suggests that interactional fluency might be best conceptualized as being a joint performance between the speakers. Then, assessing students on individual fluency proficiency in an interactional fluency context might not reflect the proficiency of the speaker, as the relationship between individual and interactional oral fluency is weak (Sato, 2014). Sato (2014) concludes that "Oral fluency is ultimately a perceived phenomenon in the listener's brain; therefore, it may be theoretically implausible to identify corresponding cognitive abilities" (2014: 88).

## **2.3 Assessment of oral competence**

First and foremost, this is a thesis about perceptions of aspects of oral competence. In order to investigate aspects of oral competence, I have asked teachers and students about the assessment of two specific competence aims under oral communication in the English subject curriculum. Therefore, I use assessment as a context to explore these perceptions of aspects of oral competence, and the implications of this thesis are closely linked to assessment of oral competence.

Within language assessment Bachman and Palmer (2010) points that the “[...] definition of the construct is based on a frame of reference such as course syllabus, a needs analysis, or current research and/or theory of language use [...] (2010: 211). In the Norwegian context that construct is the English subject curriculum with its competence aims, as these are the ones being used for all assessment of students in English. As there are no guidelines provided in terms of assessment of oral competence, the teachers are left with the responsibility interpreting the competence aims to formulate assessment criteria for their students. The competence aims look at aspects of oral competence as pronunciation, intonation and fluency. These aspects of oral competence can be operationalized in different ways based on the language learning paradigm followed. The oral exam in English is managed locally, and while some local educational authorities provide rating scales, rater training and exam tasks, others leave it to the individual schools or teacher to decide (Bøhn, 2016).

“The sound of people’s speech is meaningful, and that is why it is important for assessing speaking” (Luoma, 2004: 10). As emphasized by Luoma, the *sound of speaking* is a factor in language assessment that can be seen as a quite thorny issue. The abovementioned aspects of pronunciation, intonation and fluency, influence the ways in which we assess a person’s ability to speak and is therefore important to keep in mind when assessing spoken language. These elements are important for becoming a fluent speaker in a language (Luoma, 2004). While assessing oral competence is, as all assessment, challenging, it can be said that “Speaking is [...] the most difficult skill to assess reliably” (Alderson, J. C. & Bachman, L. F., in Luoma, 2004, p. ix). Speaking skills is an important part of a curriculum in language teaching, and therefore important for assessment (Luoma, 2004: 1), as can be seen in the English subject curriculum in Norway. When we listen to someone speak we are most likely subconsciously judging what we are hearing. People use language to create an image of themselves to others through speaking, and language and identity is closely linked together (Norton, 2010; Luoma, 2004). The judgements can be about a speaker’s personality or attitudes, as well as listening for any indication of them being a native or non-native speaker of the language (Luoma, 2004). There are many factors that influence the way in which we assess someone’s oral proficiency, and it is also challenging to assess speaking as various skills are in use (e.g. listening) (Brown, 1996; Luoma, 2004).

Other important aspects for assessing oral competence are grammar and vocabulary. It is important to keep in mind that the grammar of spoken language differs from that of written

language. When speaking, we tend to not speak in complete sentences, but rather in *idea units* (Luoma, 2004). These units include short phrases and clauses that are connected by the use of *and, or, but* and *that*, or just separated by short pauses (Luoma, 2004: 12). When assessing oral competence this is done by conducting an assessment situation where the students are going to solve a task connected to a topic by giving an oral performance of some kind. Then, what is important to take into consideration is the design of the assessment situation, as we distinguish between planned and unplanned speech. It is expected that speakers have prepared and practiced for a presentation and that their speech is going to contain more complex grammatical features as well as thought-out points in planned speech, as contrasted in unplanned speech where the words spoken often are reactions to other speakers. It is in these situations that incomplete sentences and use of idea units occur frequently (Luoma, 2004: 12-13).

A natural part of all spoken language are slips and errors such as mispronunciations, usage or mixing sounds, then following the second view of fluency as natural speech though not necessarily grammatically correct. Within an EFL context, learners are often judged on the occurrence of errors or slips in their speech, and is hence seen as a lack of competence (Ellis, 1997; Jenkins, 2006). However, native speakers also have errors when speaking, but we tend to excuse them as they probably know how it is supposed to be (Luoma, 2004). Assessors should therefore not be made aware of slips and errors being natural part of all spoken language, and that they are also made by native speakers of a language (Luoma, 2004).

## **2.4 Previous research: perceptions and assessment of oral competence**

To the best of my knowledge, there have been no previous research exploring teachers' and students' perceptions of aspects of oral competence in the Norwegian educational context. However, there has been studies researching assessment of oral competence focusing on teachers and their assessment practices in connection to the oral English exam at the end of Vg1 (Yildiz 2011; Borch-Nielsen, 2014; Bøhn, 2016), and a study looking at the assessment of oral proficiency towards the final course grade (Cosabic, 2016). Furthermore, studies exploring attitudes connected to perceptions of aspects of oral competence, namely pronunciation and accent (Rindal, 2013; Haukland, 2016) as well as assessment of pronunciation (Iannuzzi, 2017) have also been conducted. Finally, a study exploring teachers'

and students' attitudes towards accents in English language teaching at the Vg2 level (Hopland, 2016). These studies, with an exception of Rindal (2013) and Bøhn's (2016) PhDs, are master theses and I have looked at theses submitted at different universities in Norway to find those relevant for my thesis. The following section provides an overview of these studies, as they are relevant as a backdrop for the present thesis.

### **2.4.1 Assessment of oral competence**

Yildiz's (2011) master thesis addresses rater perceptions in regards to English oral examinations at the Vg1 level. By using a qualitative research design, she interviewed 16 teachers from 16 schools in 16 counties, and found that there is great variation in local oral examinations. The findings indicate that there are differences in both format and in the assessment process, including elements found to be important in assessment in addition to the use of assessment criteria. These differences might cause issues concerning the reliability, as well as the construct validity of the oral examination in English. Further, Yildiz (2011) proposes possible implications of the study being a common format testing the construct at hand, the assessment criteria of the English subject curriculum (KD, 2006, 2013), and introducing a common set of assessment criteria as well as providing teacher with rater training, enhancing the reliability of the oral examination ratings.

Borch-Nielsen (2014) conducted a similar master thesis to that of Yildiz (2011), where the aim was to find out more about the locally administrated oral examinations of English at the Vg1 level. The study took a qualitative approach interviewing five teachers who function as both local and external examiners. The findings of the study were that the format used in the examinations varied, and that there is a variation in terms of guideline availability, hence affecting the reliability of the oral examination. Therefore, the findings agreed with those found in Yildiz (2011), suggesting that the validity of oral examinations in English at the Vg1 level is not satisfactory. Borch-Nielsen (2014) suggest, as Yildiz (2011), rater training in connection to the rating of oral exams, and suggest further research to explore the student perspective regarding the examination in English at the Vg1 level.

Cosabic (2016) compared and contrasted the assessment practices of English teachers at VG1 level and in 10<sup>th</sup> grade in her master thesis. She conducted a mixed-methods study using both a digital questionnaire and interviews by telephone. Her findings point toward there being

inconsistencies in the assessment process leading up to the final grade in both Vg1 and 10<sup>th</sup> grade. Further, based on the informants' answers it is possible to argue that there is variation and inconsistencies in the use of assessment criteria, as well as the significance of it. In addition, the findings indicate inconsistencies in the format of assessment situations and the distribution between written and oral assessment situations. These findings have to some degree correspondences to the findings of Yildiz (2011).

In his doctoral thesis, Bøhn (2016) investigated teachers' rater orientation in connection to an oral examination in English at the upper secondary level in Norway. With no common rating scale available in the upper secondary context, a concern is how this affects both the validity and reliability of the oral examinations in English. Therefore, teachers in both the general studies programme and vocational studies programme were interviewed in order to find out what they understand as relevant constructs of assessment in an oral examinations, and what construct-relevant aspects are included in the English subject curriculum.

When investigating Norwegian teachers' understandings of the constructs to be tested, Bøhn (2016) found that *communication* and *content* were the two main constructs teachers focused on. On an overall basis the teachers understood these constructs in the same way, but they disagreed on specific performance constructs such as *pronunciation*. Further, teachers in the general studies programme emphasized *content* more than those working in vocational programmes, and the study shows that some teachers focused on construct-irrelevant features such as effort, but overall, the results indicated a fairly good agreement in scoring behaviour.

With regard to EFL-teachers' rating orientations towards pronunciation, the aspects explored included native speaker pronunciation and intelligibility, as well as pronunciation of segmentals, word and sentence stress and intonation. The results showed that the teachers agreed on intelligibility and that segmentals, word stress and sentence stress was important features. As for intonation, the findings indicated that the teachers were either not as concerned with it, or that they were unsure of its relevance in assessment. Although the teachers strongly agreed on intelligibility as being an important aspect of high-scoring performances, they disagreed on the relevance of native speaker pronunciation in assessment. Lastly, teachers were also asked of their understanding of the content construct, and findings suggest that they largely had a common understanding of the construct, but that there was a difference in how vocational

teachers and general programme teachers assessed the construct, the first being more lenient than the latter.

Overall, the findings of the study indicated that teachers' understanding of the main constructs to be assessed, and that differences were found in what can be described as the more narrow performance aspects. The findings suggest that aspects of pronunciation and content needs to be better defined for raters' scoring of them to be more valid and dependable. Lastly, Bøhn (2016) emphasises that Norwegian educational authorities should consider the introduction of a common rating scale and better, more consistent rater training, as addressed in the findings of both Yildiz (2011) and Borch-Nielsen (2014). In his concluding remarks, Bøhn (2016) suggest more research on the aspect of pronunciation in relation to the notion of nativeness and intelligibility, as well as investigating how ELF teachers in Norwegian assess oral English leading up to the final grade, where oral proficiency makes up a substantial part of the final grade in English at the upper secondary level.

#### **2.4.2 Perceptions of oral competence**

In her doctoral thesis, Rindal (2013) explored the social meanings of Norwegian learners' use of L2 English, by investigating their pronunciation, their accent choices and their attitudes towards native accents of English. The results proved Standard Southern British English as being the most prestigious accent, while General American was regarded as most favourable in terms of social attractiveness. In addition, Standard Southern British English seemed to be assigned formal functions, while General American seemed to be assigned informal functions. Rindal (2013) argues that Norwegian adolescents evaluate English accents socially, not only when used by native speakers, but also when used by their peers.

Although Standard Southern British English was regarded as the most prestigious accent in the verbal-guise test, a majority of the participants reported General American to be their desired L2 accent. In addition, a large minority reported their desired L2 accent to be 'neutral'. The choice of a *neutral* accent, was explained as a desire to use an accent not associated with any cultural baggage (Rindal, 2013). Based on the social evaluation of native accents, Rindal (2013) encourage a critical distance to the use of target accents in English language teaching.

In his master thesis Haukland (2016) investigated Norwegian and non-Norwegian listeners' attitudes towards Norwegian-accented English by using a matched-guise experiment involving three different listener groups (Norwegians, native and non-native speakers of English). The findings of the study found that native-like accents (Br: Received Pronunciation) are perceived as having more status, but that Norwegian listeners have a negative attitude towards Norwegian-accented English, more so than native and non-native speakers of English. In addition, non-Norwegian listeners do not regard an accent with a strong Norwegian intonation as a strong foreign accent, as oppose to accents with a strong Norwegian phonology. The findings suggest that even the strongest Norwegian-accented English are perceived as highly intelligible by non-Norwegian listeners. Haukland (2016) suggests a call for a paradigm shift from EFL to teaching ELF in English language teaching to meet the students' need in international communication, and suggest further research on both the guidelines for Norwegian-accented English and the attitudes towards it.

Hopland's (2016) master thesis explored students' and teachers' attitudes towards spoken English variations in ELT at the Vg2 level in upper secondary school in Norway. It uses a mixed methods approach with both quantitative and qualitative data, interviewing four teachers and having their students answer an online questionnaire. The results from the interviews and questionnaires showed that both students and teachers found communication to be central, and intelligibility as the most important feature of spoken English. Further, it found that the English variety spoken in the classroom influenced both teachers and students, and that most students believed their teachers to prefer a native accent. Another finding suggests that students might be more anxious and nervous about speaking English in class due to teacher expectations. The teachers agreed on accepting all varieties of English emerging in the classroom, but some wanted their students to sound *more English* than various of the non-native accents of English. However, the results indicate that the students' beliefs about what the teachers expect, does not correlate with what the teachers report themselves, proving that there are misconceptions between the teachers and students when it comes to what they believe and expect from each other in the language classroom. In terms of further research, Hopland (2016) suggests looking at to what extent teachers and students speak about these language attitudes in class, as both groups clearly have them.

### **2.4.3 Oral competence in the English classroom**

A recent master thesis by Iannuzzi (2017) investigated teachers' oral instruction of pronunciation, as well as their corrections of students' mispronunciation, by looking at 26 hours of video-taped English lessons in lower secondary school. The findings based on the analysis of these videos showed that students' mispronunciation, being non-standard pronunciation, only constituted around 4% of their total number of spoken words. This indicates Norwegian students pronunciation to be highly intelligible, and most non-standard pronunciations were connected to one deviation type. Iannuzzi (2017) concludes that the English subject curriculum is vague about what patterns in pronunciation refers to, and that the curriculum seems to be between two different language learning paradigms. As for the implications for teaching of pronunciation, Iannuzzi (2017) suggests that teachers need the same understanding of what pronunciation is, and that there is a need for guidelines related to what pronunciation refers to in the curriculum to avoid different teaching and assessment practices. She suggests further research to compare the teachers' teaching practices at the upper secondary level to compare with those in lower secondary. In addition, she suggests investigating both how teacher approach pronunciation, and how students experience it, as well as what they think of pronunciation in English.

The abovementioned studies show that research has been conducted on both perceptions and assessment of oral competence, as well as students' oral performance in the classroom. In relation to assessment the studies have mainly focused on the oral examination in English at Vg1 interviewing teachers, and exploring their understanding of constructs of assessment. Their findings indicate a need for guidelines and rater training, as well as an operationalization of aspects perceived as important for oral competence. Most of the research presented in this chapter, has been restricted to teachers only when exploring assessment of oral competence, suggesting a need for investigation into student perspectives as this can be seen as somewhat unexplored. In an attempt to explore both the teacher and student perspective, as well as their understanding of aspects of oral competence, I have chosen to carry out my study exploring both teachers' and students' perceptions of oral competence at the Vg1 level in English.



# 3 Methodology

This chapter will provide a detailed description of the methodological process that has been used in this study. This is a qualitative study that investigates teachers' and students' perceptions of aspects of oral competence in English at the Vg1 level by using individual semi-structured interviews with both student and teachers. The teachers' and students' perceptions of aspects of oral competence are investigated by using assessment as context in the interviews. Firstly, the research design will be outlined (3.1), followed by a presentation of the participants (3.2). Then, the research tools will be accounted for (3.3), before a description of the data collection (3.4) and analysis (3.5). Finally, the research credibility (3.6) of the study will be addressed in terms of validity, reliability, ethical considerations and limitations.

## 3.1 Research design

The aim of this study is to explore how teachers and students perceive aspects of oral competence in English at the Vg1 level. Studies on aspects of oral competence have either focused on specific aspects; pronunciation, intonation and accent, or the assessment of it. However, the studies on assessment of oral competence have focused on the teacher aspect, leaving the student aspect unexplored. Therefore, using an exploratory study will be useful for acquiring insight into both teacher and student perceptions of aspects of oral competence by using assessment as context in the interviews. Exploratory research has been defined as:

A broad-ranging, purposive, systematic, prearranged undertaking designed to maximize the discovery of generalizations leading to description and understanding of an area of social or psychological life (Stebbins, 2001: 3).

In this study, the exploration, a type of *investigative* exploration, has used a qualitative approach, and Creswell (2014) defines qualitative research as:

[...] a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures; collecting data in the participants' setting; analyzing the data inductively, building from particulars to general themes; and making interpretations of the meaning of the data (p. 246).

The present study emphasizes exploration and investigation into a human phenomenon. Therefore, I chose a qualitative approach with interview as my method. Interview is a suitable method to use in my study as it provides rich information from the specific context that is needed to answer my research question. Halcomb & Davidson (2006) point out how interviews

as a method “[...] facilitate interactive dialogues between participants and researchers” and how this along with an emphasis on exploration has made interviews “[...] a method of data collection associated with the naturalistic (qualitative) paradigm” (Halcomb & Davidson, 2006: 38).

The choice of topic for my thesis draws upon results from a pilot study I conducted in the spring of 2017 as partial fulfilment in the course “EDID4010 – Teaching English in Upper Secondary” at the University of Oslo. By using a pilot study I was able to test my concerns and theories, as well as the methods used to gain insight and information about the topic (Maxwell, 2013). The pilot study made me more certain about the methodological choices regarding the interview style applied in the current thesis, as well as the formulation of the questions in both the teacher and student interview guide.

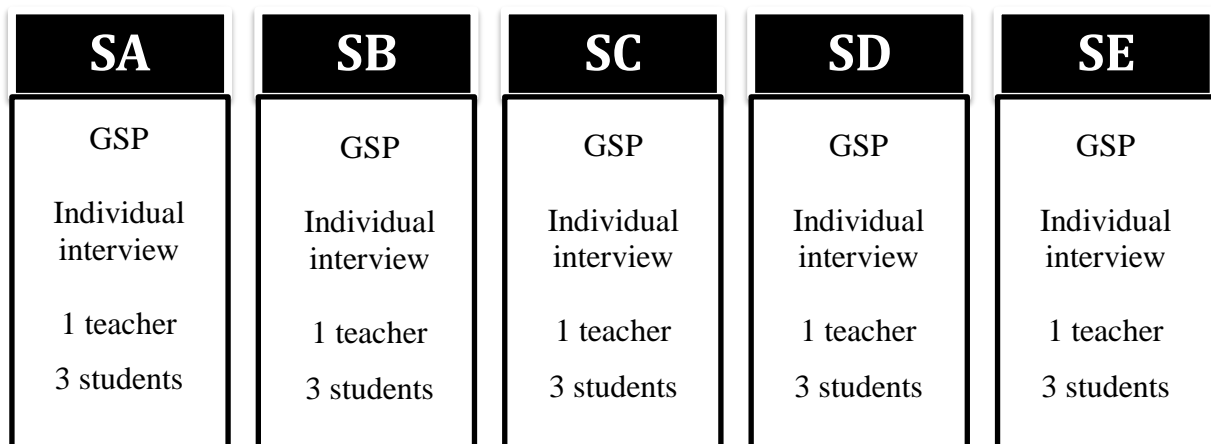
As this study is exploring how teachers and students perceive aspects of oral competence in English at the Vg1 level at five upper secondary schools, it is a multiple case study (Cohen et al., 2011), with multiple sources. The participants, both teachers and students, were purposefully selected to provide information that was particularly relevant to answer the research question in this study (Maxwell, 2013; Creswell, 2014). I chose to use individual semi-structured interviews in both the student and teacher interviews. The questions asked in the interviews were partly focused around a prior assessment situation, as well as both students’ and teachers’ perceptions of what aspects of oral competence are assessed in an oral assessment situation according to two specific competence aims under oral communication in English. The two specific competence aims the participants were presented with are:

- uttrykke seg på en nyansert og presis måte med god flyt og sammenheng, tilpasset formål og situasjon
- bruke mønstre for uttale, intonasjon, ordbøying og varierte setningstyper i kommunikasjon  
(KD, 2006, 2013: 10).

The participants were presented with the competence aims in Norwegian, and here are the two competence aims in English:

- express oneself fluently and coherently in a detailed and precise manner suited to the purpose and situation
- use patterns for pronunciation, intonation, word inflection and various types of sentences in communication  
(KD, 2006, 2013: 10).

The reason for choosing interview is that this is the *only* way of gaining insight into a situation that took place in the past (Maxwell, 2013). A triangulation or mixed-methods approach including observation was not suitable for the methods of this study, as my presence could have affected the performance of a student in an assessment situation causing reactivity (Maxwell, 2013). The data was collected in the months of November, December and January, depending on when the teachers at the different schools had time and opportunity to have me come and interview them and their students. In addition, the students had to have had an oral assessment situation prior to my visit as the interviews were partly focused around this.



**Figure 3.1:** A representation of the research design.

Figure 3.1 is a representation of the research design illustrating the five schools that have participated in the thesis, where one teacher, teaching at the Vg1 general studies programme, and three of that teacher's students have been individually interviewed at each school.

The study has been granted permission to collect data by the Norwegian Centre of Research Data (NSD), and the students and teachers that have participated in this study have given their consent letting me use the data in my thesis. All interview participants were given my e-mail address and phone number, giving them the opportunity of withdrawing from the study at any time if wanted.

## 3.2 Participants

### 3.2.1 A presentation of the teachers

The teacher participants in my study were selected on the basis of three criteria: (a) being English teachers, (b) teaching English at the Vg1 level in upper secondary school in the general

studies programme and (c) working at a school in the Eastern part of Norway. The geographical criteria was added due to practical considerations, but I tried to get some geographical spread by contacting schools located in different areas within the Eastern part of Norway. I did not choose the teachers myself, but contacted the head of the language department at different schools and on the basis of my criteria they gave me names and contact information of teachers who fitted the criteria and could participate in my study. I contacted the teachers and sent them an e-mail with an attached letter (Appendix 1) providing them with general information about the study, as well as a consent form. The teachers' education and experience varied, and is illustrated in the table below:

**Table 3.1:** The participating teachers and their experience and education. All participants are anonymized and have been given aliases.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Years as a teacher</b>	<b>Years as an English teacher</b>	<b>Education in English</b>
<b>Mary</b>	Female	37	9	9	1 year
<b>Rick</b>	Male	37	10	7	1 year
<b>Alice</b>	Female	47	7	7	Master's degree
<b>Kim</b>	Female	40	5	5	Master's degree
<b>Alex</b>	Female	53	25	14	Bachelor's degree

### **3.2.2 A presentation of the students**

The students who participated in my study were chosen based on two criteria (a) being general studies programme students at the Vg1 level and (b) being willing to participate in the study. The students were not chosen by me, but by their English teacher. Additionally, the teachers were asked to choose three students who were at different levels of achievement in English based on their assessment situation, or situations, during their autumn semester. However, this was expressed as a desire, not a necessity. The table below illustrates the student participants in terms of age, gender and what teacher they have:

**Table 3.2:** The participating students

<b>Education programme</b>	<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>
Vg1 General studies programme	<b>Mary</b>	Female	15
		Female	16
		Female	16
Vg1 General studies programme	<b>Rick</b>	Female	16
		Male	16
		Male	16
Vg1 General studies programme	<b>Alice</b>	Male	16
		Male	16
		Female	16
Vg1 General studies programme	<b>Kim</b>	Female	16
		Female	16
		Male	16
Vg1 General studies programme	<b>Alex</b>	Female	16
		Male	16
		Female	16

### **3.3 Research tools**

#### **3.3.1 Semi-structured interview**

As mentioned, I chose to use individual semi-structured interviews with both students and teachers. I developed two interview guides, one for the teacher interviews (Appendix 2) and one for the student interviews (Appendix 3). The semi-structured interview style allowed me to ask follow-up questions to the interviewees if something needed explanation or elaboration (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). Both interview guides are organized thematically; each theme starts with an open-ended main question, with possible follow-up questions for elaboration and explanation listed under the main question. The interviews have few main questions exploring

the topic, in addition to questions providing me with background information about the participants, and those included are intended to elicit information about the participants' perceptions regarding aspects of oral competence in English, by using an assessment situation as context (Creswell, 2014). The interviews were conducted in Norwegian, being the interviewees mother tongue, to make sure that they were able to express their opinions and to feel comfortable in the interview situation. By using interview guides, I was provided with a framework for the interviews creating a stable structure without being too rigid for exploration. In the following section, both interview guides will be accounted for.

### **3.3.2 Semi-structured interviews with the teachers**

The interviews with the teachers followed an interview guide that made the teachers able to express their opinions on the topic presented without being restricted by the questions. Further, the interview guide assured me that I was able to ask all teachers participants about the same things within the time frame given. Something I noticed in the pilot study was that the teachers found my first, and only, question to be very wide and general. Consequently, they expressed concerns of not having answered the question. Therefore, I added three possible subsidiary questions to use as follow-up questions. A downside with the use of a semi-structured interview can be that it is too rigid, and thus missing ideas or thoughts participants have about the topic. To avoid this, I added an open-ended question at the end of the interview for them to be able to express these if it was the case. I also member-checked, to make sure that I had understood the interviewees correctly and not drawn my own conclusions out of context (Maxwell, 2013). This was done by asking the participants if what I experienced as their opinion in fact was what they meant. This proved to be useful as some interviewees were able to elaborate and clarify what they meant, as my experienced view was not what they had intended to communicate.

The teachers were asked how they on a general basis assess oral competence in English according to two competence aims under oral communication in English, providing me with broad and rich answers about their perceptions of aspects included when assessing oral competence, before asking them how they planned and conducted an assessment situation in English being the one I interview the students about. The reason as to why the teachers were not asked specifically about *one* assessment situation was due to a wish for broad and rich answers reflecting the teacher's general perceptions of aspects of oral competence when assessing oral competence. If asked about *one* specific assessment situation their answers could

easily have become too focused on aspects that were specifically focused on, or worked with, in that situation, not giving a presentation of their perceptions of oral competence in general.

The teacher interview guide was structured thematically as follows:

- (a) Background information (education, work experience, experience teaching English).
- (b) How the teacher assesses two specific competence aims in an oral assessment situation.
- (c) How a specific oral assessment situation was designed and conducted.
- (d) What competence aims and assessment criteria was used in this oral assessment situation.
- (e) If they had any addition information they wanted to provide regarding assessment of oral competence.

The structure of the interview guide, with its themes and questions, was used to explore what the teachers' understanding of aspects of oral competence in oral assessment, and if this was operationalized in the assessment situation conducted. The topics were chosen on the basis of their relevance for perceptions of aspects of oral competence, and research conducted on exploring teachers' understanding of constructs in an oral English examination at upper secondary level in Norway (Bøhn, 2016).

The interviews with the teachers were done individually as I only interviewed one teacher at each of the five schools. As the study is seeking to explore the perceptions of aspects of oral competence, and the ways in which the teachers assess oral competence, an interview with the teacher alone was purposeful for this study. I was not looking for the teachers to collectively agree on a common view of aspects or assessment of oral competence, but rather to gather information about teachers' individual perceptions, assessment practices and understanding of the two competence aims. Therefore, the individual semi-structured interview was chosen, and it made it possible for me to see to what degree there was variation between the teachers' answers.

### **3.3.3 Semi-structured interviews with the students**

The aim of the interviews with the students was to gain an understanding of their perceptions of aspects of oral competence in English. In order to get this insight, I chose to conduct individual semi-structured interviews with the students where I used an assessment situation

as context to provide me with the information I was seeking. The reason why I chose this approach builds on experiences from the pilot study. Here, I conducted a focus group interview with three students and it was hard to get a conversation going as two of them were quiet and quite shy towards me. As a consequence, one student dominated the focus group interview and the two others only agreed and reinforced this student's answers. In this pilot study I let the teacher pick out the three students for the focus group interview. In hindsight, I can see that a consideration that might not have been taken is one of "power hierarchies within groups" (Williams & Katz, 2001: 6). If there was a power hierarchy within the student group, it may have affected the promotion or suppression of the various voices of the participants in the focus group interview. Therefore, I chose to conduct individual semi-structured interviews with the students.

In contrast to the teacher interviews, the students were asked about *one* specific assessment situation. By asking them about *one* specific assessment situation it would be easier for the students to provide answers as the questions are directed at this particular experience, and not on how they experience assessment of oral competence on a general basis. Before interviewing the students I either interviewed the teacher, or spoke to them before their lesson, and got information about the assessment situation so I was prepared and could remind the students of the assessment situation if they had forgot.

The interview guide for the student interviews was structured thematically as follows:

- (a) Background information (age).
- (b) The impression the student has of the English subject at the Vg1 level and the English lessons, and if they are orally active in English class.
- (c) How the student experienced the oral assessment situation they have had.
- (d) What the student believes was assessed in the oral assessment situation, and if there was a specific focus.
- (e) How the student believes he or she has been assessed by the teacher according to two specific competence aims from the English subject curriculum.

The student interview guide includes several follow-up questions under each main theme question. The reason why I have formulated several follow-up questions is based on the experiences I made during the focus group interview in the pilot study where I found it quite hard to get the students to talk and to reflect around the questions asked. There was a chance



that the students would do this in the individual interviews, thus making the follow-up questions necessary in the particular interviews where this might be the case. The follow-up questions I had formulated could also help the students to reflect around the main theme question before answering. This due to the possibility of there being uncertainty around the question itself. In addition, I actively member-checked during the interviews to make sure I had understood the interviewees correctly, not having drawn any conclusions out of context based on their answers (Maxwell, 2013).

I used the experiences from the pilot study I conducted in the spring of 2017 as a starting point for developing the new student interview guide for the individual interviews in this study. Some of the questions from the interview guide used in the pilot study have been revised and included, by altering and clarifying the questions as the students experienced them as quite hard to answer and fully understand. Other questions have been added to explore the phenomenon at hand, or to help the students reflect and answer the main theme questions without uncertainty around the main question itself.

## **3.4 Data collection**

### **3.4.1 Pilot study**

The topic of this MA thesis was chosen on the basis of the findings in the pilot study I conducted in the spring of 2017. The pilot study focused on perceptions of assessment of oral competence, and had a much smaller sample and a different methodology than this thesis. What I wanted to explore with the pilot study was if there was a difference in the way teachers and students perceived assessment of oral competence, something my results indicated. Therefore, I wanted to further explore both teachers' and students' perceptions of aspects of oral competence, as a common understanding of these would indicate an understanding of the assessment of these aspect. So, based on this the topic of this current MA is teachers' and students' perceptions of aspects of oral competence. By using the research paper in the course "EDID4010 – Teaching English in Upper Secondary" as an explorative study to decide on the topic for my MA, I was also able to conduct interviews and develop interview guides suiting the topic. This has been of great help for the methodological choices made in this MA, as well as the development of the interview guides with their questions. The pilot study confirmed that interview was a suitable method, but that the style of interview should be different as well as the questions exploring the research question.

### 3.4.2 Conducting the teacher interviews

Before conducting the interviews, I provided all the teacher participants with information about the study and emphasised that participation was voluntarily. I also informed them that all data is anonymised and that the study has been granted permission by the NSD to gather and use the information gathered. There was also an emphasis put on wanting their perceptions on assessment of oral competence, especially on the aspects of oral competence they assess, and not what they believe to be the correct answer to this question. All the interviews were recorded with a recorder, as well as my iPhone. I clarified that the recordings would only be listened to by me when transcribed, and later deleted at the submission of this thesis.

The teacher interviews started with a question related to the teacher's education and teaching experience, before presenting the teachers with the two specific competence aims in oral communication in Norwegian along with the question "In an oral assessment situation, how would you assess these two competence aims in oral communication in English?" (Appendix 2). This is an open-ended question where I wanted the teachers to talk me through their assessment practices, hence providing me with information about their perceptions of the aspects of oral competence included in the competence aims. Some found it a little hard to know exactly *what* I was asking for, making me emphasize *what* and *how* they assess being important and not the *situations* used for assessment. The next topic was focused on one specific assessment situation the students had had this autumn, asking how and in what way it was conducted. By receiving this information from the teachers, through the teacher interviews or speaking with the teachers before their lessons, I could use it in the student interviews helping them remembering the assessment situation. Further, I asked the teachers if any specific competence aims or assessment criteria were focused on in the assessment situation, before ending the interview with asking if the teacher had anything to add when it came to the topic of assessment of oral competence in English.

I wanted to interview the teacher before interviewing their students, so that I could use the information from the teacher interviews in the student interviews. This was something I was not able to do at all the schools, but all interviews were conducted on the same day. The interviews lasted between eight and ten minutes each. The interview guide used in the teacher interviews is attached as an appendix (Appendix 2).

### 3.4.3 Conducting the student interviews

The student interviews also started with me providing them with information about the study, and emphasising that participation was voluntary. In the same manner as in the teacher interviews, I also informed them that the NSD has granted me permission to gather and use the information gathered in my study and that all data is anonymised. It was important for me to make it clear that the information they provided in the interviews is not being shared with their teachers, and that I want their perceptions of aspects of oral competence through asking them about assessment of oral competence, and not what they believed to be the right answer. The same approach, being semi-structured interviews, was chosen for the student interviews based on the experiences of using a focus group interview in the pilot study. All the interviews were recorded on both a recorder and my iPhone. I clarified, as with the teacher interviews, that I would be the only one listening to the interviews when transcribing them, and that they would be deleted after the submission of this thesis.

The interviews all started with the students stating their age for background information. Then, the students were asked of their opinion of the English subject and the English lessons at Vg1 before moving on to how they experienced the oral assessment situation they recently had in English. After having shared their experiences with the assessment situation, I moved on and asked them about what they believed they were assessed in this assessment situation and if the teacher had prioritized or stated that something specific was being assessed. Lastly, the students were asked of how they believed they had been assessed according to the same two competence aims under oral communication in English by their teacher. The students were presented with the two competence aims in Norwegian when asked this question. The interviews ended with me asking the students if they had anything to add, or if they felt like they wanted to clarify or explain something they had mentioned earlier.

The question the students found *harder* to answer was “In what way do you believe you were assessed according to these competence aims in the assessment situation you had in English?” (Appendix 3). Therefore, two of the three subsidiary questions were asked straight after the main question due to the need for clarification in order to answer the main question. Those two subsidiary questions were “How do you understand the content of the competence aims?” and “What do you believe is meant with them?”. By answering these two questions, the students

were able to reflect around them and then apply their understanding of them into expressing their perception of their teacher's assessment of aspects of oral competence according to them.

Therefore, the follow-up questions were of good help, as some of the students provided short answers not reflecting around the questions asked by me. And, by using the follow-up questions I got more insight into the perceptions the students had of aspects of oral competence, and they were of good use if the students found the initial question too broad or hard to understand. The length of the interviews varied, lasting from seven to thirteen minutes each. The interview guide used in the student interviews is attached as an appendix (Appendix 3).

## **3.5 Data analysis**

### **3.5.1 Transcribing the interviews**

My data consisted of transcriptions of the recorded interviews with both teachers and students. By transcribing the interviews, I was able to get a more structured presentation of the data, thus making them more suitable for an analysis (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). I transcribed all the interviews myself, and did so after the interviews at each school had been conducted. This helped me to get an overview of what the participants at the different schools where I conducted the interviews had to say, and made it easier for me to have an open mind when transcribing without focusing too much on what previous participants had to say. Before transcribing each interview, I listened to the recording of the interview before the transcription process started.

While the interview guide did provide me with possible themes (Dalen, 2013), it was important for me to have an open mind and to not focus too much on these themes, but rather on what the participants had to say. This is an exploratory study, and themes not included in the interview guide may arise in the interview situation making others that are included fade out and replaced by others. So, by codifying the data from the interviews, both main themes and important themes will arise and then be focused on in the analysis (Dalen, 2013).

### **3.5.2 Analysing the interviews**

The data analysis took an inductive approach (Dalen, 2013), while having thematic categories suggested by the interview guide. In addition, the data was stimulus-driven as the competence aims were presented to the participants during the interviews. While using a stimulus-driven approach, the data was to some degree expected to mirror the content of the competence aims

with its aspects of oral competence. The data analysis started after all the material was gathered and all interviews from the five schools had been transcribed. In the results chapter, the results will be presented in a different order than the interview guide, due to categories developed from the analysis being mirrored in both the representation of the teacher interview and student interview. The reason for structuring the results in this manner is due to the sub-constructs that emerged as important aspects of oral competence in the interviews.

At first, the teacher interviews were analysed by structuring each teacher's answers into boxes based on the interview guide. In this way, I conducted a cross-case analysis (Cohen et al., 2011), and chose this approach as the number of informants was five teachers only. The teacher's interview guide's main focus is to explore *how* the teachers assess two competence aims under oral competence in the English subject curriculum, and hence to look at the aspects of oral competence they find important for oral communication. I chose to quantify (Dalen, 2013) my qualitative data by creating a representation of the teachers' answers connected to different constructs and sub-constructs, as well as including how many teachers and how many times each were commented on. In addition, three questions were added as mapping questions providing me with information about the specific assessment situation they had conducted with their students. Therefore, the background information is presented before the data concerning aspects of oral competence in connection to assessment according to the two competence aims under oral competence in English, as opposed to the structure in the interview guide.

The analysis of the student interviews took a slightly different approach, though following the same representation of the results. By having a total of fifteen interviews, they were firstly codified and the data was analysed individually (Byrne, 2001), before being presented through a quantification (Dalen, 2013) of the qualitative data, as with the teacher interviews. The representation of the data did differ from that of the teacher interviews, as the students were asked both how they perceived the assessment of oral competence made by their teacher, as well as being given the competence aims and asked how they believed they were assessed according to the aspects in these. Therefore, the student presentation includes a column for perceived and stimulus-driven results. The student interviews had an extra construct which emerged when asked of perceived assessment, and this is also included in the table. As for the two other constructs, being the same ones as in the teacher interview, five of the same sub-constructs proved to be the same as those most commented on in the teacher interviews, while an additional two are included in the presentation of the results.

In connection to the students' responses on their teachers' use of competence aims and assessment criteria, some of the students' responses indicated uncertainty in relation to *what* competence and assessment criteria refer to. Based on their responses it has been categorized as either use of competence aim or assessment criteria. As the interviewer, I also asked follow-up questions when I was unsure if the student believed competence aims were the same as assessment criteria.

In the representation of the results, extracts from the interviews will be used to illustrate the results. These have been translated by me, and all of the extracts are attached in Appendix 4. The teacher extracts are presented first according to which teacher said what, with the original in Norwegian and my translation. The same approach was used for the student interviews and these are accounted for straight after the teacher interview extracts in Appendix 4. All extracts are chosen because they illustrate the results from the interviews, and give a representation of either *one* or more participants' views (Dalen, 2013).

## **3.6 Research credibility**

### **3.6.1 Validity**

Qualitative validity refers to the way the researcher can check the accuracy of his or her findings by employing different procedures (Creswell, 2014). In other words, you as a researcher must check if there are reasons for how your conclusions might be wrong. Maxwell (2013) looks at two specific validity threats often raised in relation to qualitative studies: *researcher bias* and *reactivity*. Further, Maxwell (2013) explains that researcher bias points to "selection of data that fit the researcher's existing theory, goals, or preconceptions" as well as "the selection of data that 'stand out' to the researcher" (Maxwell, 2013: 124). Therefore, it is important for me as a researcher to analyse the data collected explaining possible biases I might have going into the project. As for reactivity, it refers to the influence I as a researcher have on the setting and the individuals participating in the study (Maxwell, 2013: 124). In qualitative studies, the researcher is always going to be part of the world studied and will therefore influence the results in some way. Being aware of my own biases and the ways in which I might have influenced the interview situation became an important part of the process as I analysed the data gathered in this study.

The participants in the study were selected on the basis of criteria defined by me to fit the purpose of the study. As for the interviews, availability played a crucial role. The schools and their teachers all had busy schedules, and with one of my criteria being that they had to have had an oral assessment situation, my visits had to be set to a specific time and date. As a consequence, the interviews were conducted over a three-month period, but all interviews at each of the five schools were conducted the same day.

For the student selection, I asked the teachers to pick three students they believed would be willing to participate and be comfortable in an interview situation with me. It was also desirable that the students were at different levels in English, but it quickly came to show that this was not doable and hence not as important for the selection of students. This poses a concern for the validity as the teachers might pick students they have a good relation to, students they know perform well in oral assessment situations or students who are well-known with assessment criteria and have a good understanding of constructs included in them. The letter with information about the study was intended to be used by the teachers to inform the students about the project, hopefully getting someone to participate. In the interviews, I clearly stated to the students that I was interested in their views and opinions regarding perceptions of aspects of oral competence in connection to a specific assessment situation. Further, I explained that I was interested in how the assessment situation went, but that it was up to them to share their grade or level of achievement with me. As all students did not share their grade specifically, but rather commented on their achievement, it was not possible for me to include their level of achievement as a category in the analysis.

According to Maxwell (2013), reactivity is one of the main threats to the validity of qualitative studies. This is also the case with my study as I am the researcher, and am conducting the interviews with both the teachers and the students. How can I be sure that the information provided by the participants in fact were true, and not just what they thought I wanted to hear? Firstly, I tried to make the participants comfortable in the interview situation by emphasizing their anonymity at the beginning of every interview. I also gave them my e-mail address and phone number so that they could withdraw from the study at any given time if wanted. By having the students answer questions directly connected to a prior assessment situation, I made sure that their answers would be related to a specific happening and not just general comments about different constructs (Maxwell, 2013). Due to practicality, the interviews were conducted at the schools in an available room. By having the interviews at the school, the teachers and

the students were in a familiar environment. To make sure that I had interpreted the participants' answers correctly and to clarify meaning, I actively *member checked* during the interviews (Maxwell, 2013) by asking the participants follow-up questions for clarification or elaboration, or repeating my interpretation of their answer. By doing this, the participants were able to make sure that I had indeed understood what they said and meant, instead of having interpreted it myself.

One of the most common strategies for controlling or minimizing reactivity in qualitative studies is *reflexivity*. And reflexivity refers to "[...] the use of self-reflection to recognize one's own biases and actively seek them out" (Ary et al., 2010: 501). Therefore, it was important that I did not let my preconceptions related to the pilot study interfere with the investigation into the participants answers in the current MA. Also, keeping in mind that this study aims at exploring a phenomenon will help me to stay open-minded to the responses given in the interviews, not seeking to *check* or *find* something I have constructed before conducting the interviews. Also, being aware of my role in the research and not being able to eliminate my influence on the results were of importance.

Additionally, by using a semi-structured interview guide for both teacher and student interviews I ensured that all interviews were similarly conducted and covered the same topics. However, I wanted to let the participants explore the different topics and wanted to be able to supplement with follow-up questions if they did not touch upon topics needed to enhance similarity in the interviews. A loss of control in the interview due to this exploration might affect the validity of them, but I did not want to potentially miss out on perspectives provided in the interviews by not following the interviewee's answers (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). Throughout the interviews, this balance of following the interview guide and the interviewee was continually evaluated, to ensure that I ended up with the data needed for the analysis.

The interviews were conducted three to five months after the students had started upper secondary school, giving them a relatively short experience with the English subject at the Vg1 level, their teacher and their teacher's lessons. This was taken into consideration, and my main criteria was for the students to have had an oral assessment situation so that I could ask them specifically about this. Their experiences with English as a subject and the English lessons were used as context rather than information connected directly to the research question.



### **3.6.2 Reliability**

The reliability of an interview concerns the consistency and credibility of the research results, and whether these results can be reproduced by another researcher (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). In other words, would the interviewees provide another researcher with the same answers given in the interview with me. I will look at, and discuss, the reliability in relation to the interview quality, transcription and analysis.

A main concern with conducting interviews is the use of leading questions, according to Kvale & Brinkmann (2015). To avoid this, I used the same interview guide in all the teacher interviews, and the same interview guide in all the student interviews. I had formulated open-ended questions for both interview guides, and provided the teachers with an opportunity to add information if they felt like they had more to say on the matter. The questions were all asked in the same order, but the possible follow-up questions were only asked if the interviewees needed a clarification, or if there was some aspect I felt that they did not touch upon themselves. I used approximately the same amount of time on all the teacher interviews and all the student interviews, with some variation but not enough for it to be seen as a notable difference. As mentioned before, the interview guide was developed based on experiences from the pilot study. With this being an exploratory study, I did prioritize the authenticity of the conversations rather than the rigidness of the interview guide. By asking or contrasting with follow-up questions, asking for elaboration or exploration relating to previous statements where I wanted additional information, the interviews varied to some degree. However, it is desirable to keep the interviews conducted as reliable as possible, but this can also counteract with the inter-human aspect of the interviews. Therefore, I chose to make little adjustments if necessary in the interviews, and it is my opinion that this did not affect the reliability of the interviews.

By having conducted a pilot study, I was sure of the topic chosen in this thesis and it made it easier for me to decide on the methodological approach in this study based on experience. This enhances the reliability of the study as I have tried out both questions and interview techniques, providing me with experiences that has changed the way I wanted to conduct the interviews in this study. I realized that focus group interviews were not suitable in this situation, as one of the students, in a group of three, became too dominant, leaving the others to agree and almost not contribute in the interview situation. It made me aware that possible follow-up questions

would help me get the students talking, as there was much silence in the focus group interview in the pilot study. As for the teacher interviews, I realized that I needed some questions for clarification and to help me get the information I asked for. The initial approach chosen in the pilot study left the teachers unsure if they provided the answers I was looking for by just being presented with *one* wide and general question. Overall, conducting a pilot study made it possible to choose a more appropriate method, and to develop interview guides that suited their purposes. It also gave me indications as to how I had to determine the time frame needed to conduct the interviews.

The transcriptions of the audiotaped interviews, as well as the recordings of them, were all done by me. This ensured that the inter-human relations that can be lost in the audiotaped data was not lost due to them being done by the same person. In addition, I transcribed the interviews shortly after they were conducted. Poland (1995) points out that an awareness of the transcription being an interpretative activity and not just a direct translation of the recordings as crucial for the researcher. There are several factors that can affect the credibility of the data, and Halcomb & Davidson (2006) points out language, cultural differences, class and misinterpretation of content as some human errors that can occur during interpretation. By using recordings, you get an additional layer of complexity as bad audio quality or incorrectly transcribing what you have heard can affect the results (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). It was therefore important for me to first listen to the recordings, before transcribing and then listening to it again while looking over the transcriptions.

### **3.6.3 Ethical considerations**

This project has been approved by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD) (see Appendix 5), and the data collected in this project has been handled and stored per the guidelines set by the NSD. Further, all participants have given their consent to participate in the study and been given the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any given time. They were given my contact information, and before the interviews were conducted I once more emphasized that participation was voluntarily.

The students who participated in this study were all over fifteen years old, being the age limit set by NSD for giving consent to participate in studies. Due to the non-sensitive nature of this study, there was no need for parents' consent for their children to participate.

An important ethical aspect has been anonymity. None of the information gathered during the data collection can directly identify the participants, and the information that could indirectly identify participants has been categorized roughly enough to ensure the participants' anonymity.

### **3.6.4 Limitations**

Both students and teachers were asked of use of competence aims and assessment criteria in the specific assessment situation. However, I did not ask the teachers for the assessment criteria, as I am not looking into an operationalization of the assessment criteria, rather than having both students and teachers reflect around them.

I have conducted five teacher interviews and fifteen student interviews by following the same interview guide for each group of informants. However, given the structure of the interview guide and the *investigative* and *exploratory* nature of this study, some participants have not been asked the exact same questions in the exact same manner. At times, the interviewee has said something of interest that has been explored further causing the interview guide to not have been followed in the same manner as intended. This investigative or exploratory aspect made me choose the semi-structured interview research design, as it would allow me to do exactly this. Some students did not comment on aspects of the questions asked and did therefore not report on the question, although I tried to ensure that I got the data needed.

Lastly, I will comment on generalizability in connection to my study. In qualitative studies, providing rich data exploring a human phenomenon is the goal, rather than generalization (Polit & Beck, 2010). Although similarities were found between and within both teacher and students, this cannot be seen transferable to other teachers and students in other schools. But, the results imply that there are some similarities that can be seen as applicable for other contexts, as similar results have been found with studies concerning teachers' understanding of constructs connected to the assessment of oral exams in English at the Vg1 level (Bøhn, 2016).

## 4 Results

This chapter will present the results of the present MA thesis. The results will be presented in two main parts; results from the teacher interviews (4.1) and results from the student interviews (4.2). Both main parts will first present the results regarding the assessment situation, from both the interviews with the teachers (4.1.1) and the students (4.2.1). Then, a section presenting the constructs used in the analysis of the results will be provided (4.1.2, 4.2.2) Within both main parts, the results will be presented in categories connected to these constructs, which emerged from the analysis of the data (4.1.3-4.1.7, 4.2.3-4.2.10). Lastly a summary of the results from both interviews will be provided (4.3) All parts will include a representation of the respondents' views, as well as extracts chosen to best illustrate the respondents' views from the interviews. The interviews were all conducted in Norwegian, and the translation of the extracts from the interviews has been done by me, and the original extracts are attached in Appendix 4. Both teachers and students are anonymized in the provided extracts.

The participants in this study, five teachers and 15 students, were presented with two specific competence aims under oral communication from the English subject curriculum. All interviews were conducted in Norwegian, and therefore the competence aims were presented to the participants in Norwegian. The two competence aims were:

- uttrykke seg på en nyansert og presis måte med god flyt og sammenheng, tilpasset formål og situasjon
- bruke mønstre for uttale, intonasjon, ordbøying og varierte setningstyper i kommunikasjon  
(KD, 2006, 2013: 10).

In this chapter I will refer to the competence aims and the elements within them in English, being:

- express oneself fluently and coherently in a detailed and precise manner suited to the purpose and situation
- use patterns for pronunciation, intonation, word inflection and various types of sentences in communication  
(KD, 2006, 2013: 10).

The teachers were presented with the competence aims at the beginning of the interviews and commented on how they assessed them in oral assessment situations. The students, on the other

hand, were not presented with the competence aims until after they had commented on their perception of their teacher's assessment related to a specific assessment situation.

## 4.1 Teachers' perceptions of oral competence

### 4.1.1 The assessment situation

All teachers were asked to provide information about *one* specific oral assessment situation the students had had in English, focusing on the design and how it was conducted. Four of the five teachers had chosen a group discussion (*fagsamtale*) as their design. Here, the students worked in groups and were given a task to solve collectively. Out of the four, Rick and Alex had a group discussion about a novel the students had read, Mary focused on a film they had seen, and Alice focused on the development of the English language. Kim chose to have an oral assessment situation where the students gave individual presentations about a novel of their own choice.

None of the teachers commented on *why* they had chosen the design they had, but Alice added that she liked group discussions as an assessment situation better than individual presentations. She also pointed to class size as a problem for conducting the group discussions.

*Alice: I wish I had more time for such group discussions, as you get very close to the students when having them.*

When asked if they had used specific competence aims or assessment criteria, Mary and Alice said they had used relevant competence aims focused on content and language, Rick connected the oral competence aims to rhetoric to make them more specific for the students, while Alex did not include competence aims specifically in the assessment description. Kim did not comment on it. As for the assessment criteria, Rick said he used an assessment chart divided into examples of low, intermediate and high achievement, and Mary said she used an assessment chart for both language and content. For Alice, the main goal was for the students to be able to maintain a conversation or discussion, and Alex had an emphasis on *how* they discussed the novel, with a specific focus on language. Kim expressed that her focus for the presentations, was for the students to be able to engage the listeners.

*Kim: The fact that they manage to, what do you say, communicate with the listeners. And that they do not just stand there and read out loud, as if they stood there with their backs towards the audience.*

#### 4.1.2 Constructs and elements of oral competence

When presented with the competence aims, all teachers commented and focused on elements within the two competence aims separately. Therefore, sub-constructs based on elements of assessment commented on by the teachers have been developed in relation to the main constructs. These sub-constructs will be presented thematically in the following sections (4.1.3-4.1.7).

**Table<sup>1</sup> 4.1:** A representation of the teachers' mentions of elements connected to constructs.

<b>Constructs</b>	<b>Element</b>	<b>Times mentioned (by <i>n</i> teacher)</b>
<b>Communication</b>	Appropriateness	9 (5)
	Fluency	5 (3)
	Avoiding breakdown	4 (4)
	Accuracy	2 (2)
	Coherence	1 (1)
	<b>Sum communication</b>	<b>21 (15)</b>
<b>Language</b>	Intonation	8 (5)
	Pronunciation	7 (4)
	Vocabulary	7 (4)
	Accent	3 (3)
	Grammar	3 (3)
	Varied sentence structure	1 (1)
	<b>Sum language</b>	<b>30 (20)</b>

**Note:** Times mentioned refers to the number of times a word or concept has been mentioned by the teachers in the interviews with the number of teachers mentioning it in parentheses.

Based on the number of teachers who commented on different elements, and number of times these elements were commented on, five sub-constructs have been created to represent the teacher results. The element *accent* has been presented in relation to *pronunciation* (4.1.3), as

<sup>1</sup> The layout of the table 4.1 and 4.2 is inspired by "Table 3" in Bøhn (2015).

the teachers commented on them in connection to each other. The same applies for *fluency* and *appropriateness* (4.1.7).

### 4.1.3 Pronunciation

Three of the teachers, Alice, Kim and Alex, commented on pronunciation. Whereas Alice and Alex commented on pronunciation specifically, Kim commented on it in relation to intonation as a unit. Alice was not so concerned with pronunciation, and did not expect her students to have a *native-like* pronunciation.

*Alice: I am not concerned with them having a very professional pronunciation, because how can you expect that. They have never lived abroad.*

Alex was concerned with the students' abilities to produce different sounds, and would give her students advice if they had difficulties pronouncing specific sounds, emphasising this as sometimes being key for intelligibility. By doing this, Alex was concerned with the phonological aspect of pronunciation, but also added that her goal was not for her students to speak a perfect British or American accent. Her goal is for them to be able to communicate and be intelligible.

*Alex: I will give students advice about sounds they struggle with. As this often can be the key for being understood. ... I have no goal that my students shall speak perfectly British or perfectly American. I have a goal of them being able to communicate in an understandable way.*

Lastly, Kim commented on pronunciation and intonation as a unit, stating that the main concern on her part was for the students to not have errors that make them unintelligible in communication.

*Kim: ... I am very concerned with there not being any errors causing the communication to break down.*

#### 4.1.4 Intonation

Intonation was commented on specifically by all five teachers. Mary and Alex said they would comment on it if one of their students spoke with a distinctive Norwegian-English intonation pattern.

*Mary: If it is really Norwegian-English, I can comment on it.*

*Alex: If they are very Norwegian and go up at the end of every sentence, then we have to work with that.*

Alice also commented on students speaking Norwegian-English, but did not see this as an issue. But, she added that she would comment on it if this caused breakdowns in communication.

*Alice: I am not so concerned with students speaking a little Norwegian-English. ... If there is not a complete stop in the communication, a breakdown.*

And the aspect of students' intonation being a possible reason for breakdown in communication was also mentioned by Rick and Kim.

*Rick: It just does not have to be a hinder for communication.*

*Kim: ... intonation is possibly where there easily can be a breakdown in communication if you speak too Norwegian-English, as Norwegian and English have so different intonation patterns.*

While Alex said she would comment on a student's intonation if it was an element disturbing the communication.

*Alex: So yes, I would comment on it if it is disturbing [the communication].*



### 4.1.5 Grammar

Three teachers, Mary, Rick and Alex, commented on word inflection as an element of assessment. Both Rick and Alex mentioned specific, common grammatical errors they would comment on if made by their students.

*Rick: Concord. Verbs are common, but also singular and plural forms that are used incorrectly in sentences.*

*Alex: The usual mistakes, you have concord, you have it and there, you have adverbials and adjectives.*

However, Alex added that she would only comment on it if the student consistently made the grammatical errors. The same applies for Mary, and she would comment on a student's grammatical errors if they affect the intelligibility in communication.

*Alex: And of course, if a student does it once I am like okay it is not a big deal. But, if it is consistent ... then I will comment on it.*

*Mary: In an oral assessment situation I am not as concerned with it. But, if you see that there are too many grammatical mistakes throughout that makes it hard to understand the student, the grade goes down.*

### 4.1.6 Vocabulary

Three of the teachers, Mary, Rick and Alice, pointed out that vocabulary was an important feature they looked for when they assessed whether or not a student expressed themselves in a detailed and precise manner.

*Mary: So, I think that in a nuanced and precise manner, it also has something to do with which word, which vocabulary they use... precise words in the right setting, context.*

*Rick: Nuanced, it has to be adjusted to the audience. So, they do not use too technical language.*

*Alice: It has to do with vocabulary of course, nuanced.*

On the other hand, Kim focused on the students' ability to use precise expressions, while Alex did not comment on anything connected to these features specifically.

*Kim: To use precise expressions, not too—bombastic expressions.*

Mary also commented students' use of transitional words for coherence, while this was not commented on by Alice, Rick or Kim specifically.

*Mary: It has to do with what words, what transitions, the coherence.*

Lastly, Rick, being the only teacher commenting on the use of varied sentence structures, said that he focused on variation in the students' sentence structures in an assessment situation.

*Rick: Various types of sentences. That they do not have a standard phrase they repeat every time they are given an assignment.*

#### **4.1.7 Fluency and appropriateness**

Two teachers, Rick and Alex, commented on fluency explicitly. Rick focused on fluent speech without too long pauses, while Alex expressed that the students' fluency in English was not to be expected better than in the students' mother tongue (L1).

*Rick: Fluency, that it goes without too long pauses for thought.*

*Alex: I do not expect the students to have better fluency in English than they have in Norwegian.*

Lastly, four of the teachers commented on what can be regarded as appropriateness to situation. Their answers differed as Rick emphasised that an understanding of the task showed that the students understood the purpose and situation, while Kim focused on the academic situation.

However, both Alice and Alex focused on the formality with an emphasis on the language or style used not being too informal.

*Alice: An oral assessment situation is less formal, but regardless of this that to get high achievement they have to be precise and have a nuanced vocabulary.*

*Alex: ... that it is not too informal.*

## **4.2 Students' perceptions of oral competence**

### **4.2.1 The assessment situation**

All 15 students were asked about their experience with the English subject and lessons at the Vg1 level, after having stated their age. One of the subsidiary questions focused on oral activity, and the students were asked if they regarded themselves as orally active in class. Out of the 15 students, nine said they were, two said they were not, and four said they sometimes were, or that it depended on the situation.

*SD3<sup>2</sup>: I would say that I am one of the more orally active in class.*

*SA3: It depends on the topic, but if I know the topic it might happen.*

*SC3: No. I am very little orally active because I generally do not like to speak in front of the class. I have never liked it, and especially not in English. So I choose not to answer.*

All students were asked about how they experienced the assessment situation, and if needed they were provided with information retrieved from their teacher to remind them of the specific assessment situation. The reason for asking the students specifically about a prior assessment situation was made as students had a difficulty providing answers to a general question about assessment of oral competence in the pilot study conducted in the Spring of 2017. Out of the 15 students, 12 of them had a group discussion, and ten of them reported on how they

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<sup>2</sup> All student participants have been anonymised by the use of an abbreviation, for instance *SD3*, illustrating that the student belongs to school D, and 3 referring to one of the students interviewed at this school. The students have been numbered randomly to ensure anonymity.

experienced it. Out of those ten, six reported that they had had a positive experience describing it as *better* or *fun*. Additionally, four students focused on the aspect of safety, and on it feeling safe. The three students (*SD*) who had an individual presentation focused on having had the presentation in front of two-thirds of the class, indicating that a smaller group might increase the feeling of safety.

*SB3: Yeah, I think it was a very good way of doing it, really. Surprising. The best way I have experienced this year.*

*SA2: It is very safe in groups, in that you can kind of lean on others.*

*SE3: I thought it was okay. ... if you can choose who you want to have the group discussion with, then have it with someone you feel comfortable with. Then I also believe it is easier to speak freely.*

*SD2: Yeah, you feel a little more, I don't know, safer.*

When asked how they believed the assessment situation went, 11 out of 15 students reported that they perceived the assessment of their performance to have been *good* or *okay*. Some students had not received their feedback and grade, but the question was directed at their perceived assessment and experience of the assessment situation, so this was not necessary in order to answer the question.

The students were asked about their teachers' use of competence aims and assessment criteria in this specific assessment situation. 14 of the 15 students answered this question, and some of the student replies indicated that what they referred to as competence aims in fact was assessment criteria. This was clarified after being asked whether they meant assessment criteria or competence aims as stated.

*INTW: So, was it in relation to competence aims that you were assessed?*

*SA1: We got some aims for what to do to get high achievement and that sort of things, so we did work with the competence aims.*

*INTW: So, was it more like assessment criteria then, or what?*

*SA1: Yes.*

*INTW: ... did your teacher use competence aims, or what?*

*SE3: We got a sheet of paper with like what we should know to the group discussion.*

...

*INTW: Yes. Was it assessment criteria then?*

*SE3: I believe so.*

Other replies expressed uncertainty in relation to their teachers' use of both competence aims and assessment criteria, but the students expressed a belief of it having been used.

*INTW: Yes. So were both competence aims and assessment criteria used, or what?*

*SD3: Yes, I would believe so. But, I am not really sure.*

*INTW: You said based on criteria, did your teacher use competence aims or assessment criteria?*

*SA2: Yes. I believe so, I remember, I I believe, I think she did most likely.*

Several responses were connected to the lack of use of competence aims, rather than answering that assessment criteria was used. There also seemed to be uncertainty around the competence aims and what they are.

*SB3: What are competence aims?*

*SE2: I don't think so. Well, we do not go through the competence aims that much. I never really think about the competence aims.*

*SB2: But I don't remember the competence aims.*

*INTW: No.*

*SB2: Well, it was not so important. It was more like how the assessment was.*

Lastly, the students were asked if the teacher had explained what was being assessed in the assessment situation prior to them having it. Five students said their teacher did not go through what was being assessed in the assessment situation. But, some of them added that they were

given the assessment criteria and competence aims on their online learning platform (it's learning) or on paper.

*SC3: No, but we got like on it's learning, we got a sheet with the different competence aims and what was expected to get low, high, intermediate.*

*SE3: No. I don't believe so. But I think like that I and those I had the group discussion with went through it and like checked that what we spoke about fitted what we had been told on the sheet.*

As with the teacher interview results, a table illustrating the different constructs and elements of assessment will be provided for the student interviews as well. Then, what follows is a thematic representation of the students' perceptions of what they believed was assessed by their teachers in the specific assessment situation (Theme 3, Appendix 3), as well as their responses connected directly to the competence aims and the perceptions they have of their teachers' assessment of them according to these (Theme 4, Appendix 3). Their responses have been categorised into sub-constructs with different elements connected to the three main constructs which emerged from the data analysis. In addition, a representation of the students' understanding of assessment of oral competence in connection to the competence aims will be represented as it emerged as an additional result in the analysis of the data.

#### **4.2.2 Constructs and elements of oral competence**

The students provided information about both their perceptions of assessment connected to their performance in the specific assessment situation, as well as commented on what they believed they were assessed on according to the two competence aims. In addition, one of the subsidiary questions regarding their understanding of the content in the competence aims proved necessary to explore the students' perceptions of assessment. The student replies will be presented in a table illustrating their responses according to the three emerging constructs with different elements of assessment. Then, the sub-constructs which emerged from the analysis will be presented in addition to the perceptions of assessment in relation to the specific assessment situation which only emerged from the student interview data analysis.

**Table 4.2:** A representation of the students' mentions of elements connected to both perceived assessment and assessment according to competence aims.

Construct	Element	Perceived	Stimulus-driven	Total times mentioned (by <i>n</i> student)
		Times mentioned (by <i>n</i> student)	Times mentioned (by <i>n</i> student)	
<b>Communication</b>	Fluency	6 (6)	26 (13)	32 (19)
	Accuracy	2 (2)	13 (8)	15 (10)
	Appropriateness	1 (1)	14 (9)	15 (10)
	Coherence	2 (2)	6 (4)	8 (6)
	Discussion	2 (2)	1 (1)	3 (3)
	Structure	2 (2)	1 (1)	3 (3)
	Speak freely	- (-)	3 (2)	3 (2)
	Clarity	- (-)	2 (2)	2 (2)
	<b>Sum communication</b>	<b>15 (15)</b>	<b>66 (40)</b>	<b>81 (55)</b>
<b>Content</b>	Topic knowledge	4 (4)	2 (2)	6 (6)
	Specific knowledge <sup>3</sup>	2 (2)	3 (3)	5 (5)
	Sources	1 (1)	- (-)	1 (1)
	<b>Sum sources</b>	<b>7 (7)</b>	<b>5 (5)</b>	<b>12 (12)</b>
<b>Language</b>	Pronunciation	9 (6)	16 (11)	25 (17)
	Intonation	4 (3)	16 (12)	20 (15)
	Grammar	5 (4)	15 (11)	20 (15)
	“English”	6 (6)	8 (6)	14 (12)
	Vocabulary	3 (2)	11 (7)	14 (9)
	Sentence structure	1 (1)	10 (8)	11 (9)
	<b>Sum language</b>	<b>28 (22)</b>	<b>76 (55)</b>	<b>104 (77)</b>

**Note:** The student data is presented in two different categories *perceived* and *stimulus-driven*. Times mentioned refers to the number of times a word or concept has been mentioned by the students in the interviews, with the number of students mentioning it in parentheses. The same representation has been used in the column illustrating the total amount of times a word or concept has been mentioned and the number of students mentioning it.

<sup>3</sup> Connected to either a novel or film being the objective of the assessment situation.

Based on the number of students who commented on different elements, and the times mentioned by the students in the interviews, seven sub-constructs connected to the three main constructs have been created to represent the student results. The first five sub-constructs presented are the same as in the teacher interviews. In contrast to the teacher interview results, *pronunciation* (4.2.3) is not connected to *accent*. The element of accent did not emerge as an element of assessment from the student data, and is therefore not included in the presentation of pronunciation as a sub-construct. However, *fluency* and *appropriateness* will be treated as one sub-construct as in the teacher interviews. The two additional sub-constructs that emerged from the student interview data analysis are *accuracy* (4.2.8) and “*English*” (4.2.9). *Content* was not a construct that emerged from the teacher interviews, and this likely has to do with the students being asked of their perceptions of assessment in the specific assessment situation without being presented with the competence aims. Lastly, some of the students’ perceptions of assessment according to competence aims will be presented (4.2.9).

### **4.2.3 Pronunciation**

12 of the 15 students viewed pronunciation as an element assessed in relation to oral competence. In their comments, the students did not elaborate on aspects of pronunciation, but only mentioned it as an element of assessment.

*SB1: So, it was pronunciation...*

*SD2: And of course pronunciation ...*

*SC2: Maybe like pronunciation and pronunciation of words. That you are able to pronounce all of the words correctly and stuff like that.*

Some of the students also expressed a need for *good* pronunciation, however, they did not elaborate on what *good pronunciation* is.

*SE2: Good pronunciation, I know that was emphasized in the assessment.*

*SB1: ... if you had good pronunciation.*



#### 4.2.4 Intonation

One student, *SD1*, commented on intonation as an element in connection with pronunciation, in addition to pointing out pace as an important language feature for assessment.

*SD1: So, if it is connected to language then it is intonation and pronunciation, and also how fast you speak...*

Additionally, 12 students commented on intonation as an element of assessment, and two of the student replies focused on Norwegian-English as something that should be avoided in communication.

*SA1: And intonation ..., that you speak kind of with the Norwegian intonation, but you are speaking English. You kind of have to have English intonation so you sound English.*

*SE1: ... that you don't speak like Norwegian-English, but English-English. Kind of. ... A lot of times when you speak English you get a Norwegian pronunciation in your English. And then it is more like very Norwegian, even though you are speaking English.*

Other student replies focused on a *fitting* and *proper* intonation, though not indicating any native language (L1) influence on the intonation.

*SD2: That you manage to pronounce the intonation, and that it comes naturally for you.*

The students commented on *intonation* as an element of assessment, but did not elaborate on their understanding of the element. In addition, three students commented on intonation, but in relation to not understanding what the element *is*, or its *meaning*.

*SA3: What is intonation?*

SC2: *And, I don't really understand exactly what that, what using patterns for pronunciation, intonation, word inflection and various types of sentences in communication, I don't understand exactly what that is, really.*

SE2: *I am not sure about what intonation means.*

#### **4.2.5 Grammar**

Out of the 15 students interviewed, 12 of them commented on grammar as being an element of assessment in connection to oral competence. The students' responses connected to grammar were general, and they focused on having grammatically correct language:

SA1: *... if you have any grammatical errors.*

The aspect commented on mostly within the concept of grammar was word inflection, and one student specified concord as being the objective of assessment.

SD3: *Are the words conjugated correctly.*

SC2: *That you have correct conjugation ...*

SB1: *He [the teacher] can hear if your verbs are conjugated correctly in relation to the nouns and stuff*

#### **4.2.6 Vocabulary**

In connection to vocabulary, eight different students responded that they viewed it as an element of assessment. Some of the students were concerned with vocabulary in terms of breadth.

SC2: *And maybe also vocabulary. How many words you know.*

SE2: *... and to have a wide vocabulary.*

SA2: *... that you have a broad vocabulary.*

SA3 commented on variation in connection to vocabulary, and believed the teacher was concerned with the students not using *few words*, and *repetition* of certain words.

SA3: *It was kind of like, that we should like use more words, and that you maybe used too few words or the same ones over and over again.*

In addition, some students emphasized correctness in relation to word choice.

SE1: *... to use correct words.*

#### **4.2.7 Fluency and appropriateness**

A total of 14 out of the 15 students regarded fluency and appropriation as something their teacher assessed in connection to oral competence. Two of the students were concerned with the fluency in what they were saying, not specifying *what* this fluency refers to.

SE3: *Had fluency.*

SA1: *... how the fluency is when you are speaking ...*

One student specifically perceived fluency and appropriation as important for intelligibility and the assessment made by the teacher.

SC3: *But, probably like if you manage to speak, like if you manage to say something in a way that is understandable and not go quiet.*

Three students commented, as SC3, on fluency and appropriation in connection to each other specifically.

SD3: *... saying it in an appropriate manner with fluency and stuff.*

SB1: *And that you yes, have a purpose, suited to the purpose and situation, and that you know what you are talking about and why you are talking about it.*

The student replies connected to fluency and appropriateness showed that students were mostly concerned with avoiding breakdown in communication.

*SC2: ... and maybe like if you stop, or if you manage to keep the fluency and stuff.*

*SB2: ... how often we had to stop to think ...*

*SE1: And that you like, that you don't get like a stop in there. That you kind of speak with fluency.*

*SA1: To have fluency is one thing, that you should not speak like choppy or maybe stop in the middle of a sentence and go like 'eeh' and stuff.*

*SC3: And she [the teacher] is very concerned with like the way we speak. Like our sentences kind of not just stopping, but that like you actually speak in complete sentences. ... she is very concerned with our speech and that we like speak English fluently and not so Norwegian-English.*

*SA3: ... there was a lot of 'eeh' as you don't come up with the words there and then, and therefore it became more, yes, that I should improve the fluency in my language at least.*

*SA2: ... that you manage to speak freely and kind of have good fluency in your language ...*

As illustrated by the interview extracts, the students viewed maintaining communication through fluency in different ways. They indicate that *fluency* is connected either to a lack of preparation (the need to stop and think), inadequate vocabulary, native language (L1) influence and proper sentence structure.

#### 4.2.8 Accuracy

Accuracy is the first of two sub-constructs which only emerged in the student interviews. Nine students were concerned with accuracy, and saw this as an element of assessment when it comes to oral competence. Their responses showed that the students were concerned with correctness and precision.

*SA1: ... if how, if you like, what you are talking about is correct and good ...*

*SD3: ... yes, listen to what we say and then assess in relation to it being correct or not.*

*SE1: That you like talk about exactly that and don't move on to something else, maybe.*

#### 4.2.9 “English”

The second sub-construct which emerged from the student data analysis, is “English”. This category refers to the responses made by students connected to *language* or *English*, in relation to how good it was or how much knowledge you had of it. Out of the 15 students interviewed, 10 commented on the sub-construct as an element of assessment in connection to oral competence.

*SA3: ... were assessed quite a lot on language ...*

*SC1: And, there is probably a focus on English. How much English you know.*

*SA1: And, yes, like how your English is ...*

Some of the students also focused on abilities and correctness in connection to *language* and *English*.

*SB3: ... probably how well you spoke English ...*

*SD2: Here it is probably if you are able to use your language well, I reckon.*

*SD3: ... that you like speak proper English ...*

*SE1: Correct language.*

#### **4.2.10 Perception of assessment**

A subsidiary question asked to make the students reflect around their perceptions of teachers' assessment practices was asked at the end of the interviews. Six students responded that they believed their teachers to assess these competence aims by listening and paying attention, not connecting it to the elements within the competence aims which they perceived as elements of assessment.

*SA1: Well, you hear it.*

*INTW: Hear it?*

*SA1: Yes, or like in a group discussion the teacher is sitting there listening. And then you can see quite clearly, if you are skilled, then you will see quite easily what needs to be worked with or what is good, yes, that is what teachers are supposed to do.*

Two students connected their perceptions of what teachers assess directly to the competence aims. Here, *SD2*, perceived the second competence aim as connected to having *good enough English*.

*SD2: And the bottom one is like if you manage to speak or I don't know have good enough English to know the things you should when you know a language.*

*INTW: So, good enough English in connection to what?*

*SD2: In connection to what you should have. But, that is not stated here. It only states that you should use it.*

*INTW: Do you believe it is easy to assess that competence aim?*

*SD2: No. I don't think do. I actually think it can be quite hard. Because you do not know what is good, or you know what good pronunciation is, but maybe not how good pronunciation you need for it to be top grade or low or, yes.*

SE2, on the other hand, thought teachers focused on specific and important elements from both competence aims, implying that not all elements were assessed.

*SE2: ... I don't know if they were concerned with expressing oneself in a precise and detailed manner, but they focused a lot on the flow and context. And, they were very concerned with patterns for pronunciation. Or not very, but okay.*

*INTW: In what way?*

*SE2: It was, you were told afterwards that you might get a lower grade if you had incorrect pronunciation, so.*

*INTW: Like pronunciation of words?*

*SE2: Pronunciation yes, with words. But, I don't really understand patterns for pronunciation.*

Lastly, one student commented on specific elements within the competence aims and his perception of how a teacher assessed them. But, as for grading he expressed difficulty understanding a teacher's grading, as he is a student and cannot know how a teacher sets a grade. Although he clarified that based on the notes the teacher makes during an oral assessment situation connected to the assessment criteria, is how the teacher sets the grade.

*SC1: I don't know how she grades, it is quite hard for me to say when I am a student. ... She writes down what everything I, she looks at these, and then writes down yes he had good pronunciation and word inflection, and then later she looks at it and grades it.*

### **4.3 A summary of the results of both teacher and student interviews**

Four of the five teachers chose a group discussion as their assessment design, while one teacher chose an individual presentation. The students who had a group discussion expressed that they experienced the assessment situation positively, and that it felt safe to have the oral assessment situation in groups. In addition, the students expressed uncertainty as to the difference between competence aims and assessment criteria, as well as of some of the sub-constructs included in them. Overall, the teachers and students results showed that their main concern in relation to oral competence was avoiding breakdown in communication. However, how breakdowns in communication can occur differs based on the teachers' and students' perceptions. The teachers mention it specifically, while the students connect it to fluency, as defined in the broad sense (Lennon, 1990). Both teachers and students view pronunciation, intonation and fluency and appropriateness as the three most important aspects of oral communication. The teachers are not concerned with nativeness in relation to pronunciation, as they view intelligibility as most important in connection to pronunciation. However, four of the teachers are concerned with an avoidance of Norwegian-accented English and L1 influence in relation to intonation, as they view it as a threat to intelligibility. The students, on the other hand, are concerned with "good presentation" and seem unsure as to what intonation is or refers to, although viewing it as important. Fluency and appropriateness was the most commented on aspect in total. The teachers emphasise avoidance of long pauses for thought and not to expect better fluency in English than Norwegian, as well as a degree of formality. While the students view fluency as connected to sub-constructs as vocabulary and grammar, as well as L1 influence and the occurrence of pauses.



# 5 Discussion

In this chapter, the results from the teacher and student interviews will be discussed in relation to previous research and in light of the theoretical background for this thesis. First, the competence aims will be discussed in light of the student replies, as they indicate a lack of knowledge as to what they are and what they mean (5.1). Second, an emphasis will be put on the importance expressed by both teachers and students concerning avoiding breakdown in communication (5.2). Within this section two of the most commented on aspects of oral competence; pronunciation and intonation, will be discussed as teachers and students perceive these aspects differently and as aspects important in relation to oral competence (5.2.1). Lastly, fluency will be presented (5.3). It will be discussed in both a broad and narrow sense (5.3.1), before discussing the occurrence of pauses and hesitations in communication (5.3.2). Due to the nature of the assessment situation most of the students had had, a group discussion, a section on interactional fluency will be included in this section (5.3.3) in addition to a section discussing the relationship between L1 and L2 fluency (5.3.4). Throughout the discussion an emphasis will be put on the need for a common understanding of aspects of oral competence, as this has implications for both instruction and assessment of oral competence.

## 5.1 Competence aims versus assessment criteria

As an English teacher in Norway, you have to follow the national English subject curriculum created by the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research to ensure that your student have received training in the main subject areas and are able to perform according to the competence aims. In this current thesis, two specific competence aims under oral communication in the curriculum were presented to all participants in the study. The teachers were known with the competence aims as these are the basis for what is being taught in the classroom, but it was interesting to see what the students replied when asked about the use and understanding of competence aims.

What was discovered during the interviews was that some students expressed uncertainty as to what competence aims were when asked if their teacher had used them for the specific assessment situation. Some students clearly mixed what they believe to be competence aims with assessment criteria, as they described levels of achievement being used for the assessment

situation and not the competence aims which are “enable the student to”-descriptors (KD, 2006, 2013). In addition, one student expressed that the competence aim was not so important for assessment. This indicates that the students find the assessment criteria developed by their teachers as more important in an assessment situation and easier to relate to. Although this study did not look at the different assessment criteria used in the different assessment situations the students had had this autumn, their answers on how and what they believed to have been assessed indicate that teachers develop criteria based on what they believe is important or focused on in the specific assessment situation. In addition, three students expressed difficulty understanding what the second competence aim “use patterns for pronunciation, intonation, word inflection and various types of sentences in communication” (KD, 2006, 2013) meant. What they found most difficult to understand was what intonation referred to in relation to oral competence and communication. When commenting on the different aspects included in the competence aims, the students repeated the phrasings and terms used in the competence aims, without elaborating on their understanding of, or explaining these aspects. This indicates that the students might lack knowledge or understanding of what the aspects included in them refer to.

If students are not sure as to what competence aims are or the aspects described in them, there is reason to believe that they do not serve the purpose they are supposed to for the students. As a teacher you work with the curriculum and the competence aims, but develop your own assessment criteria. The teachers all broke down the competence aims into separate elements, indicating that each competence aim encompasses several aspects of oral competence which is assessed separately by teachers. When students find assessment criteria easier to relate to, and as most important in the assessment process leading up to their final mark, this indicates that the competence aims are now viewed as equally important by students. However, they relate to their teacher’s interpretation of these, as presented through the formulated assessment criteria.

As there are no guidelines provided for the assessment of oral competence based on the aspects included in the competence aims, it is up to the teacher to define what these aspects mean and refer to, and consequently what to look for in the assessment of them. With students finding the competence aims hard to understand, this might indicate that words and phrases used are not directed at the students, but rather at the teacher. Previous research competence has suggested a need for guidelines made available to teachers in assessment of oral competence

(Borch-Nielsen, 2014; Bøhn, 2016; Yildiz, 2011). The findings of the present thesis support the need for guidelines as students find it hard to understand exactly what teachers assess. By providing teachers with guidelines connected to the assessment of oral competence, it might be easier to communicate to students what aspects of oral competence refer to and how these are assessed. As well as making it easier for the teachers to make sure that the validity and reliability of assessment is enhanced and, that assessment is conducted based on the same criteria across the country.

## **5.2 Avoiding breakdown in communication**

The results from the teacher and student interviews showed that what they were most concerned with was avoiding breakdown in communication. In the teacher interviews four of the five teachers commented on this specifically, not connecting it to other sub-constructs of language or communication, indicating that their main goal of instruction to be intelligibility. The influence of CEFR (2001) as seen through the emphasis on communicative competence in the English subject curriculum (KD, 2006, 2013) reflects the emphasis put on avoiding breakdown in communication by the participants in this thesis.

Based on the analysis, three sub-constructs proved to be the ones both teachers and students were concerned with in connection to oral competence. These three sub-constructs were pronunciation, intonation and fluency. All three aspects are included in the competence aims, but of all aspects included they were overall viewed as the most important aspects of oral competence by both teachers and students. Although being emphasised as important aspects of oral competence and as possible threats causing breakdown in communication, the way in which they were perceived differed according to teachers and students. In connection to pronunciation, the teachers were concerned with intelligibility and the students with “good pronunciation”. Intonation, on the other hand, was seen as most likely to cause breakdowns in communication by the teachers, while the students seemed unsure of what it was but viewed it as important. In total, fluency was by far the most commented on aspect of oral competence. This illustrates the importance of fluency in communication, and show that both groups were concerned with fluency, as a lack of it might cause breakdowns in communication. While the following section will give an account of pronunciation (5.2.1) and intonation (5.2.2), fluency will be discussed in section 5.3.

In relation to intonation, most of the teachers perceived Norwegian-accented English as a possible threat to intelligibility, and hence a possible reason for breakdown in communication. The students, on the other hand, commented on intonation as an aspect of oral competence without connecting it specifically to L1 influence, with the exception of one student.

### **5.2.1 Pronunciation**

The teachers had different perceptions concerning pronunciation as an aspect of oral competence in relation to assessment, although emphasising the aspect of intelligibility in communication. When commenting on pronunciation the teachers connected it to accent, claiming that a native variety was not needed nor expected from the students. One of the teachers pointed to helping students struggling with different phonemes at this sometimes is key for intelligibility in communication. The teachers can be said to connect the aspect of pronunciation to both intelligibility and nativeness, viewing intelligibility as important, and nativeness as not necessary. The students also perceived pronunciation as an aspect of oral competence important for communication in English. As opposed to the teachers, the students did not explicitly mention accent in relation to pronunciation, hence not addressing the notion of nativeness in connection to pronunciation. What the students were concerned with was “good pronunciation”, but they did not elaborate on what this referred to. That the teachers view intelligible pronunciation as a necessary aspect of oral competence is in line with previous research on pronunciation (Afshari & Ketabi, 2016). And this is in line with the recent findings of Bøhn (2016) where teachers agreed on intelligibility being important in oral communication in English.

The teachers seem to be oriented towards an ELF language learning paradigm (Seidlhofer, 2001) emphasising intelligible pronunciation in communication as important, and nativeness as an unnecessary criterion. With the English subject curriculum not mentioning any L2 target accent(s), it is not surprising that teachers emphasise intelligibility if they are oriented towards the ELF paradigm. One teacher emphasised that segmentals might be the key to intelligibility in relation to pronunciation, something that is in line with the core features of Jenkins’ (2000) proposed LFC to enhance intelligibility in communication. Out of five core elements listed by Jenkins, four are concerned with segmentals proving that these might cause breakdown in communication if pronounced incorrectly. This is also what was proposed by Iannuzzi and Rindal (2018) as a possible interpretation of the English subject curriculum’s phrasing

“patterns of pronunciation” (KD, 2006, 2013) within an ELF paradigm. Norway is a high proficiency country (Education First, 2016), and is regarded as having intelligible pronunciation (Iannuzzi, 2017); it is therefore not reasonable that students should be expected to reach native speaker targets. Furthermore, taking into account the various native varieties in use it is difficult to define exactly what, or who, the native speaker model refers to (Seidlhofer, 2011; Rindal 2013). The LFC was not intended as a model of ELF pronunciation, but can be looked to as a possible resource for enhancing intelligible pronunciation instruction by teachers.

As accent is a feature of pronunciation it is often mentioned in relation to pronunciation. What is quite interesting is that none of the students mentioned accent when presented with the competence aims and asked about important aspects of oral competence. However, one student mentioned accent specifically, but in relation to oral activity in class. When asked if he was orally active, the student replied that he was, but when asked if he was comfortable being so he replied:

*SB2: Not really. I usually put on a like British, I pretend that I am Sherlock Holmes and then I can speak English because I am kind of acting.*

This is interesting as the student is expressing that he needs to “play a part” when speaking English in the classroom. Language, and accent specifically, is closely related to identity (Norton, 2010), and while some students do not want to aim for a native accent but a *neutral* accent (Rindal, 2013), this student expresses putting on an identity in order to express himself in English. However, he did not emphasise accent as an aspect important for oral competence, indicating that this is a personal, rather than a criteria-based, choice. Further, Rindal (2013) found that adolescents evaluate accents of English socially, and that they attribute accents with characteristics and degree of attractiveness, also when appropriated by peers. While the competence aims did not trigger the notion of accent, research has found that students believe their teachers to expect a native-like accent (Hopland, 2016). This suggests that there might be ideologies in the classroom, as native speakers targets might be used for the teaching of pronunciation (Hopland, 2016). Previous research has shown that students do have a perception of accents of English as being connected to pronunciation (Rindal, 2013), and what is interesting is that the competence aims do not trigger this feature of pronunciation in students when asked about pronunciation and oral competence.

As addressed in previous studies (Borch-Nielsen, 2014; Bøhn, 2016; Iannuzzi, 2017; Rindal, 2013; Yildiz, 2011) there is a need for guidelines developed concerning the oral communication, and hence oral competence. When teachers are left with the responsibility of interpreting the competence aims to formulate assessment criteria for their students, there is a chance of teachers interpreting them differently based on their understanding of aspects of oral competence as reflected in different language learning paradigms. With students expressing that they value assessment criteria over competence aims, in addition to finding competence aims hard to understand or lacking knowledge as to what they are, the need for guidelines becomes apparent. If what the students wish to become are fluent bilingual speakers of English who are able to come across as intelligible in communication with other speakers of English (Rindal & Piercy, 2013), the guidelines can be developed with the local language needs in mind (Dürmüller, 2008) in connection to pronunciation in Norway.

### **5.2.2 Intonation**

Although not being concerned with a native-like accent in connection to pronunciation, the teachers all clearly express that a heavily Norwegian-English intonation should be avoided in communication. They pointed out that this was most likely what caused breakdown in communication, or what made the students unintelligible in communication. So, while the teachers do not demand that their students have a native-like pronunciation, they do wish for them to avoid a Norwegian-influenced intonation. While not expressing a need for *nativeness*, the teachers are also expressing a wish for limited L1 interference in the students' production of speech. The teachers in Bøhn's (2016) study connected intelligibility and nativeness to segmentals, word stress and sentence stress, being unsure of the relevance of intonation or finding it to be less important (Bøhn, 2016). If this is the case, the findings in this thesis contradict the findings in Bøhn (2016), as the teachers specifically single out intonation as a threat to intelligibility if too influenced by the students' L1. However, the phrasing in the curriculum "use patterns for pronunciation, intonation" can be read as pronunciation referring to segmentals only, while intonation has been regarded as important for oral competence, and hence been included as a separate language feature. Or, there is a possibility of the phrasing referring to pronunciation, specifying intonation as a part of the feature of pronunciation. If the latter is the way in which the teachers in this present thesis have interpreted the aspects of pronunciation, the findings are in line with Bøhn (2016) indicating that they are oriented

towards intelligibility, but not able to dismiss nativeness as they wish for a limited L1 interference in their students' speech production.

A recent study by Haukland (2016) exploring attitudes towards Norwegian-accented English by Norwegian, non-Norwegian listeners, found that Norwegian-accented English is regarded as highly intelligible by non-Norwegian speakers of English. In fact, Norwegians themselves are those having the most negative attitude towards Norwegian-accented English. Then, if the teachers have intelligibility as the goal of communication, a strong Norwegian intonation does not pose as a threat in terms of intelligible communication. The teachers in Bøhn's (2016) study found intonation to either be something they were not so concerned with or expressed that they were unsure of its relevance in connection to oral competence. This contradicts the findings within the teacher group of this present study where all five teachers commented on intonation, and the majority of them on intonation as what most likely causes communication to break down.

If we look to the English subject curriculum, the Norwegian passage on pronunciation and intonation under *Basic skills, Oral communication* it is written as follows: "Det omfatter også å bruke tydelig uttale og intonasjon", whereas the English translation reads: "It also covers to speak clearly and to use the correct intonation" (KD, 2006, 2013: 2). The main difference between these two phrases is the use of the adjective *correct*. What this *correct* refers to in terms of intonation is unclear as it is not stated explicitly or explained in the curriculum as there is no standard for intonation in the English subject curriculum. CEFR (2001) describes a speaker's intonation at a C2 level as someone who can vary their use of intonation to place stress in order to express finer shades of meaning. While an independent user, as Norwegian students are expected to be at the end of their training in English, should have acquired a *natural* intonation (see table 2.2).

The research on suprasegmentals and its importance for intelligibility is less conclusive than research on segmentals as features of pronunciation. But its importance for intelligibility has been argued to be both necessary and not necessary (Jenkins, 2000; Field, 2005). With students expressed uncertainty as to what intonation is, and what the term refers to, this indicates that they have not been made aware of what it is, or do not find it to be important as an aspect of oral competence. Only two students commented on the aspect of intonation in relation to

Norwegian-accented English, indicating that Norwegian-accented English is not “English-English”.

*SA1: And intonation ..., that you speak kind of with the Norwegian intonation, but you are speaking English. You kind of have to ha English intonation so you sound English.*

*SE1: ... that you don't speak like Norwegian-English, but English-English. Kind of. ... A lot of times when you speak English you get a Norwegian pronunciation in your English. And then it is more like very Norwegian, even though you are speaking English.*

This shows that they have an idea of what intonation is, and refers to, but that they perceive Norwegian-accented English as something negative and wants to avoid it in English. The two student utterances specifically referring to Norwegian-accented English are in line with the findings in Haukland (2016) where Norwegians viewed Norwegian-accented English more negatively than non-Norwegians. But, if students are oriented towards intelligibility, they should be informed that Norwegian-accented English is as intelligible as less Norwegian-accented English perceived as by non-Norwegians in communication (Haukland, 2016).

### **5.3 Fluency as a feature of oral competence**

In the analysis fluency was grouped with appropriateness as the participants commented on them together, especially in the student interviews. Only two teachers commented specifically on fluency, while all five commented on appropriateness emphasising a degree of formality in the assessment situation. The students, on the other hand, were concerned with speaking in “an appropriate manner” and “suited to the purpose and situation” with fluency. As a descriptor of spoken fluency, CEFR (2001) emphasises the use of appropriate examples and explanations as a proficient user criterion, indicating that the participants perceptions are in line with this policy document. Fluency, in this discussion, encompasses both fluency and appropriateness.



### **5.3.1 Broad and narrow fluency**

As an aspect of spoken language, fluency has been defined in different ways, namely the broad and the narrow sense (Lennon, 1990). In the English subject curriculum fluency is referred to as being able to “express oneself fluently” (KD, 2006, 2013), but there is no guidance on which definition to follow, leaving teachers with the responsibility of interpreting how it should be defined and applied in teaching and assessment. As it is placed in relation to other aspects as coherence and precision, this can indicate that fluency is referred to as a separate language component, hence being defined in the narrow sense (Lennon, 1990), in line with CEFR’s definition (2001). Due to the different definitions found of fluency, teachers might need to interpret what they believe fluency in oral competence and in the English subject curriculum refer to. It is in this narrow sense the teachers comment on fluency, as they refer to the occurrence of pauses, and speech habits in relation to the student’s L1. Therefore, they are concerned with fluency as a language component, given that they do not connect it to other language features. Interestingly, the students view fluency in both a broad and narrow sense. They are also concerned with the occurrence of pauses and being able to communicate *fluently* with appropriateness to the situation, but also view vocabulary, L1 interference and sentence structure as possible threats causing dysfluency, and hence breakdown in communication.

### **5.3.2 Pauses and hesitation**

As fluency cannot be observed directly in students, it is operationalized through the occurrence of hesitation, pauses and false starts (Brown, et al., 2005). Research shows that pauses and hesitation are often commented on in relation to fluency (Brown, 2007; Borger, 2014; De Jong et al., 2015; Derwing et. al, 2004), and raters might judge the occurrence of them to be a sign of shortcomings in their production of L2 speech (Ginther et al., 2010). The CEFR (2001) describes spoken fluency at a C2 level as a person who “*Can express him/herself at length with a natural, effortless, unhesitating flow. Pauses only to reflect on precisely the right words to express his/her thoughts or to find an appropriate example or explanation*” (2001: 129). This shows that the use of pauses might indicate a wish to communicate the content in a more precise way, and hence not all pauses can be presumed to indicate non-mastery (Brown, 2007).

However, Derwing et al. (2004) found that speech characterised as disruptive by listeners, whether produced by an L1 or an L2 speaker, may lead to a lack of attention. In worst case, this may potentially lead to a breakdown in communication. This reflects the students’ concerns

about being perceived as dysfluent in their own speech production. Research shows that more fluent speech production is easier to attend to, and as it is not interspersed with hesitation and pauses listeners will get the impression of increased intelligibility (Derwing et al., 2004). On the other hand, research suggests that it is necessary to have pauses in speech (Lennon, 1990), and that it gives the interlocutor or listener time to process what is being said, as well as for the speaker to organize his or her thoughts (Hilton, 2008). This is in line with the description of spoken fluency found in the CEFR (2001).

### **5.3.3 Interactional fluency**

However, the fluency observed in a group discussion is referred to as interactional fluency, and pauses in a group discussion might indicate that the student wants someone else to talk. Interestingly, interactional fluency of the group discussion was not mentioned explicitly by the teachers who used a group discussion as their form of assessment. Four of the five teachers chose a group discussion as their form of assessment situation to assess oral competence. Here, the students are supposed to speak freely and maintain a conversation around a given topic they have worked with beforehand. The 12 students who had a group discussion experienced this oral assessment situation positively, and felt that it went *good* or *okay*. When asked of their perceptions of aspects of oral competence both teachers and students mentioned fluency, but the aspect of interactional fluency or something similar to it was not touched upon in the interview although the assessment situation was focused around interaction.

When communicating and interacting with others, there is a shared responsibility on the interlocutors to fill silences and what can best be described as uncomfortable long pauses (McCarthy, 2010), and it is argued that this responsibility can be manifested in turn-taking. The student responses directed at fluency was focused on their own ability to produce *fluent* speech, rather than using *natural* flow in interaction within the group discussion. It is hard to say whether or not the teachers had interaction as an objective in the assessment situation, but if it was not listed as a criterion this might indicate why neither the teachers nor students commented on it. However, given the nature of fluency, a student who is able to produce natural fluent speech as well as being able to indicate turn-taking by the use of pauses, or to propose invitation in communication, can be perceived as a fluent user of the language.

In fact, pauses are perceived differently by raters in connection to a speaker's fluency when performed individually and in interaction (Sato, 2014). Sato (2014) agrees with McCarthy (2010) claiming that interactional fluency is best conceptualized as a joint performance made by the speakers in interaction. Research on interactional fluency suggests that it might be "fundamentally different" (Sato, 2014: 88) from that of individual fluency. With teachers and students being concerned with the individual speaker's fluency, they seem to not be concerned with interactional fluency, and hence assessment might be done according to criteria not meeting the performance of the students in the group.

### **5.3.4 L1 fluency versus L2 fluency**

Another interesting aspect of fluency arose in the teacher interview, as one teacher emphasised that she did not expect her students to have better fluency in English, than in Norwegian. Research shows that there is an interest in looking at the relationship between fluency in an L1 and L2 (De Jong et al. 2015; Derwing et al., 2004; Ejzenberg, 2000; Hasselgreen, 2004). Derwing et al. (2004) did not see this relationship as a straightforward issue, and they emphasised that a student has a high proficiency connected to fluency in an L1 might not experience the same proficiency in the L2. Therefore, it cannot be expected that a student who is very proficient when it comes to fluency in Norwegian will experience the same degree of fluency in English. However, it can be useful to keep in mind the transfer of speech habits, as speakers being an "uhm"-er in an L1, potentially can be an "uhm"-er in an L2 (De Jong et al. 2015).

To the best of my knowledge, the research on fluency in L1 versus L2 in connection to assessment of aspects connected to oral competence is unexplored. The students in the present study did express that they believed the occurrence of pauses, searching for precise vocabulary and hesitation was perceived by teachers as breakdowns in communication. With a majority of English teachers in the Norwegian ELT context being Norwegian, non-native speakers are rating non-native speakers on the aspect of fluency. Ejzenberg (2000) suggested that learners of an L2 most likely will be perceived as more fluent when interacting with a native speaker as they will be able to scaffold on the speech production of their interlocutor. Further, Ejzenberg (2000) argued that when given monologic tasks, the fluency of the speaker will be negatively affected due to cognitive demands put on the speaker by the nature of the task. This then, indicates that fluency might be perceived as lower when being assessed in an individual

presentation, and that interaction with native speakers will help the speaker increase, at least, their perceived fluency. A dialogue-based assessment situation, as a group discussion, would then potentially help students acquire a higher level of spoken fluency as they might be able to scaffold on their interlocutor's speech production. However, when using an assessment design where interactional fluency is the objective, both teachers and students need to be aware of how to achieve fluency in these situations as well as taking the individual speakers speech habits into account.

This chapter has discussed the results from both teacher and student interviews in light of theory and previous research in order to show how oral competence is perceived. The discussion shows how the teacher and student perceptions form sub-constructs related to oral competence that are assessed on the Vg1 level, but that there is variation in the perceptions of certain aspects of oral competence and that there is some uncertainty among students of what some of these aspects actually refer to. The next chapter concludes this study by answering the research question and presenting implications for the teaching and assessment of English and suggestions for further research.

## 6 Conclusion

The present thesis has investigated teachers' and students' perceptions of oral competence at the Vg1 level in English, by interviewing five teachers and 15 students. By using assessment as context and competence aims as stimulus, both teachers and students provided rich descriptions of their perceptions of aspects of oral competence and the importance of them. The analysis of the data found the teachers and students to emphasise the same aspects of oral competence, though in different ways. The interview data was used to answer the research question of this thesis being:

*How do teachers and students perceive aspects of oral competence in English at the Vg1 level?*

In this section I will conclude on the basis of the results from the present thesis, and present implications for both the teaching and assessment of oral competence in English (6.1). Lastly, further research will be suggested (6.2), as well as concluding remarks (6.3).

The present thesis found that there was variation in the perceptions of oral competence of teachers and students; they agreed on the importance of avoiding breakdown in communication, but varied in their perceptions on how to avoid this. Teachers and students perceived the operationalization of aspects of oral competence differently, and in line with previous research (Borch-Nielsen, 2014; Bøhn, 2016; Rindal, 2013; Yildiz, 2011), the present thesis supports the need for guidelines connected to oral competence in English.

Some of the variation in perceptions consisted of differences in relation to the intelligibility principle and the nativeness principle, reflected in traces of two language learning paradigms in the English subject curriculum. The teachers emphasise intelligibility as important in relation to oral competence, but cannot seem to dismiss the notion of nativeness altogether, as in Bøhn (2016). Interestingly, none of the students mentioned accent in connection with pronunciation, although previous research has shown that students are aware of and concerned with accent (Hopland, 2016; Rindal, 2013). This might indicate that the idea of a native-like accent being important for oral competence might not be triggered by competence aims, suggesting instead the presence of language ideologies in the English classroom.

With regards to intonation, the teachers express that they wish for their students to have limited L1 interference as this might make them unintelligible or cause breakdowns in communication. The students, however, were unsure of what intonation is and refers to, although being aware of it as a criterion used in assessment by their teachers. Recent studies have shown that Norwegian-accented English is intelligible for both Norwegians and non-Norwegians (Haukland, 2016), suggesting that intonation as a criterion in a context where intelligibility is the main goal of instruction is not fruitful for learners, and hence not as important in assessment.

Lastly, both teachers and students view fluency and appropriateness as important, but perceive it in different ways. With students perceiving fluency in two different ways, they might end up unsure in assessment situations as they believe *mistakes* or *errors* connected to other language features disrupt their fluency. Additionally, as four of the five teachers had conducted a group discussion, the nature of the assessment situation brought up the notion of interactional fluency, which is regarded as “fundamentally different” (Sato, 2014) from individual fluency, although none of the participants commented on this, or something similar to it, as a criterion in relation to fluency in interaction. It is therefore important that teachers and students are made aware of the difference as instruction should be focused around dialogue-based tasks when this assessment situation is chosen.

## **6.1 Implications for teaching and assessment**

The results from this thesis supports the need for guidelines in relation to oral competence and assessment of it, as emphasised in Borch-Nielsen (2014), Bøhn (2016) and Yildiz (2011). While the teachers’ perceptions of the different aspects of oral competence to a certain degree show agreement, their perceptions of the aspects show variation in relation to the findings in Bøhn (2016). It is therefore reason to believe that teachers interpret the aspects of oral competence differently, proving the need for Norwegian educational authorities to supply teachers with a set of guidelines in terms of assessment of oral competence. What makes this need more apparent is the fact that students express a preference for assessment criteria over competence aims. When the students in fact are the ones we are supposed to assess, there is a need for guidelines made available for students in order to have them understand what is being assessed.

What these guidelines also could offer, is explanations and definitions of the aspects included in them. Exactly what does pronunciation, intonation and fluency refer to? With today's competence aims, little guidance is given as to what they refer to, and with the status of English in Norway being *in transition*, the interpretation made by teachers can be influenced by the language learning paradigm followed. If intelligibility is the main goal of instruction, teachers need to be made aware of ways of teaching oral competence that promotes intelligibility, as with the lingua franca core defined by Jenkins (2000) and proposed by Iannuzzi & Rindal (2018) as a possible model for intelligible L2 pronunciation. In addition, information about how a recent study by Haukland (2016) found Norwegian-accented English to be intelligible could be communicated to both teachers and students, as this research suggests that intonation does not seem to interfere with understanding in communication. Lastly, there is a need for clear guidelines defining what fluency *is* and *refers to*, so that instruction actively helping students acquire fluency in an L2 is made available to teachers. With the relationship of fluency in L1 and L2 not being as straightforward as assumed (Derwing et. al, 2004), it could prove fruitful for teachers of Norwegian and teachers of English to have a dialogue regarding students' speech habits making the assessment of the students' ability to produce a natural flow, fluency, in communication easier.

In addition, as fluency has been regarded as a somewhat neglected language component in the classroom (Rossiter et. al, 2010; Torgersen, 2018), and the relationship between L1 and L2 with regard to fluency not being straightforward, there is a need for fluency-enhancing tasks for students learning English. For instance, what has been shown by research is that native speakers of English, to a larger extent than non-native speakers use filled pauses in communication (Hasselgreen, 2004; Simensen, 2010). By using filled pauses, one is perceived as more fluent in communication, and Simensen (2010) suggests that it would be fruitful to teach students these "small words" in order to enhance their fluency in an L2.

Based on the assessment situation design chosen by four of five teachers in this thesis, teachers are aware of, and focus on, the English subject curriculum's emphasis on communicative competence (KD, 2006, 2013). The choice of a dialogue-based assessment situation also restricts the cognitive demands on the speaker, making interlocutors or raters perceive the speaker as more fluent than in monologic assessment situations (Ejzenberg, 2000). When conducting a dialogue-based assessment situation, it is important that raters and participants are informed on what interactional fluency is and how it can be achieved, as it is suggested to

be fundamentally different from individual fluency (Sato, 2014). Due to the nature of assessment situations including several interlocutors, there is a common responsibility to fill pauses or to use them as signals indicating turn-taking in interaction (McCarthy, 2010).

Overall, making students aware of what is being assessed and how might be one of the most important tasks teachers have. If students are assessed according to competence aims or assessment criteria they do not understand, there is a chance that the students might experience a lack of mastery by not being aware of what is being assessed. It is therefore important that teachers and students have a common understanding of the aspects of oral competence included in the competence aims, as this will eliminate misconceptions in the classroom. This is especially important in English at the Vg1 level as English is compulsory for one year, with the oral proficiency shown by the student in assessment making up a great proportion of their final mark.

## **6.2 Suggestions for further research**

My suggestion for further research is connected to the intelligibility principle and nativeness principle in relation to pronunciation, as suggested in Bøhn (2016). There seems to be somewhat contradictive views on the importance of intelligibility and nativeness in relation to pronunciation depending on the definition given of the aspect. As the curriculum separates pronunciation and intonation, this indicates that these aspects should be assessed separately, although research on suprasegmentals is less conclusive its relevance for intelligibility (Jenkins, 2000; Field, 2005), also indicated through the findings of Bøhn (2016) and the present thesis. Therefore, I suggest further research into perceptions and the operationalization of pronunciation investigating the relationship between intelligibility and nativeness.

In addition, looking into the aspect of fluency sparked interest for the perceptions and applications of this concept, as it might be interpreted in different ways (Lennon, 1990) and appropriated to different situations (McCarthy, 2010; Sato, 2014). It would therefore be interesting to see how teachers and students perceive specifically the aspect of fluency and how it is presented through criteria made by teachers to measure the degree of it in assessment situations. Furthermore, it would be interesting to investigate if interactional fluency is taken into account when the assessment situation is dialogue-based and to what degree fluency is affected in monologic- and dialogue-based tasks (Ejzenberg, 2000).



### **6.3 Concluding remarks**

The last year and a half has been very educational, as this thesis have given me a better understanding of aspects of oral competence in English. This information has been valuable, both for my students and me, as I have become aware of the presence of different interpretations of aspects of oral competence and the need to talk about them in class. By creating a common understanding of the aspects included in the competence aims and the assessment criteria used, I hope my students have felt informed and prepared for the assessment situations conducted in English. The knowledge I have gained through this process has helped me develop as a teacher, and I hope to employ this knowledge in both my English and Norwegian classes to come.

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# Appendix

## Appendix 1: Information letter

**UiO** • **Det utdanningsvitenskapelige fakultet**

Universitetet i Oslo

### Forespørsel om deltakelse i masterstudie

#### Formål og bakgrunn

Formålet med denne studien er å samle informasjon om læreres og elevers oppfatninger om vurdering av muntlighet i engelsk på Vg1.

Dette er en masteroppgave i engelsk fagdidaktikk som gjennomføres ved Universitetet i Oslo, Institutt for lærerutdanning og skoleforskning (ILS). Studien vil inngå som en del av denne individuelle masteroppgaven.

Utvalget i studien er basert på skolens geografiske beliggenhet og undervisningstilbud. Du forespørres om å delta da du underviser i engelsk på studiespesialiserende Vg1.

#### Hva innebærer deltakelse i studien?

Det gjennomføres ett intervju med én engelsklærer og ett individuelt intervju hver med tre av lærerens elever ved hver skole. Intervjuene vil ikke ta mer enn maks 20 minutter per intervju, og spørsmålene vil dreie seg om læreres og elevers oppfatninger om vurdering av muntlighet i engelsk på Vg1.

Intervjuene vil bli tatt opp, og senere transkribert før de slettes ved prosjektslutt. Alle data anonymiseres, og intervjuene vil ikke være personidentifiserbare. Kun student (Emilie Bakka Aalandslid) og veileder (førsteamanuensis ved ILS, Ulrikke Rindal) vil ha tilgang til datamaterialet i prosjektperioden før de slettes. Prosjektet skal etter planen avsluttes i mai 2018.

Prosjektet er meldt til Personvernombudet for forskning, Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS (NSD).

Ved spørsmål angående studien og deltakelse, ta kontakt med:  
Emilie Bakka Aalandslid, tlf: 465 45 673 eller emilieaalandslid@hotmail.com

Med vennlig hilsen

Emilie Bakka Aalandslid





## Samtykke til deltakelse i studien

Jeg har fått informasjon om studien, og ønsker å delta

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(Signatur, prosjektdeltaker)

## Appendix 2: Teacher interview guide

### Intervjuguide lærere

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**Samtykkeskjema og informasjon om intervjuet og studien**

**Bakgrunnsinformasjon:**

- Utdanning
- Jobberfaring
- Undervisning i engelsk

**I en muntlig vurderingssituasjon, hvordan vurderer du disse kompetansemålene i muntlig kommunikasjon i engelsk?:**

**Muntlig kommunikasjon**

Mål for opplæringen er at eleven skal kunne

- uttrykke seg på en nyansert og presis måte med god flyt og sammenheng, tilpasset formål og situasjon
- bruke mønstre for uttale, intonasjon, ordbøying og varierte setningstyper i kommunikasjon

**Elevene har hatt en muntlig vurderingssituasjon med deg i høst. Hvordan ble denne lagt opp og gjennomført?**

**Hvilke kompetansemål og vurderingskriterier ble det spesifikt fokusert på i denne vurderingssituasjonen?**

**Er det noe mer du vil legge til med tanke på vurdering av muntlige ferdigheter i engelsk?**

## Appendix 3: Student interview guide

### Intervjuguide elever

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#### Samtykkeskjema og informasjon om intervjuet og studien

##### Bakgrunnsinformasjon: alder

#### Hva synes du om engelsktimene og engelskfaget?

Er det mye muntlig aktivitet i engelsktimene deres?

Er du muntlig aktiv i engelsk?

Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke?

#### Nå har dere hatt en muntlig vurderingssituasjon i engelsk, hvordan synes du det var?

Hadde du den foran klassen, i en liten gruppe eller kun foran læreren din?

Hvordan gikk denne vurderingssituasjonen?

#### Hva (hvilke ferdigheter/hva slags kompetanse) tror ble du vurdert av læreren din i denne vurderingssituasjonen? Ble det lagt vekt på noe spesielt?

Brukte læreren kompetansemål?

Brukte læreren vurderingskriterier?

Forklarte læreren hva som ble vurdert i vurderingssituasjonen før du hadde den?

#### På hvilken måte tror du at du ble vurdert på disse kompetansemålene i vurderingssituasjonen du hadde i engelsk?

##### Muntlig kommunikasjon

Mål for opplæringen er at eleven skal kunne

- uttrykke seg på en nyansert og presis måte med god flyt og sammenheng, tilpasset formål og situasjon
- bruke mønstre for uttale, intonasjon, ordbøying og varierte setningstyper i kommunikasjon

Hvordan forstår du innholdet i de forskjellige kompetansemålene?

Hva tror du menes med de?

Hvordan tror du en lærer vurderer deg ut i fra disse kompetansemålene?

## Appendix 4: Interview extracts

All of the extracts used in the results chapter from both teacher and student interviews can be found in Norwegian in this appendix. The teacher interview extracts are presented in connection to participant, and the same has been done with the student interviews extracts.

### Teacher interviews:

#### Mary

Norw.: ... *hvis det er veldig sånn norsk-engelsk så kan jeg kommentere det*

Eng.: *If it is really Norwegian-English, I can comment on it.*

Norw.: *Når det er muntlig vurdering så er jeg faktisk ikke like streng på altså verb og alt for mange gramm.. altså, hvis man ser at det er altfor mange grammatiske feil underveis, som faktisk da noen ganger kan gjøre det vanskelig for å forstå eleven, da går det jo ned*

Eng.: *In an oral assessment situation I am not as concerned with it. But, if you see that there are too many grammatical mistakes throughout that makes it hard to understand the student, the grade goes down.*

Norw.: *Så jeg synes at nyansert og presis måte det har også litt med det her med hvilket ord hvilken vokabular dem bruker hvilke ord dem bruker, presist ord riktig setting, kontekst.*

Eng.: *So, I think that in a nuanced and precise manner, it also has something to do with which word, which vocabulary they use... precise words in the right setting, context.*

Norw.: ... *altså det er mye på ordbruk, språkbruk, men også da det har litt med hvilke ord, altså da med overgangene, sammenhengen*

Eng.: *It has to do with what words, what transitions, the coherence*

#### Rick

Norw.: ... *det skal bare ikke være til hinder for kommunikasjon,*

Eng.: *It just does not have to be a hinder for communication.*

Norw.: *Ordbøying og sånt så går det veldig mye på samsvar da, der er jo verb en gjenganger, men også flertall og entallsformer som blir forveksla i en setning.*

Eng.: *Concord. Verbs are common, but also singular and plural forms that are used incorrectly in sentences.*

Norw.: ... *nyansert, det må jo begrenses litt da i forhold til publikum. Så ikke dem bruker for teknisk språk,*

Eng.: *Nuanced, it has to be adjusted to the audience. So, they do not use too technical language.*

Norw.: *Varierte setningstyper, der er jo for så vidt svaret nesten i spørsmålet, at dem ikke bare har en standard frase dem gjentar hver gang dem får en oppgave.*

Eng.: *Various types of sentences. That they do not have a standard phrase they repeat every time they are given an assignment.*

Norw.: *Flyten er også da atte atte det går uten alt for lenge lange tenkepauser,*

Eng.: *Fluency, that it goes without too long pauses for thought.*

### **Alice**

Norw.: ... *jeg skulle ønske jeg hadde mer tid til sånne fagsamtaler for du kommer veldig tett på elevene da.*

Eng.: *I wish I had more time for such group discussions, as you get very close to the students when having them.*

Norw.: *Jeg er ikke så veldig nøye om ikke de har så innmari proff uttale, for hvordan skal man forvente det. De har jo aldri bodd i utlandet.*

Eng.: *I am not concerned with them having a very professional pronunciation, because how can you expect that. They have never lived abroad.*

Norw.: ... *jeg er ikke så veldig nøye med om de snakker litt sånn engelsk-norsk, ... Hvis ikke det er helt stopp i kommunikasjonen, ...*

Eng.: *I am not so concerned with students speaking a little Norwegian-English. ... If there is not a complete stop in the communication, a breakdown.*

Norw.: *Det går på vokabular selvfølgelig, nyansert.*

Eng.: *It has to do with vocabulary of course, nuanced.*

Norw.: ... *en muntlig situasjon er jo mindre formell, men at de allikevel er klarer å at hvis du skal ha høy måloppnåelse da så bør jeg være presis og kunne ha et et nyansert vokabular er ganske viktig synes jeg da.*

Eng.: *An oral assessment situation is less formal, but regardless of this that to get high achievement they have to be precise and have a nuanced vocabulary.*

## **Kim**

Norw.: ... *det at de klarer å, holdt jeg på å si, kommunisere med de som hører på, ikke bare stå og lese sånn høyt sånn at man like gjerne kunne stått med ryggen til*

Eng.: *The fact that they manage to, what do you say, communicate with the listeners. And that they do not just stand there and read out loud, as if they stood there with their backs towards the audience.*

Norw.: ... *jeg er veldig på at det ikke skal være kommunikasjonsforstyrrende feil.*

Eng.: ... *I am very concerned with there not being any errors causing the communication to break down.*

Norw.: ... *intonasjonen er nok der det lettest kan bli kommunikasjonsforstyrrende hvis man snakker for norsk-engelsk, fordi norsk og engelsk har såpass forskjellige intonasjonsmønstre.*

Eng.: ... *intonation is possibly where there easily can be a breakdown in communication if you speak too Norwegian-English, as Norwegian and English have so different intonation patterns.*

Norw.: ... *å bruke presise uttrykk, ikke alt for, holdt på å si, bombastiske uttalelser,...*

Eng.: *To use precise expressions, not too—bombastic expressions...*

## **Alex**

Norw.: *Og jeg vil gi elevene råd om lyder som de sliter med. Fordi det kan ofte være det som er nøkkelen for å bli mer forstå- mer forstått. ... jeg har ingen mål at mine elever skal snakke perfekt britisk eller perfekt amerikansk, jeg har et mål at de skal kommunisere på en forståelig måte.*

Eng.: *I will give students advice about sounds they struggle with. As this often can be the key for being understood. ... I have no goal that my students shall speak perfectly British or perfectly American. I have a goal of them being able to communicate in an understandable way.*

Norw.: ... *hvis de er veldig norske og går opp på slutten av hver setning må vi ta tak i det.*

Eng.: *If they are very Norwegian and go up at the end of every sentence, then we have to work with that.*

Norw.: ... *så jeg vil gi tilbakemelding om det, ... hvis det er forstyrrende...*

Eng.: *So yes, I would comment on it if it is disturbing [the communication].*

Norw.: ... *det er de vanlige tingene, det er concord, det er it/there, det er adverb/adjektiv*

Eng.: *The usual mistakes, you have concord, you have it and there, you have adverbials and adjectives.*

Norw.: *... så klart hvis en elev gjør det en gang jeg tenker okei det er ikke så farlig. Men hvis det er noe som er konsekvent ... så vil jeg kommentere det*

Eng.: *And of course, if a student does it once I am like okay it is not a big deal. But, if it is consistent ... then I will comment on it.*

Norw.: *Jeg forventer ikke bedre flyt på engelsk enn de har på norsk*

Eng.: *I do not expect the students to have better fluency in English than they have in Norwegian.*

Norw.: *... at det ikke er for uformelt*

Eng.: *... that it is not too informal.*

### **Student interviews:**

#### **SA1**

Norw.: *INTW: Ja. Var det da opp mot kompetansemål dere ble vurdert?*

*SA1: Vi fikk noen sånne mål for hva man skulle gjøre for å få høy måloppnåelse og sånne ting, så vi jobba jo med kompetansemålene.*

*INTW: Så det var litt sånn vurderingskriterier da, kanskje, mer?*

*SA1: Ja.*

Eng.: *INTW: So, was it in relation to competence aims that you were assessed?*

*SA1: We got some aims for what to do to get high achievement and that sort of things, so we did work with the competence aims.*

*INTW: So, was it more like assessment criteria then, or what?*

*SA1: Yes.*

Norw.: *Og intonasjon, ..., snakker på en måte med det norske tonefallet, bare at du snakker engelsk. Du må liksom ha det engelske tonefallet så det høres engelsk ut.*

Eng.: *And intonation ..., that you speak kind of with the Norwegian intonation, but you are speaking English. You kind of have to have English intonation so you sound English.*

Norw.: ... om du har noen grammatiske feil.

Eng.: ... if you have any grammatical errors.

Norw.: ... hvordan flyten er når du snakker ...

Eng.: ... how the fluency is when you are speaking ...

Norw.: Det at man skal ha god flyt er jo en ting, at det ikke skal være sånn hakkete eller at du kanskje stopper midt i en setning og blir sånn 'ææh', og sånne ting.

Eng.: To have fluency is one thing, that you should not speak like choppy or maybe stop in the middle of a sentence and go like 'eeh' and stuff.

Norw.: ... om hvordan, om du liksom, det du snakker om er riktig og bra da ...

Eng.: ... if how, if you like, what you are talking about is correct and good ...

Norw.: Og, ja, hvordan engelsken din er da, ...

Eng.: And, yes, like how your English is ...

Norw.: SAI: Man hører det jo da.

INTW: Hører det?

SAI: Ja, eller læreren sier sånn i fagsamtale så sitter læreren og hører. Og da ser man jo ganske godt, eller, hvis du er dyktig da så ser du ganske godt hva som kanskje skal jobbes litt mer med eller hva som er bra da, ja, det er det lærere skal gjøre hvert fall.

Eng.: SAI: Well, you hear it.

INTW: Hear it?

SAI: Yes, or like in a group discussion the teacher is sitting there listening. And then you can see quite clearly, if you are skilled, then you will see quite easily



*what needs to be worked with or what is good, yes, that is what teachers are supposed to do.*

## **SA2**

Norw.: *Det er jo veldig trygt i grupper da, i og med at du har på en måte noen andre å lene deg på.*

Eng.: *It is very safe in groups, in that you can kind of lean on others.*

Norw.: *INTW: Ja. Du sa, ut i fra kriterier, brukte hun kompetansemål eller vurderingskriterier?*

SA2: *Ja. Jeg tror det, jeg husker, jeg jeg mener, jeg tror hun gjorde det mest sannsynlig.*

Eng.: *INTW: You said based on criteria, did your teacher use competence aims or assessment criteria?*

SA2: *Yes. I believe so, I remember, I I believe, I think she did most likely.*

Norw.: *... at man har et bredt vokabular.*

Eng.: *... that you have a broad vocabulary.*

Norw.: *... at på en måte at man klarer å snakke fritt at på en måte ha en fin flyt i språket...*

Eng.: *... that you manage to speak freely and kind of have good fluency in your language ...*

## **SA3**

Norw.: *Det spørs jo litt på tema da men, hvis jeg kan tema så hender det jo.*

Eng.: *It depends on the topic, but if I know the topic it might happen.*

Norw.: *Hva er intonasjon?*

Eng.: *What is intonation?*

Norw.: *Vi skulle bruke flere ord da, og at du kanskje ble litt få ord eller at vi brukte liksom samme ord om og om igjen.*

Eng.: *It was kind of like, that we should like use more words, and that you maybe used too few words or the same ones over and over again.*

Norw.: *... det ble veldig mye sånn derre 'eeh', fordi man kommer ikke på ordene akkurat der og da, og da ble det litt mer, ja, at jeg skulle burde forbedre flyten i språket, hvert fall.*

Eng.: *... there was a lot of 'eeh' as you don't come up with the words there and then, and therefore it became more, yes, that I should improve the fluency in my language at least.*

Norw.: *... ble vurdert ganske mye på språket, ...*

Eng.: *... were assessed quite a lot on language ...*

### **SB1**

Norw.: *Altså, det var jo uttalen da...*

Eng.: *So, it was pronunciation...*

Norw.: *... om det var bra uttale.*

Eng.: *... if you had good pronunciation.*

Norw.: *At han hører om du bøyer verbene riktig i forhold til substantiv og sånn ...*

Eng.: *He [the teacher] can hear if your verbs are conjugated correctly in relation to the nouns and stuff.*

Norw.: *Og at ja, du har et formål, tilpasset formål og situasjon, og at du liksom vet hva du snakker om og hvorfor du snakker om det.*

Eng.: *And that you yes, have a purpose, suited to the purpose and situation, and that you know what you are talking about and why you are talking about it.*

## **SB2**

Norw.: *SB2: Men kompetansemåla husker jeg ikke.*

*INTW: Nei.*

*SB2: Det var ikke så vel viktig, det var litt mer hvordan vurderingen lå.*

Eng.: *SB2: But I don't remember the competence aims.*

*INTW: No.*

*SB2: Well, it was not so important. It was more like how the assessment was.*

Norw.: *... hvor ofte vi stansa da, for grunn at vi måtte tenke oss om ...*

Eng.: *... how often we had to stop to think ...*

Norw.: *Egentlig ikke, jeg pleier egentlig å sette på en sånn britisk, jeg forestiller meg at jeg er Sherlock Holmes og da kan jeg liksom snakke engelsk for jeg spiller egentlig et slags skuespill, da.*

Eng.: *Not really. I usually put on a like British, I pretend that I am Sherlock Holmes and then I can speak English because I am kind of acting.*

## **SB3**

Norw.: *Ja, jeg synes det var en veldig bra måte egentlig. Overraskende. Beste måten jeg har møtt her i år*

Eng.: *Yeah, I think it was a very good way of doing it, really. Surprising. The best way I have experienced this year.*

Norw.: *Hva er kompetansemål?*

Eng.: *What are competence aims?*

Norw.: *Sikkert hvor bra du snakket engelsk ...*

Eng.: *... probably how well you spoke English ...*

### **SC1**

Norw.: *Altså, det er sikkert fokus på engelsk. Hvor mye kan du engelsk.*

Eng.: *And, there is probably a focus on English. How much English you know.*

Norw.: *Jeg vet ikke hvordan hun setter karakter, det er litt vanskelig å si når jeg er elev. ... Hun skriver ned alt jeg, ja hun ser på disse her, og så skriver hun ned ja her hadde han god uttale eller ordbøying, og så ser hun etter på også setter karakter på det.*

Eng.: *I don't know how she grades, it is quite hard for me to say when I am a student. ... She writes down what everything I, she looks at these, and then writes down yes he had good pronunciation and word inflection, and then later she looks at it and grades it.*

### **SC2**

Norw.: *Kanskje sånn uttale av ord. Sånn om du greier å si alle ord riktig og sånne ting.*

Eng.: *Maybe like pronunciation and pronunciation of words. That you are able to pronounce all of the words correctly and stuff like that.*

Norw.: *Og, jeg skjønner egentlig ikke helt hva det hva det, eller bruke mønstre for uttale, intonasjon, ordbøying og varierte setningstyper i kommunikasjon, jeg skjønner ikke hva det er egentlig jeg.*

Eng.: *And, I don't really understand exactly what that, what using patterns for pronunciation, intonation, word inflection and various types of sentences in communication, I don't understand exactly what that is, really.*

Norw.: *At du har riktig ordbøying ...*

Eng.: *That you have correct conjugation ...*

Norw.: *Også kanskje ordforråd, hvor mye ord du kan.*

Eng.: *And maybe also vocabulary. How many words you know.*

Norw.: *... og kanskje litt sånn om du stopper opp da, eller om du klarer å holde det flytende og sånne ting.*

Eng.: *... and maybe like if you stop, or if you manage to keep the fluency and stuff.*

### SC3

Norw.: *Nei. Jeg er veldig lite muntlig aktiv, fordi generelt jeg liker ikke å prate foran hele klassen. Jeg har aldri likt det, så hvert fall da i engelsk. Så velger jeg å ikke svare.*

Eng.: *No. I am very little orally active because I generally do not like to speak in front of the class. I have never liked it, and especially not in English. So I choose not to answer.*

Norw.: *Nei, men vi fikk sånn på itslearning, så fikk vi sånn ark over de ulike kompetansemålene og hva som liksom krevdes for lav, høy, middels.*

Eng.: *No, but we got like on it's learning, we got a sheet with the different competence aims and what was expected to get low, high, intermediate.*

Norw.: *Men også om du klarer å snakke liksom, om du klarer å liksom si noe at man forstår det og ikke bare blir helt stille.*

Eng.: *But, probably like if you manage to speak, like if you manage to say something in a way that is understandable and not go quiet.*

Norw.: *Og hun ser veldig sånn på måten vi snakker på. Sånn at setningene våre liksom ikke bare stopper liksom, men atte liksom det faktisk kommer ordentlige setninger liksom. ... hun er veldig på hvordan tale vi har sånn at vi liksom snakker engelsk sånn flytende og ikke så norsk-engelsk.*

Eng.: *And she [the teacher] is very concerned with like the way we speak. Like our sentences kind of not just stopping, but that like you actually speak in complete sentences. ... she is very concerned with our speech and that we like speak English fluently and not so Norwegian-English.*

### **SD1**

Norw.: *Altså, hvis det er snakk om språket så er det jo intonasjon og uttale og også hvor fort du snakker, ...*

Eng.: *So, if it is connected to language then it is intonation and pronunciation, and also how fast you speak...*

### **SD2**

Norw.: *Ja, du føler deg litt mer sånn, jeg vet ikke, tryggere.*

Eng.: *Yeah, you feel a little more, I don't know, safer.*

Norw.: *Også selyfølgelig uttale ...*

Eng.: *And of course pronunciation ...*

Norw.: *At du klarer å uttale intonasjonen og at det kommer naturlig for deg.*

Eng.: *That you manage to pronounce the intonation, and that it comes naturally for you.*

Norw.: *Her er det vel om du klarer å bruke språket godt, regner jeg med.*

Eng.: *Here it is probably if you are able to use your language well, I reckon.*

Norw.: *SD2: Og den nederste er vel bare om du klarer å snakke og jeg vet ikke ha et bra nok engelsk til at du kan de tingene som man bør kunne når man kan et språk da.*

*INTW: Så bra nok engelsk i forhold til?*

SD2: *I forhold til det som man skal ha. Det står jo ikke det her da. Der står det bare at du skal bruke det.*

INTW: *Tror du det er lett å vurdere det nederste?*

SD2: *Nei. Det tror jeg ikke. Jeg tror det kan være vanskelig, faktisk. For du vet jo ikke hva som er bra, eller du vet jo hva som er bra uttale, men du vet kanskje ikke hvor bra uttale det skal være da for at det skal bli høyeste karakter eller laveste eller ja.*

Eng.: SD2: *And the bottom one is like if you manage to speak or I don't know have good enough English to know the things you should when you know a language.*

INTW: *So, good enough English in connection to what?*

SD2: *In connection to what you should have. But, that is not stated here. It only states that you should use it.*

INTW: *Do you believe it is easy to assess that competence aim?*

SD2: *No. I don't think do. I actually think it can be quite hard. Because you do not know what is good, or you know what good pronunciation is, but maybe not how good pronunciation you need for it to be top grade or low or, yes.*

### **SD3**

Norw.: *Det ville jeg sagt at jeg er, en av de mer muntlig aktive i timen.*

Eng.: *I would say that I am one of the more orally active in class.*

Norw.: INTW: *Ja. Men, så da ble det brukt både kompetansemål og vurderingskriterier eller?*

SD3: *Ja, det ville jeg da trodd. Jeg er ikke helt sikker egentlig.*

Eng.: INTW: *Yes. So were both competence aims and assessment criteria used, or what?*

SD3: *Yes, I would believe so. But, I am not really sure.*

Norw.: *Er ordene bøyd riktig.*

Eng.: *Are the words conjugated correctly.*

Norw.: *... sier det på en passende måte med flyt og sånn.*

Eng.: ... *saying it in an appropriate manner with fluency and stuff.*

Norw.: ... *ja, høre etter på hva vi sier og da bli vurdert etter om det stemte eller ikke.*

Eng.: ... *yes, listen to what we say and then assess in relation to it being correct or not.*

Norw.: ... *at man bruker liksom snakker ordentlig engelsk, ...*

Eng.: ... *that you like speak proper English ...*

### **SE1**

Norw.: ... *ikke snakker sånn norsk-engelsk, men engelsk-engelsk. På en måte. ... Det er veldig mange ganger at når man snakker engelsk så får man norsk uttale i engelsken. Og da blir det veldig, da blir det mer norsk da. Selv om dem egentlig snakker engelsk.*

Eng.: ... *that you don't speak like Norwegian-English, but English-English. Kind of. ... A lot of times when you speak English you get a Norwegian pronunciation in your English. And then it is more like very Norwegian, even though you are speaking English.*

Norw.: ... *å bruke riktige ord.*

Eng.: ... *to use correct words.*

Norw.: *Og at det blir liksom, at det ikke blir veldig sånn derre stopp, på den der. At du på en måte snakker med flyt og*

Eng.: *And that you like, that you don't get like a stop in there. That you kind of speak with fluency.*

Norw.: *At du liksom skal prate om akkurat det og ikke gå på noe annet kanskje.*

Eng.: *That you like talk about exactly that and don't move on to something else, maybe.*

Norw.: *Riktig språk.*



Eng.: *Correct language.*

## SE2

Norw.: *Det tror jeg ikke. Nå er det ikke sånn at vi går igjennom kompetansemålene så mye. Jeg tenker egentlig aldri heller over kompetansemålene.*

Eng.: *I don't think so. Well, we do not go through the competence aims that much. I never really think about the competence aims.*

Norw.: *God uttale, vet jeg ble lagt vekt på.*

Eng.: *Good pronunciation, I know that was emphasized in the assessment.*

Norw.: *Jeg er litt usikker på hva intonasjon betyr.*

Eng.: *I am not sure about what intonation means.*

Norw.: *... og ha et bredt vokabular.*

Eng.: *... and to have a wide vocabulary.*

Norw.: SE2: *... jeg vet ikke om de brydde seg veldig mye om å uttrykke seg på en nyansert og presis måte, men de fokuserte veldig mye på den gode flyten og sammenhengen. Så, brydde de seg veldig om mønstre for uttale. Eller ikke veldig, men helt greit.*

INTW: *På hvilken måte da?*

SE2: *Det var, hvis du fikk høre det etterpå at du blir kanskje trekket litt hvis du hadde feil uttale, så.*

INTW: *Sånn uttale på ord?*

SE2: *Uttalemessig ja, på ord. Men, bruke mønstre for uttale det forstår jeg ikke helt.*

Eng.: SE2: *... I don't know if they were concerned with expressing oneself in a precise and*

*detailed manner, but they focused a lot on the flow and context. And, they were very concerned with patterns for pronunciation. Or not very, but okay.*

*INTW: In what way?*

*SE2: It was, you were told afterwards that you might get a lower grade if you had incorrect pronunciation, so.*

*INTW: Like pronunciation of words?*

*SE2: Pronunciation yes, with words. But, I don't really understand patterns for pronunciation.*

### **SE3**

*Norw.: Jeg synes det var greit ... hvis du får velge selv hvem du har fagsamtalen med, så ha fagsamtalen med noen du er trygg på. Så tror jeg også at det er lettere å snakke mer åpent og ja.*

*Eng.: I thought it was okay. ... if you can choose who you want to have the group discussion with, then have it with someone you feel comfortable with. Then I also believe it is easier to speak freely.*

*Norw.: INTW: brukte læreren kompetansemål eller?*

*SE3: Vi fikk et ark med liksom hva vi skulle kunne og vite til samtalen.*

*...*

*INTW: Ja. Var det vurderingskriterier da?*

*SE3: Jeg tror da det.*

*Eng.: INTW: ... did your teacher use competence aims, or what?*

*SE3: We got a sheet of paper with like what we should know to the group discussion.*

*...*

*INTW: Yes. Was it assessment criteria then?*

*SE3: I believe so.*

Norw.: *Nei, det tror jeg ikke. Men jeg tror liksom at jeg og de jeg hadde fagsamtale med gikk gjennom det og liksom sjekket at det vi skulle snakke om passet til det vi hadde fått liksom beskjed om på arket.*

Eng.: *No. I don't believe so. But I think like that I and those I had the group discussion with went through it and like checked that what we spoke about fitted what we had been told on the sheet.*

Norw.: *Hadde flyt i seg.*

Eng.: *Had fluency.*

## Appendix 5: NSD



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Vår dato: 22.11.2017

Vår ref: 57002 / 3 / STM

Deres dato:

Deres ref:

### Forenklet vurdering fra NSD Personvernombudet for forskning

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 08.11.2017.  
Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

57002	<i>Lærere og elevers oppfatninger om vurdering av muntlige ferdigheter i engelsk.</i>
Behandlingsansvarlig	<i>Universitetet i Oslo, ved institusjonens øverste leder</i>
Daglig ansvarlig	<i>Ulrikke Rindal</i>
Student	<i>Emilie Bakka Aalandslid</i>

### Vurdering

Etter gjennomgang av opplysningene i meldeskjemaet med vedlegg, vurderer vi at prosjektet er omfattet av personopplysningsloven § 31. Personopplysningene som blir samlet inn er ikke sensitive, prosjektet er samtykkebasert og har lav personvernulempe. Prosjektet har derfor fått en forenklet vurdering. Du kan gå i gang med prosjektet. Du har selvstendig ansvar for å følge vilkårene under og sette deg inn i veiledningen i dette brevet.

### Vilkår for vår vurdering

Vår anbefaling forutsetter at du gjennomfører prosjektet i tråd med:

- opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet
- krav til informert samtykke
- at du ikke innhenter [sensitive opplysninger](#)
- veiledning i dette brevet
- Universitetet i Oslo sine retningslinjer for datasikkerhet

### Veiledning

#### Krav til informert samtykke

Utvalget skal få skriftlig og/eller muntlig informasjon om prosjektet og samtykke til deltakelse.

Informasjon må minst omfatte:

- at Universitetet i Oslo er behandlingsansvarlig institusjon for prosjektet
- daglig ansvarlig (eventuelt student og veileder) sine kontaktopplysninger

*Dokumentet er elektronisk produsert og godkjent ved NSDs rutiner for elektronisk godkjenning.*

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NSD – Norwegian Centre for Research Data

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Org.nr. 985 321 884

- prosjektets formål og hva opplysningene skal brukes til
- hvilke opplysninger som skal innhentes og hvordan opplysningene innhentes
- når prosjektet skal avsluttes og når personopplysningene skal anonymiseres/slettes

På nettsidene våre finner du mer informasjon og en veiledende mal for [informasjonsskriv](#).

#### **Forskningsetiske retningslinjer**

Sett deg inn i [forskningsetiske retningslinjer](#).

#### **Meld fra hvis du gjør vesentlige endringer i prosjektet**

Dersom prosjektet endrer seg, kan det være nødvendig å sende inn endringsmelding. På våre nettsider finner du svar på hvilke [endringer](#) du må melde, samt endrings skjema.

#### **Opplysninger om prosjektet blir lagt ut på våre nettsider og i Meldingsarkivet**

Vi har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet på nettsidene våre. Alle våre institusjoner har også tilgang til egne prosjekter i [Meldingsarkivet](#).

#### **Vi tar kontakt om status for behandling av personopplysninger ved prosjektslutt**

Ved prosjektslutt 15.05.2018 vil vi ta kontakt for å avklare status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

### **Gjelder dette ditt prosjekt?**

#### **Dersom du skal bruke databehandler**

Dersom du skal bruke databehandler (ekstern transkriberingsassistent/spørreskjemaleverandør) må du inngå en databehandleravtale med vedkommende. For råd om hva databehandleravtalen bør inneholde, se [Datatilsynets veileder](#).

#### **Hvis utvalget har taushetsplikt**

Vi minner om at noen grupper (f.eks. opplærings- og helsepersonell/forvaltningsansatte) har [taushetsplikt](#). De kan derfor ikke gi deg identifiserende opplysninger om andre, med mindre de får samtykke fra den det gjelder.

#### **Dersom du forsker på egen arbeidsplass**

Vi minner om at når du [forsker på egen arbeidsplass](#) må du være bevisst din dobbeltrolle som både forsker og ansatt. Ved rekruttering er det spesielt viktig at forespørsel rettes på en slik måte at frivilligheten ved deltakelse ivaretas.

Se våre nettsider eller ta kontakt med oss dersom du har spørsmål. Vi ønsker lykke til med prosjektet!

Vennlig hilsen

Marianne H øgetveit Myhren

Sri Tenden Myklebust

Kontaktperson: Sri Tenden Myklebust tlf: 55 58 22 68 / [Sri.Myklebust@nsd.no](mailto:Sri.Myklebust@nsd.no)