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The Gender Asymmetry Supported by the Teachers

*An observational research of genders in
English lessons regarding authentic text
discourse in seven lower secondary
schools*

Kjersti Skilnand Øvereng

Mastergradsavhandling i engelsk fagdidaktikk ved Institutt
for Lærerutdanning og Skoleforskning

Det utdanningsvitenskapelige fakultet

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ABSTRACT

As a part of the Linking Instruction and Student Experiences (LISE) project developed by Kirsti Klette and led by associate professor Lisbeth M. Brevik, this study aimed to answer the research question: *What are the characteristics of girls' and boys' participation in English lessons in seven lower secondary classrooms, when authentic texts are being discussed, and what characterizes the teacher's role in these situations?*

In order to investigate this research question, I observed the previously collected data material for the LISE project. I firstly observed all the lessons regarding text through using an overview provided by my supervisor Lisbeth M. Brevik, this means that I observed 32 video-recorded English lessons from seven different Norwegian lower secondary schools. Previous research (Öhrn, 1990; Asp-Onsjö & Öhrn, 2015; Ahmadian, 2018) present findings claiming that the boys are the dominant voices in the classrooms, while the girls are the academical voices. This means that the boys speak far more than the girls and that their oral participation is both non-academic as well as academic, while the girls' oral participation is mainly academic. In order to further research the academical classroom interaction I singled out segments with discourse regarding authentic text with pairs, groups or whole-class situations where the students and the teachers interact.

Through this research, I found that the boys and girls participate in much the same ways with the percentages of each different type of activity being approximately the same. These activities are: (1) A student raised their hand, (2) a student was invited to speak in class after raising their hand, (3) a student spoke, uninvited, after raising their hand, (4) a student was invited to speak in class, (5) a student spoke in class uninvited and (6) a student answered a follow-up question directed at them. In addition to finding that they used almost the same percentage of all their gender's participation on each activity, I also found a large difference between the boys and girls. The boys participated approximately twice as much as the girls did, and they spoke far more often. In addition to initiating the participation quite a lot more than the girls did, the boys were also on the receiving end of the teacher-initiated participation far more often than the girls.

SAMMENDRAG

Som en del av Linking Instructuin and Student Experiences (LISE)-prosjektet utviklet av Kirsti Klette og ledet av førsteamanuensis Lisbeth M. Brevik ønsket denne masteravhandlingen å svare på forskningsspørsmålet; *Hva er karakteristisk for jenter og gutters deltakelse i engelsktimer i syv ungdomsskoleklasserom der autentisk tekst blir diskutert og hva karakteriserer lærerne i disse rollene?*

For å undersøke dette forskningsspørsmålet observerte jeg tidligere innsamlet data materiale for LISE prosjektet. Først observerte jeg alle timene som omhandlet tekst ved bruk av en oversikt jeg fikk tildelt fra min veileder Lisbeth M. Brevik. Deretter snevret jeg fokuset inn mot timer som omhandlet autentisk tekst. Dette vil si at jeg observerte 32 videofilmede engelsktimer fra syv ulike norske ungdomsskoler. Tidligere forskning (Öhrn, 1990; Asp-Onsjö & Öhrn 2015; Ahmadian, 2018) presenterer funn som indikerer at guttene er de dominante stemmene i klasserommene og at jentene er de akademiske stemmene. Dette vil si at guttene snakker langt mer enn jentene og at de deltar muntlig både akademisk og ikke akademisk, mens jentene hovedsakelig deltar akademisk. For å videre undersøke den akademiske klasseromsinteraksjonen valgte jeg ut segmenter med diskurs som omhandlet autentisk tekst i par, grupper og helklassesituasjoner der læreren og studentene har en interaksjon.

Gjennom denne forskningen fant jeg ut at guttene og jentene deltar på omtrent samme vis i forhold til prosentene av de ulike aktivitetene. Disse aktivitetene er: (1) en elev rekker opp hånden, (2) en elev blir invitert til å snakke i timen etter å ha rukket opp hånden, (3) en elev snakket, uinvitert, etter å ha rukket opp hånden, (4) en elev ble invitert til å snakke i timen, (5) en elev snakket i timen, uinvitert og (6) en elev svarte på et oppfølgingsspørsmål rettet mot dem. I tillegg til dette fant jeg ut at det også er en enorm forskjell mellom gutter og jenter. Guttene deltok omtrent dobbelt så mye som jentene, og de snakket langt oftere. I tillegg til at de initierte deltagelsen mye oftere enn jentene ble de også invitert til å delta av læreren langt oftere enn jentene gjorde.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Education has been central to the development of the Nordic welfare systems, which emphasise the importance of equal educational opportunities for social cohesion. Gender equality was and still is an important dimension of equality within these efforts. (Öhrn, 2018, p. 125)

It should come as no surprise that the Norwegian curriculum for primary and secondary education describes students in general and does not specify aspects of gender or emphasise gender equality. Nonetheless, prior research indicates a gender gap in the classroom, where girls are described as the academic voices, talking about school-related academic topics mainly, whereas boys are found to be the dominant voices in the classroom, talking about both academic and non-academic topics and speaking significantly more than the girls do (Ahmadian, 2018; Asp-Onsjö & Öhrn, 2015; Öhrn, 1990).

In this master's study, I argue that boys and girls have very different opportunities to participate in the English classroom, and that this should be of concern to anyone interested in education and equality. I will even go so far as to state that the gender gap observed in secondary school classrooms create fundamental conditions for equal education. There are both opportunities and threats to this aspect, and I argue that if a teacher is not aware of the gender gap in their classroom, they are not only ignoring girls' right to equality in the classroom, but also in society in general. Seeing equal opportunities as fundamental in students' lives, I hope this thesis will offer some benefits for students and teachers alike.

The research question for this master's thesis is: *What are the characteristics of girls' and boys' participation in English lessons in seven lower secondary classrooms, when authentic texts are being discussed, and what characterises the teacher's role in these situations?* As is implied in the research question, three elements will be focused on in this study: (1) How do girls participate in such lessons?, (2) How do boys participate in such lessons?, and (3) What are characteristics of the teacher's role in these situations? These three aspects will be examined separately, before being compared and considered in light of each other.

In this first chapter, I will explore why this line of research is important in order to gain knowledge about a potential gender gap in English lessons in lower secondary classrooms. I will also examine what role communication has in Norwegian society and in the English subject curriculum for Norwegian schools. As will be explained, the data materials I use in

this study was collected during 2015–17, which means that since the LK06/13 curriculum was in force at the time, this is also the curriculum I will refer to (KD, 2006, 2013), although a new curriculum (LK20) is currently being implemented in Norwegian classrooms (UDIR, 2020).

1.1 THE ROLE OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN NORWEGIAN SOCIETY

English is the global language of communication with the number of non-native speakers of English exceeding the number of native speakers (Brevik & Rindal, 219). As a result, English is the new Lingua Franca of the world, with roughly two billion speakers worldwide, including Norway (Brevik & Rindal, 2019).

In Norway, English is *not* considered a second language, yet, various factors regarding the English language in Norway indicate that it is, such as the high proficiency of the language among adolescents (Brevik & Rindal, 2019). A report measuring English proficiency conducted by Education First (2020) ranks Norway as a European country with the third highest English proficiency in 2019, with approximately 68% proficient users of English. Additionally, Norwegian 15-year-olds are among the most proficient speakers of English as a foreign or second language, and has been for 20 years (Bonnet, 2014; Education First, 2018, 2019; Linn & Hadjidemetriou, 2014).

1.2 THE ENGLISH CURRICULUM IN NORWEGIAN SCHOOLS (LK06/13)

There are many differences between the English school subject and other foreign languages taught in Norwegian schools, such as French, Spanish or German, which indicate that English holds another status than that of foreign languages. These differences consist of English not being part of the foreign language curriculum and that English, in contrast to other foreign languages, is a mandatory school subject for 11 years, taught from the first year in primary school (KD, 2006, 2013). Another noticeable difference is that English is described in the curricula as a key subject for communication worldwide, while the curriculum for foreign languages emphasises that knowledge of foreign languages helps you to communicate in an international context (KD, 2006, 2013).

The English curriculum emphasises that communication is an important part of language learning, and oral communication is one of the main areas. In the competency aims in the LK06/13 curriculum, for the English subject after 10th grade in Norwegian schools, there is a large focus on oral English and several of the competency aims are directly aimed at oral

communication. These competency aims revolve around the students being fluent communicators in the English language and understanding and expressing opinions in a communicative manner (KD, 2006, 2013). This focus underlines the importance of learning to communicate orally in English. The English subject is therefore considered a communicational language with a focus on interaction and global reach, and it is important to fully study the extent to which students communicate in the English classroom and the extent to which they do not, or rarely do.

Another main area in the English curriculum (LK06/13) concerns Culture, Society and Literature, specifying what the students should be capable of discussing in the English subject. This area can be considered the main area to describe academic content in the subject, whereas the other areas (i.e. language learning, oral communication and written communication) focus on basic skills. Thus, focusing on classroom discourse about different types of English texts related to the area of culture, society and literature will be of relevance when considering previous research about gender differences in the classrooms. Previous research indicates, as mentioned, that the girls mostly participate in an academic sense in the classrooms, as opposed to the boys, who also participate in non-academic or personal discourses with the teachers. When considering the fact that previous research found that the girls in the Swedish and Norwegian classrooms participated with subject-related, academic discourses, but that the boys were the most orally active in the lessons (Ahmadian 2018; Asp-Onsjö & Öhrn, 2015; Öhrn, 1990), it is of interest to me to further study the academic discourses in Norwegian classrooms. Because of this, one vital element in the selection process of the data material relevant for my study was the academic discourse related to authentic texts.

1.3 ENGLISH PROFICIENCY FOR GIRLS AND BOYS IN NORWAY

In addition to research confirming the status of English in the Norwegian society (Brevik & Rindal, 2019), and in English lessons (Brevik & Rindal, 2019), and for adolescents' in their private spheres outside of school (Brevik, 2019), annual national tests in English provide an indication of English proficiency among adolescents in Norwegian schools (UDIR, 2020). The statistics regarding these results are conducted at the beginning of the 8th grade. These statistics appear to be moving in a positive direction for the boys in Norway. The statistics show that the boys are in fact performing better than the girls in the English subject in these tests (UDIR, 2020). These statistics show that there are more boys on the two highest mastery

levels (level 4 and 5), which indicates the higher levels of proficiency in English. There were fewer girls in these two mastery levels than there were boys. The percentages of boys on lower levels (level 3, 2 and 1) were, on the other hand lower than that of the girls. This means that there were more boys performing at the two highest levels of the English test than there were girls, and more girls who performed at the three lowest levels of the national test in English than there were boys.

These results are of great relevance for my study. The fact that the boys are improving and have surpassed the girls makes it especially interesting to examine the difference in oral participation and communication, when considering the importance that communication has been given in the current English subject curriculum. These statistics regarding the proficiency level of the girls and boys will be considered further in the discussion (Chapter 5).

1.4 MY MASTER'S STUDY

Therefore, it is important to examine to what extent boys and girls participate orally in English lessons during academic textual discourse, based on the teaching of authentic texts, and to examine the teacher's role in their opportunities to speak in these situations. My master's study is part of the research project LISE (*Linking Instruction and Student Experiences*), designed by Professor Kirsti Klette and led by Associate Professor Lisbeth M Brevik at the University of Oslo. The LISE project contains video material of English lessons from 9th and 10th grade in seven lower secondary schools in Norway and was therefore of great relevance when studying this topic. The already gathered video data presented a unique opportunity to observe lessons with greater accuracy than that of field observation. Being able to re-observe the video material several times and from different angles has been vital for this study. This means that I use the LISE material as secondary data in my master's study, acknowledging that I have not participated in the collection of these video data (Dalland, 2011).

To explore this fairly qualitative aspect regarding students' oral classroom participation, I chose to utilize a quantitative method where the numbers are in focus. Thus, six aspects of oral participation will be explored in this study, which emerged inductively during the initial round of observation of the video data I used for this master's thesis. These six aspects relate to how many times I observed each of the following activities during English lessons: (1) boys and girls raised their hands to initiate oral participation, (2) boys and girls who raised

their hands were invited by the teacher to speak, (3) the boys and girls who raised their hands spoke without being invited to do so, (4) boys and girls were invited by the teacher to speak without raising their hands, (5) boys and girls spoke without being invited to do so, and, (6) boys and girls answered a follow-up question from the teacher that was directed at them. I created these codes to study their frequency; specifically, which activities occurred often, and more rarely, and how often the boys and girls, respectively, participated in the different activities.

What is unique about this master's study is precisely the aspect of using quantitative methods through mapping of boys' and girls' participation in discussions about text in English lower secondary classrooms, which to my knowledge has not been done before. In order to analyse what I observed, I created seating maps for all participating students in each observed lesson, which will be elaborated in Chapter 3 (methods). This approach to the study of a potential gender gap gives detailed insight into the opportunity for oral participation of girls and boys in English lessons in 9th and 10th grade in seven lower secondary classrooms in Norway.

In addition to researching how the girls and boys participate orally, this master's study also studies what role the teacher plays in order to provide opportunities to speak in English lessons. As it is stated in the English curriculum, the teacher has a responsibility to promote communicative skills of the students in order for them to safely express their opinions, to learn to listen and respond in dialogue with other students, and being able to speak up for others. The teacher's role in these situations is therefore relevant to examine, and in this study, I aim to examine if the girls and the boys in a classroom have the same opportunities to participate and get similar responses from their English teacher.

1.5 STRUCTURE OF THIS THESIS

In this chapter, I have elaborated on the importance and relevance of this master's study, as well as the English subject's place in Norwegian society and schools. In Chapter 2, I will present relevant theory and prior research regarding sociocultural theory and gender, drawing on researchers such as Lev Vygotsky, Harriet Bjerrum Nielsen and Elisabeth Öhrn. In Chapter 3, I present the methodology used in this study, including the data material that I have used, which is part of the research project LISE. This chapter also includes the research design and methods used, as well as the analytical process, and, finally, the credibility and ethical considerations of this study. In Chapter 4, I present the findings of my study, which focus on the participation of the girls and boys in the English lessons with discourse

regarding texts, and the characteristics of the teacher's role in these situations. In Chapter 5, I discuss the findings in light of the research question and theory and prior research. Here, I will further elaborate on these findings in light of prior gender research and the proficiency of the girls and boys as shown in the national test in Norway. Finally, I present the conclusion in Chapter 6, which summarizes and concludes on the aspects discovered through the other five chapters.

2.0 THEORY AND PRIOR RESEARCH

In this chapter, I present the theoretical framework and relevant prior research for this master's study. Since I aim to study how girls and boys participate in English lessons when academic texts are discussed, and the teacher's role in this, I will first explore the social aspects of learning English through interaction and thus find sociocultural theory of learning to comprise a suitable theoretical framing for this study (2.1). Next, I will explain the importance of interaction and communication inside the classroom (2.2). Considering that this study investigates the differences between girls' and boys' opportunities for oral participation in the classroom, I also examine the differences between the genders in the classrooms, and consequently present previous research on gender differences inside the classroom (2.3).

2.1 VYGOTSKY'S SOCIOCULTURAL THEORY

Since I investigate girls' and boys' opportunities for oral activity inside the classroom and the teachers' role in this, I initially examine the social relations of learning a second language and thus, find Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory to be an appropriate theoretic framing for this study. Sociocultural theory is commonly used to describe the learning process occurring in second language learning (Lantolf, 2000). Educational psychologist, Lev Vygotsky, was one of the foremost theorists within sociocultural theory and thus, this theory has its origins in Vygotsky's work.

Vygotsky considered children's development as part of a social and cultural context, and in his theory of development, he suggests that rather than having all development contained from birth, one develops along with one's surroundings (Vygotsky, 1978). This means that the influence from for example parents and cultural beliefs, develops a child or a learner. In sociocultural theory, the child's cognitive function is essentially a mediated process constructed by activities and cultural artefacts, such as language (Lantolf, Thorne & Pohener, 2015). According to Lantolf (2000), sociocultural theory recognises that we have genetically determined capacities, but it also argues that we have a human consciousness that allows us to voluntarily use these capacities. Regarding this, Lantolf (2000) writes that the learner not

only learns how to communicate, but also shapes the progress of cognition, which allow us to "intentionally and voluntarily control our memory, attention, planning, rational thought, problem solving, and learning" (p. 79). Vygotsky viewed language as a cultural and cognitive tool of learning, and humans use symbolic tools to interact with and establish a relationship with the world. One of the most important symbolic tools is language (Candlin & Mercer, 2001). According to Vygotsky (1978), using mediated means presented by others is the core of development, and therefore, it is essential for language learning.

A key aspect of Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory is the Zone of Proximal Development. The Zone of Proximal Development refers to the social zones through which a child or learner develops. This means that a second-language learner develops through these zones. Within these zones there are people from whom the learner learns and develop. The Zone of Proximal Development "refers to the 'cognitive gap' that exists between what an individual can do alone what they can do jointly and in coordination with a more skilled other" (Gibbons, 2006, pp. 25-26). As Lantolf (2000) explains, there are three social mediations to be considered when examining such development; experts, novices and peers, where teachers are the experts, and students are the novices and peers (e.g. classmates). Through interacting with these people in the different zones, and acquiring social mediation, a student's knowledge and range of the second language expands, and, therefore, the student learns from their peers, their teachers, their parents, and other people in their lives involved with their learning and development.

Related to my study, students might through interaction, both acquire new knowledge, solidify previously acquired knowledge, and practice communicating using the language.

Through his and his collaborators' experiments, Vygotsky (1978) found a pattern where the children they studied turned to the experimenters for help when attempting to solve a problem or perform a difficult activity. They linked this finding to the understanding of a learner's interaction with the social context. He explains: "The child may attempt to solve the task through verbal formulations and by appeals to the experimenter for help." (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 29). In other words, the theory Vygotsky presents is one where the development of a child is affected by the people surrounding him or her. Vygotsky (1978) argues that from the very beginning of a child's development, the development is directly linked to another person or persons, and he argues that this development passes through the other person. He links the child directly to a different person, explaining how development is done through interaction

with them. Vygotsky's (1978) theory explains how the learner internalizes the new knowledge through the social context. Children create new knowledge and internalize it through observing and interacting with others. The newly acquired knowledge of a child or learner is then considered through others' reactions to it. His theory explains how a child develops through what he calls interpersonal and intrapersonal processes. The interpersonal process is the social aspect of this development, meaning that the development first takes place in interaction with others. The second process is intrapersonal. The intrapersonal process is one where the development appears inside the child, meaning that they internalize the development. These processes are also referred to as interpsychological and intrapsychological. In her book, Gamlem (2015) uses another set of terms for these processes. She highlights the main aspect of Vygotsky's theory:

Central in Vygotsky's theory about mediation is the idea that conceptual knowledge first occurs between people on an interpsychological level (*intermental* level), and further becomes internalized on an intrapsychological level (*intramental* level). The notion is that learning happens in social processes, in interaction with others, like the one between a student and a teacher (or peer). Such an interaction supports the student's learning process (p. 41, my translation)

Through examining this sociocultural learning theory that is widely acknowledged, it becomes apparent just how vital and important communication is for learning. When understanding the importance of communication for learning, the vitality of dialogues with the teachers are highlighted. The importance of these interactions is illustrated in the next section (2.2).

2.2 THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERACTION

Prior research highlights the teacher's role in classroom interaction (e.g., Mercer & Littleton, 2007; Rojas-Drummond & Mercer, 2003). Consequently, research on how teachers should adequately interact with students is imperative. Research indicates that the ways in which teachers interact with students are related to the students' learning outcomes. In her research, Rojas-Drummond and Mercer (2003) used recordings from classrooms and discovered that the way teachers interacted with students played a substantial role in the students' learning outcomes (Rojas- Drummond & Mercer, 2003). Rojas-Drummond and Mercer (2003) examined how teachers interacted with students who developed particularly well in reading,

comprehension and mathematical problem-solving, and teachers with students who did not. Through her research, she discovered that there were similar characteristics for the teachers with students who performed well. Rojas-Drummond and Mercer (2003) and her team discovered that the teachers resorted to question-answer sequences to guide the development of understanding, and that they taught procedures for problem solving. Instead of just teaching the content of their subjects, these teachers also taught the students *how* to solve problems. These teachers taught in much the same way that Vygotsky (1978) argues learning and development happens; through social interaction. As well as treating teaching as a communicative activity, these teachers also used questions to encourage their students to elaborate on views and opinions, and to create an idea-sharing environment between peers.

Alexander (2020) has also studied types of classroom talk and discovered that even if the types of talk seem rather similar at the surface, a closer observation shows that there are several differences (see also Mercer & Littleton, 2007). He elaborates on how the expectations often shape types of talk or interaction. These expectations are based on the cultural context and can shape the classroom interaction. He explains that a type of interaction that students benefit from, is dialogic teaching. Dialogic teaching is teaching where the teachers and students engage in communication that encourages thoughts and ideas to move forward, and that such teaching includes questions that invites substantial thoughts and ideas. Dialogic teaching is a way for the teacher to encourage students to express and reflect on their learning, as well as to modify it. This type of teaching includes questions that encourages thought-through answers, questions that invite students to elaborate on their utterances, and questions that create communicative situations that support teacher-student and student-student interaction, in line with Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (Mercer & Littleton, 2007). This prior research highlights the importance of communication inside classrooms, how classroom-talk and dialogic teaching affects the students' learning outcomes and can improve their understanding. Consequently, it becomes relevant in my study to understand how students participate in these oral discourse situations in the classroom, the opportunities they have to interact with their teachers and peers, and whether there are differences between genders in such participation. Some perceptions of gender roles are therefore elaborated on in the next section (2.3).

2.3 THE ROLE OF GENDER

First, Harriet Bjerrum Nielsen's research into genders in the classrooms will be presented. Second, Elisabeth Öhrn's research regarding gender will be presented. Finally, Shilan Ahmadian's gender research in vocational schools will be presented.

Harriet Bjerrum Nielsen studied how the understanding of gender and gender norms have changed and what this means for the children and for the schools (Nielsen 2014). She argues that the modernization of the Norwegian schools appears to be more beneficial for the girls than for the boys (Nielsen, 2014). Classroom research conducted in the 1970s and 1980s demonstrated that the girls had minor roles inside the classroom, even though they performed well, while the boys dominated both physically and verbally, and on an average received more attention from the teachers (Nielsen, 2014; Nielsen & Davies, 2008). Classroom studies from the 1980s also proved that even though girls offered to answer questions inside the classroom, they initiated contact to a lesser degree than the boys did (Nielsen & Davies, 2008).

From 1992 to 2001, Nielsen (2009) conducted research for nine years and followed students from the first year of primary school until the last year of lower secondary school. With regard to oral activity inside the classroom, she concluded that the girls were more visible inside the classroom than girls were in the 1970s and 1980s (Nielsen & Davies, 2008) and that the reason could be that the number of girls in the classroom exceeded the number of boys. Another finding that turned out to be different from the 1970s and 1980s was that the boys were much more restrained inside the classroom, and as Nielsen (2009) states, this can be because the school focuses more on communication than it did before and that girls are more equipped for this. Lastly, Nielsen (2009) points out that the teachers in her research tried including the boys to participate orally much more than the teachers in the 1970s and 1980s did concerning girls.

According to Nielsen (2014), the boys are still the dominant participants inside the classroom, even though there have been some changes. Despite the fact that the boys generally dominate, there are also some lessons in today's society where the girls dominate the lessons. Since the girls entered the classrooms, performed well, and received good grades, the boys have taken a distance and often focus on other aspects of life, such as sports. The boys sometimes express disinterest in school and schoolwork due to a fear of failing. This fear of failing is justified because as Nielsen (2014) states, the boys are more likely to drop out of school than the girls are. Furthermore, she explains that even though the boys achieve

lower grades and a higher percentage of them drop out, they get a job and better pay earlier than the girls do in the same situations.

Elisabet Öhrn conducted research on gender differences in classrooms in Sweden, and unlike Nielsen (e.g. 2014), her research indicate that the teacher gives more attention to the boys and that the school is more fitting for the male gender. Öhrn (1990) observed lessons in various schools in Sweden and interviewed students and teachers to study gender patterns in classroom interactions. To do so, she studied the girls' and boys' interaction with the teachers, their perception of one another, the teacher's perception of the girls and boys, and the perception teachers had on gender differences (Öhrn, 1990.) In her research, Öhrn (1990) discovered that the boys and girls participated differently when communicating in plenary situations in the classroom, in the sense that the boys were typically the ones interacting and as a result, the boys spoke more often than the girls did. In addition, her research proved that the boys turned to the teacher more often than the girls did for non-academic purposes. The boys asked more personal and informal questions, while the girls, on the other hand, had few personal and informal comments. Öhrn (1990) concludes that the opportunities for social interaction in the classroom were more angled towards the boys and that the gender differences were constructed by gender patterns established in the cultural context outside school. Öhrn (1990) argues that the gender asymmetry in the classroom is the result of men being the more powerful group in society and thus, the cultural context affects the classroom dynamics in favor to the boys by making them the more powerful group inside the classroom, which is the opposite of what Nielsen (2014) claims is correct for the Norwegian school, by claiming that the communicational focus in Norwegian schools is more tailored for the girls. Moreover, Öhrn (1990) says that the societal reflection in the classroom influences the girls' and boys' behavior and that it is, in fact, apparent that the boys participate more in the classroom than the girls do. In addition, Öhrn (1990) concludes that the boys receive and seek more attention from the teachers and that they are asked questions more often than the girls and ask more questions.

Newer research (Asp-Onsjö and Öhrn 2015) gathered from multiple data collected from ethnographic studies consisting of observations both inside and outside the classroom and interviews with students from various schools in Sweden, confirms Öhrn's (1990) conclusion. Asp-Onsjö and Öhrn (2015) explain that the boys are trying to receive good grades effortlessly and that they aspire to achieve good results whilst appearing not to be invested in it. They call this parallel positioning and found that the boys who manage the

parallel positioning are the ones who receive the most attention from the teachers to the point where it is described as an alliance between the teachers and the boys who manage parallel positioning.

In her master's thesis, Ahmadian (2018) examined, among other things, how much girls in vocational studies spoke English orally in comparison to the boys. The study was conducted in three vocational classes, with the same teacher in each class. She conducted her research in a female-dominated classroom, a male-dominated classroom and in a class with approximately the same number of boys and girls. In her research, she discovered that the boys were the dominant voices in the classroom, meaning that they were the ones speaking the most throughout a lesson, even in classrooms with the number of girls exceeding the number of boys. Also, she discovered that even though the girls spoke less, they were the academic voices in the classroom, meaning that the girls participated orally only in subject related matters, whilst boys used English for both academic and non-academic purposes.

Ahmadian's (2018) findings are compatible with that of gender research from the 1970s and 1980s (e.g. Brophy, 1985; Kelly, 1988 in Nielsen & Davies, 2008), which also concluded that the boys were the dominant voices in the classrooms and the observational study of Öhrn (1990). Ahmadian's (2018) research does, however, not agree with Nielsen's (2014), which suggests that the boys have become more restrained due to more female-dominated classrooms. Ahmadian(2018) found that the girls in the male-dominated classroom spoke more in proportion to the number of girls than the girls in the female-dominated lessons, which does not support Nielsen's (2014) claim, that the comprehensive presence of girls makes the boys more restrained. The boys in Ahmadian's (2018) research spoke three times as much as the girls did.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in this master's study is mainly quantitative, in order to answer my overarching question: *What are the characteristics of girls' and boys' participation in English lessons when authentic texts are being discussed, and what is characteristic of the teacher in these situations?*

The research design of this master's study will be elaborated in section 3.1, where the quantitative aspects of my study will be elaborated, including the major steps taken to conduct this research. The sample and data material that has been used for the study is detailed in section 3.2, which explains the process used for data selection, and details the steps taken in order to decide on the final sample. Section 3.3 elaborates on my data analysis, including the codes used. Section 3.4 elaborates on the trustworthiness of this master's study, through different aspects of validity, reliability and ethical considerations.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study is part of the research project *Linking Instruction and Student Experiences* (LISE), designed by Professor Kirsti Klette and led by Associate Professor Lisbeth M. Brevik, at the University of Oslo. During the school years 2015–18 (round 1) and 2019–20 (round 2), the LISE research team collected both qualitative data (video observations, screen recordings, student texts and stimulated recall interviews) and quantitative data (student surveys) among teachers and students in seven lower secondary schools (Brevik, 2019; Brevik & Rindal, 2020). The study followed seven classes across two grades (9 and 10, ages 13-15):

We sampled seven schools (Schools 2, 7, 9, 13, 17, 50, 51) for variation in levels of student achievement, based on high ($n=2$), average ($n=2$) and below average ($n=2$) gains on the national reading tests from 8th to 9th grade, as well as demographic and geographic variation across three school districts, i.e. amount of data from urban ($n=2$), suburban ($n=3$), and rural ($n=2$) schools, in areas characterised by low ($n=1$), medium ($n=3$) and high ($n=3$) socioeconomic status. (Brevik, 2019, pp. 2286-2288)

The study received approval from the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD), and teachers, students and their parents provided written informed consent. For my master's study, I have selected video recordings as my data material, which I have analysed, which means that my data material is extensive, comprising 60 video recorded English lessons across two school years. Thus, my role as part of the LISE research team has been to

participate in the analysis of selected video recordings from all LISE classrooms collected in round one (2015-18).

3.1.1 METHOD

As mentioned, I have chosen a quantitative research design in my analysis of the video recordings. Originally, I planned to conduct this master's study with a qualitative research design, focusing on the characteristics of the oral participation of girls and boys, respectively, in English lessons that focused on the discourse of authentic texts. After having started the observations, the quantity of the different actions of the girls and boys in these lessons made an impact on me. It soon became apparent that a quantitative approach was preferable in order to fully understand the gender gap in the number of responses and oral participation in conversations with teachers and peers.

Postholm and Jacobsen (2016) explained that, "it is important to understand that it is mainly qualitative *phenomena* and *processes* that are studied in pedagogy. It does *not* mean that one should limit oneself to qualitative methods and data" (p. 41, my translation). Similarly, although this master's study focuses on the qualitative phenomenon and processes regarding the gender gap in oral participation within the observed English lessons, I study this phenomenon through the use of a quantitative approach to the data material. Postholm and Jacobsen (2016) continued explaining how, "both words and numbers have a role in research regarding knowledge, teaching and learning" and that instead of being considered opposites, "the qualitative and quantitative method should be seen as complementary, that they complete each other, provide different types of information, and that they can inspire further reflection and discussion" (p. 40, my translation). These statements explain how I can examine qualitative video material quantitatively, using different research aspects that should be considered complementary. Consequently, I do not limit myself to the qualitative method even though I use qualitative data to examine this phenomenon. Through using quantitative analysis, I can indeed enlighten different questions regarding the phenomenon and classroom processes. Therefore, using a quantitative method to explore the qualitative phenomenon of girls' and boys' oral participation in authentic text lessons can contribute to exploring new questions and discovering novel perspectives on the gender gap. I believe the numbers gathered, categorized and analysed will indeed contribute unique findings that a qualitative method would not offer. Specifically, Postholm and Jacobsen (2016) emphasised the overlap between qualitative data and quantitative analyses: "The difference between qualitative and quantitative methods is not as clear as many appear to believe. [...] observation also, in many

instances, involves registering how often someone does something (frequency expressed through numbers)” (p. 42, my translation).

This explanation addresses the complexity of these methods and the varying ways in which they can be used. In this master’s study, I used the method of observation, typically considered qualitative, in the same way that they explain quantification of observations. The frequency of the phenomenon was gathered through registering how often they appeared in the videotaped lessons and were expressed through numbers. In other words, although the videos collected for the LISE project are typically referred to as qualitative data, I used this data material quantitatively, in line with Christoffersen and Johannesen (2010), who stated that, “what is characteristic of quantitative methods is that the data are presented as numbers that can be counted” (p. 141).

3.1.2 PROCEDURE

Figure 3A illustrates the procedure used in this master’s study. It visualizes the steps taken in my research design and the chronological order in which they were conducted. These steps will be further explained below.

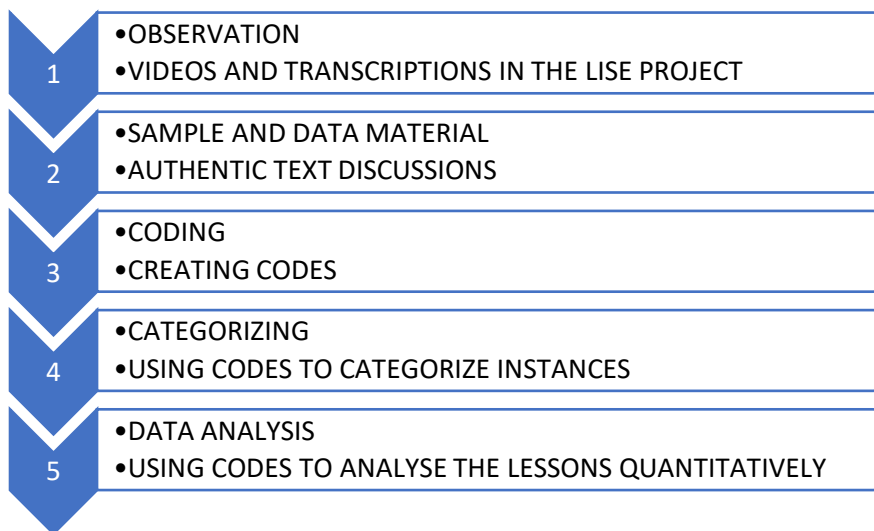


Figure 3A. Research procedure in five steps

Step one – observation: My introduction to the LISE video material took place in my first master’s course – EDID4001 Quality English Teaching – in the spring of 2019. After having observed and transcribed one of the English lessons filmed for the LISE project, which was part of an obligatory component in the course, I became interested in these videos as a data

source. These lessons are interesting in the way that they record the natural environment in these classrooms. The LISE project contained a large number of videotaped English lessons ($N=60$), of which 32 lessons addressed authentic texts, which interested me greatly, in terms of students' oral participation.

I then decided that the teaching of authentic texts in the English lower secondary classrooms in Norwegian schools would be the overall topic for my master's study. I therefore spent a greater part of June 2019 observing these videos in the teaching Learning Video lab (TLVlab) at UiO, where these videos are stored safely. Based on Ahmadian's (2018) master's thesis, my initial interest was in identifying and interviewing some students that showed great oral participation when discussing academic texts, some who demonstrated a moderate oral participation and some who did not participate orally during the segments in the lessons. However, I changed my focus and instead decided to focus on the gender gap observed in the video recordings, because of the clear differences in girls' and boys' oral participation. My interest in the gender gap was strengthened as I learnt about the differences Ahmadian (2018) had discovered between girls' and boys' oral participation in English lessons in vocational classrooms in upper secondary school. I therefore wanted to examine this aspect in the LISE videos.

Step two – selection: Next, I decided on what selection of videos would best fit my research aim. I decided to include English lessons that directly focused on authentic texts, in order to examine both students' and teachers' roles and actions in such situations. English lessons that did not focus on authentic texts were therefore excluded from my sample.

For this step I used an already created overview in the LISE project, of lessons that contained the use of texts in the classrooms. This overview contained information about what types of texts were present in the lessons, what types of activities the students participated in (e.g., authentic text discussion), and when during each lesson these activities occurred (see also Brevik, 2019). Based on this overview, I began narrowing in on the lessons containing authentic texts and plenary discussions.

Of the seven schools in the LISE project, six contained video material relevant for my master's study. These were schools S02, S09, S13, S17, S50 and S51. Of the 60 video-recorded English lessons, 32 were relevant for this master's study.

Table 3A. Video recorded English lessons focusing on authentic text

School	S02	S09	S13	S17	S50	S51	Total
No of lessons	6	5	4	5	6	6	32

As shown in Table 3A, in school S13, there were four relevant video-recorded lessons. In schools S09 and S17 there were five video recorded lessons at each school that focused on authentic texts and discussions, and in schools S02, S50 and S51 there were six relevant videos.

Step three – coding: After selecting the lessons, the next step was that of coding. The purpose of this step was to produce codes for the different actions in each lesson. These codes were to express action and initiator of said action. My supervisors and I decided on creating one code for each type of oral participation. After thorough consideration, I decided that examining the girls’ and boys’ frequency of participation in the authentic text conversations and the differences between different types of oral participation would be of interest, along with the teachers’ roles in these classroom interactions. During my initial observation of the videos, I had made notes of differences between the girls’ and the boys’ participation, and also the teachers’ responses and their selection of students to participate in the oral discourses in the classroom. The extent of a gender gap became my primary focus. Due to this interest in the quantity of the patterns of participation, my belief in the relevance of the quantitative method was strengthened. After this decision, I had a meeting with my supervisors regarding how to further analyse the videos. I decided to only examine the discussions that included both the teacher and students, and to include pair work and group work, as well as plenary situations. I decided on the following codes:

- 1a: A boy raised his hand
- 1b: A girl raised her hand
- 2a: A boy was invited to speak in class
- 2b: A girl was invited to speak in class
- 3a: A boy spoke in class, uninvited
- 3b: A girl spoke in class, uninvited
- 4a: A boy was invited to speak after raising his hand
- 4b: A girl was invited to speak after raising her hand
- 5a: A boy spoke, uninvited, after raising his hand

5b: A girl spoke, uninvited, after raising her hand

6a: A boy answered a follow-up question directed at him

6b: A girl answered a follow-up question directed at her

In order to code as efficiently as possible, I used a software called InqScribe. This software allowed me to create the codes (1a–6b), play the video, rewind, pause and play at a faster speed using a foot pedal with three “buttons”. I was given proper instructions on how to use this software during the EDID4001 course, where I used it to transcribe a classroom video as part of the obligatory assignment in the master’s course. Through using this software, I was able to speed watch the parts of the lessons that were irrelevant to my master’s study (i.e., that did not include authentic text discourse), and then stop the video and rewind whenever a relevant lesson segment appeared.

Step four – categorizing: Step four was dedicated to using the created codes to categorize the video data. Firstly, I created an overview of the classroom, a rough draft of where the students were sitting, by drawing a square for each student desk, including the empty ones, due to the fact that students sometimes moved to different seats during the lessons. After having created this seating plan for the first English lesson, I noted down the gender at the top of each square (seat). Second, I proceeded to analyse the lesson by observing and coding the videos in InqScribe. Third, for each coded action in InqScribe, I made a note of the same code on the seating plan.

After having done this for the first lesson, I moved on to the next lesson and repeated the procedure. My main supervisor provided a list of the lessons she suggested I should start with, continue with, and end with. Some of the lessons she recommended I started out with contained fewer students, shorter time periods of text discussions, and were less challenging in how to identify each student. In the videos she recommended I analyse towards the end, more students were involved in the discussion, they often spoke more and faster, which involved a lot more challenges regarding the identification of each student.

Due to this procedure, I became familiar with the categorization and more efficient in my coding during the analysis of the videos. After I had familiarized myself with the procedure, using the data she advised me to start with, I moved on to the next set of lessons she advised. I believe this both saved time and strengthened the reliability of my coding. The reason for the second claim is that through using this step-by-step guide she provided me with, I became

more certain of how to create my overviews and how to take notes on the seating plan also when the lessons became increasingly more complicated to analyse.

When I struggled with identifying the individual students, this was typically linked to them moving around in the classroom during the English lessons. In some of the lessons, the students were asked to move to a different seat at the beginning and later told to return to their original seats. In other lessons, all the students were told to regroup in ways that had previously been established in the class, before the lessons were recorded, and thus unknown to me as an observer. Some students also exited the classroom in order to work on group projects in different locations, and during this time, no activity was noted down in their respective seats. In one lesson, the students were told to create a so-called writing circle. In this instance, I created a map of the classroom after the students were told to sit in the circle. This was not a problem for this specific lesson, seeing as all of the relevant authentic text discussions appeared within the circle. However, had this not been the case, I would have created one overview of the classroom before they moved and another after. In the instances where single or few students were told to move to different desks, perhaps to collaborate or discuss with peers, I simply put a dot where the student moved and drew a line from their original seating and to the dot. I then continued to make notes of their participation in the authentic text discussions in the original seating.

Step five – analysing: After having coded and categorized all the video recorded English lessons containing authentic text conversations, I continued with the data analysis, specifically aiming to answer my research question. This step consisted of counting and comparing the numbers of the different activities in order to identify the characteristics of the girls and boys.

3.2 SAMPLE AND DATA MATERIAL

First, on the basis of the 32 lessons involving text (see Step 2 above), I aimed to select only the lessons that contained oral discussions of these texts. These lessons varied in length; whereas some lasted for 45 minutes, some were 60 minutes, some were 70 minutes, and in two instances they were double lessons, meaning that they lasted for up to 140 minutes. Secondly, it meant that lesson segments where the students for instance read a text or watched a video adaptation of an authentic text (e.g. music video), were also excluded from my sample, as these segments did not contain any oral interaction. Third, since this master's

study aimed to study the teacher’s initiation of the oral discussions, I focused on segments in which the teacher participated in the oral interaction.

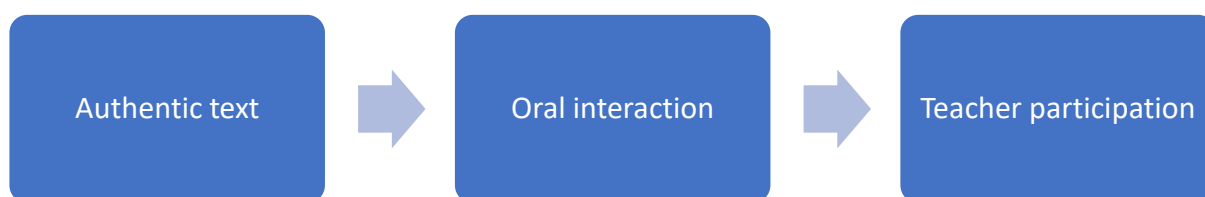


Figure 3B. Process of selection

This elimination process left me with 32 of the originally 60 texts I observed in the LISE-project. The following table depicts the different texts that were discussed in the relevant lessons, and what types of text they were:

Table 3B. An overview of the texts used in the lessons.

S02EN01EAE	FICTION	Short story, <i>First Day of Spring</i> , Howell Hurst
S02EN01EBE	FICTION	Short story, <i>First Day of Spring</i> , Howell Hurst
S02EN01ECE	FICTION	Short story, <i>First Day of Spring</i> , Howell Hurst
S02EN02EAE	FICTION	Short story, <i>The Lottery</i> , Shirley Jackson
S02EN02EBE	FICTION	Short story, <i>The Lottery</i> , Shirley Jackson
S02EN02ECE	FICTION	Short story, <i>The Lottery</i> , Shirley Jackson
S09EN01aE	FICTION	An authentic poem (excerpt), <i>My history lesson</i> , Janette Armstrong
S09EN01bE	FICTION	An authentic poem (excerpt) <i>My history lesson</i> , Janette Armstrong
S09EN03aT	FACT	Statistics from 2013 about capital punishment by country by Amnesty International World map of executions from 2015 by Amnesty International
S09EN03bT	FACT	Statistics from 2013 about capital punishment by country by Amnesty International

		World map of executions from 2015 by Amnesty International
S09EN04T	FICTION	Film, <i>The Green Mile</i> , (1999) by Frank Darabont (clips)
S13EN01E	FICTION AND FACT	Fact, authentic: Map of America <i>Fiction, lyrics:</i> Lyrics “America” from the musical <i>West Side Story</i> Fiction, lyrics: Recording from the musical <i>West Side Story</i> . The song “America”. Fiction, film: Film clip from the musical <i>West Side Story</i> . The song “America”.
S13EN02E	FACT	Lyrics: Lyrics from the Children’s song “No More Kings” Film: Music video on the Children’s song “No More Kings” (authentic)
S13EN03E	FACT	Lyrics: Lyrics from the Children’s song “No More Kings” Film: Music video on the Children’s song “No More Kings” (authentic)
S13EN02T	FACT	Map and list of UNESCO World Heritage sights on UNESCO’s web page.
S17EN34E	FICTION	Excerpt from the graphic novel <i>Operation Stormbreaker</i> by Anthony Horowitz (author), Anthony Johnson (adaptor), Kanako (Illustrator), and Yuzuru Takasaki
S17EN01T	FICTION	Play: Excerpts from the playscript <i>Dear Nobody</i> by Gilian McCain & Legs McNeil

S17EN02T	FICTION	Play: Excerpts from the playscript <i>Dear Nobody</i> by Gilian McCain & Legs McNeil
S17EN03T	FICTION	Play: Excerpts from the playscript <i>Dear Nobody</i> by Gilian McCain & Legs McNeil
S17EN04T	FICTION	Play: Excerpts from the playscript <i>Dear Nobody</i> by Gilian McCain & Legs McNeil
S50EN12E	FICTION	Novel: Excerpt from the novel <i>Mathilda</i> by Roald Dahl Novel: Excerpts from the novel <i>Witch Child</i> by Cecilia Rees from the textbook
S50EN03E	FICTION	Lyrics: Lyrics form the <i>John Brown</i> by Bob Dylan.
S50EN04aE	FICTION	Lyrics: “The Times They are a-Changing” by Bob Dylan
S50EN04bE	FICTION	Lyrics: “The Times They are a-Changing” by Bob Dylan
S50EN01T	FICTION	Short story: <i>The Unicorn In The Garden</i> by James Thurber in the textbook Film: Animated film adaptation of <i>The Unicorn In The Garden</i> by James Thurber
S50EN03T	FICTION	Lyrics: Lyrics from the song “Forever Young” by Bob Dylan covered by Pete Seeger” <i>lyrics</i> : Music video from the song “Forever Young” by Bob Dylan covered by Pete Seeger
S51EN01E	FICTION AND FACT	Fiction, short story: <i>The Sniper</i> by Liam O’Flaherty Fiction, short story: <i>Hills Like White Elephants</i> by Ernest Hemmingway

		<p>Fiction, short story: <i>Neighbors</i> by Raymond Carver</p> <p>Fiction, short story: <i>Lamb to the Slaughter</i> by Roald Dahl</p> <p>Fiction, short story: <i>The Gift of the Magi</i> by O. Henry</p> <p>Fiction, short story: The Fall of the King by Johannes V. Jensen (excerpt)</p> <p>Fact, short story: Captain Scott’s diary by R.F. Scott (excerpt)</p> <p>Fiction, short story: <i>No Country for Old Men</i> by Cormac McCarthy (excerpt)</p> <p>Fiction, short story: <i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i> by L. Maria Child (excerpt)</p>
S51EN02E	FICTION	Short story <i>The Sniper</i> by Liam O’Flaherty
S51EN04E	FICTION	<p>Lyrics from “Can’t Stop the Feeling” by Justin Timberlake</p> <p>Short story, <i>The Killers</i> by Ernest Hemmingway</p> <p>The short story <i>The Killers</i> by Ernest Hemmingway (recording)</p> <p>Short Story, <i>For sale: Baby Shoes, Never Worn</i> (recited by a student)</p>
S51EN01T	FACT	<p>Digital comparison chart about the Democrat vs. Republican party platform</p> <p>Digital text about how presidential debates run</p>
S51EN03T	FACT	Handout about “attention grabbers” (digital)
S51EN04T	FACT	Handout about “attention grabbers” (digital)

3.3 DATA ANALYSIS

As mentioned, the coding of this study began with open coding and sifting through data and personal notes from the initial observation of the LISE video recordings, before I narrowed the focus and began watching the English lessons that contained authentic texts and attempted to note down every instance of oral participation. Some major differences between field notes from a researcher present in the classroom and video material are the possibilities to consider the data from different perspectives, to re-analyse, to code and to interpret the data several times (Dalland, Klette and Svenkerud, 2020, p. 53). Because of this possibility, I was able to decide on what core themes to focus on without writing large-scale field notes, and to observe each recording many times in order to minimize the margin of error. Therefore, the core themes and codes were decided through my observing the data and taking notes during the video observation process.

The codes consisted of a black line, a black line with a red dot on top, a black line with a green dot at the bottom, a red dot placed closer to the upper line, a green dot placed closer to the lower line, and a blue star placed in the middle of the square (see Figure 3C).

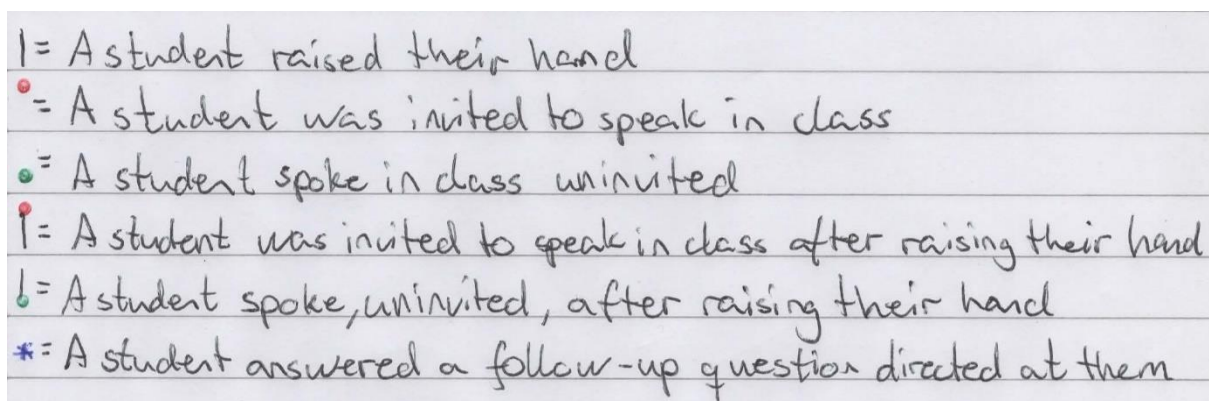


Figure 3C. Codes

In Figure 3C, the black vertical line represented a student raising their hand indicating that they wanted to speak. The red dot represented instances where the teacher invited the student to speak. The green dot represents instances where the students spoke without being invited to do so. The red dot at the top of the black vertical line represents instances where students were invited to speak after having raised their hands. The green dot at the bottom of the black vertical line represents instances where the students speak without being invited to do so after

having raised their hands. The blue star towards the middle of the area represents instances where the students answers a follow up question. Figure 3D illustrates how I used the codes during the video observation:

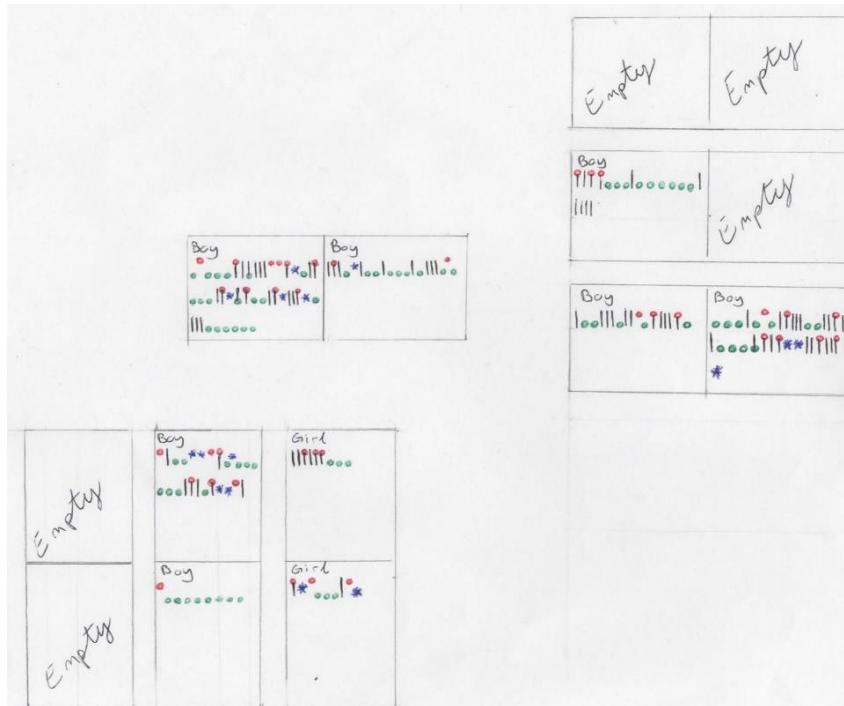


Figure 3D. Seating plan with categorization based on video observation. *Notes.*

S02=School 02. EN02=English lesson 2. For an explanation of the codes, see Figure 3C.

The squares in Figure 3D are placed to give an approximate understanding of how the classrooms looked, and it illustrates one student per desk. In order to get a full understanding of the lesson, I illustrated the desks that were unoccupied as well and wrote “empty” inside the square. In order to separate the two genders, I decided to write “boy” or “girl” in the top left corner of each square. This seating plan created an overview of how many boys there were in the classroom, how many girls there were, where they were seated, and if it was typically the same students who spoke during a lesson. This procedure also provided me with the opportunity to observe whether some students never participated orally in these lessons.

After having created these codes, I observed the videos containing authentic text discussions once more. I drew the squares and filled in the gender. I then made notes of all the codes for the different activities observed in these videos. These seating plans with my handwritten field notes were the basis of my first set of findings. In order to get to these findings, I needed to categorize my data. After having first separated them by gender, the next step was to

differentiate between student-initiated activities and teacher-initiated activities. I decided to separate it as shown in Figure 3E.

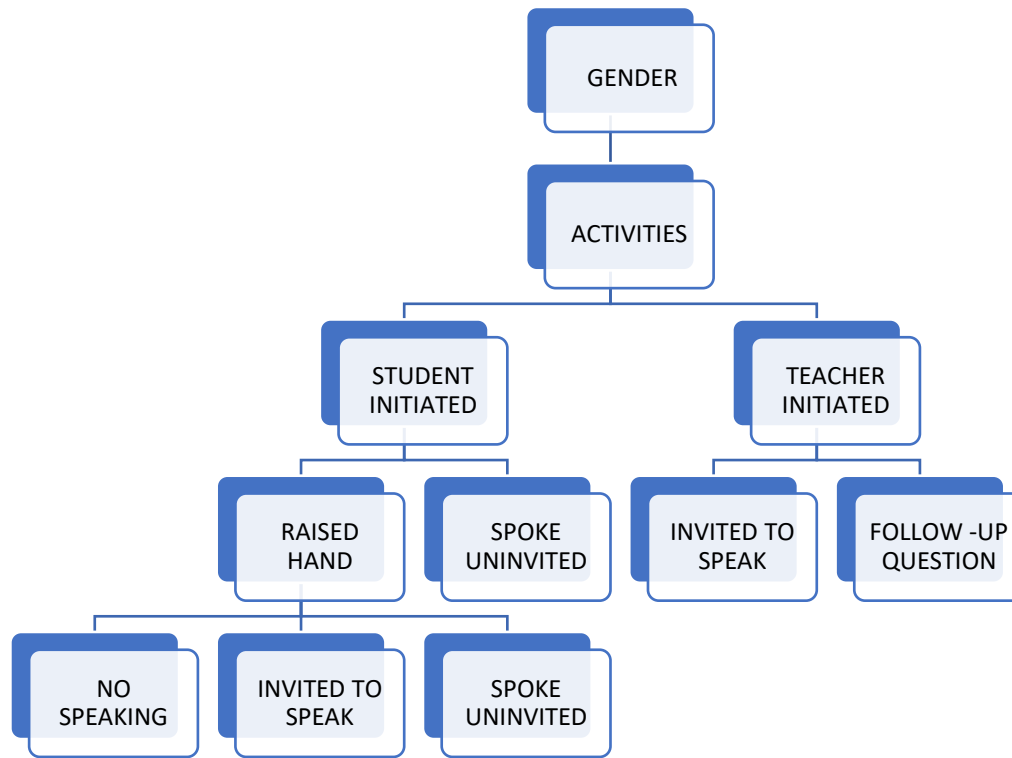


Figure 3E. Categorization overview for boys and girls (gender) respectively

Boeijs (2010) explained categorization, or segmenting, as separating and reassembling data in order to create meaningful parts. Similarly, in my analysis, student-initiated activities included raising their hands, and speaking without being invited to do so, while teacher-initiated activities comprised follow-up questions and inviting a student who had not raised their hand to speak. Even though the students often raised their hands as a response to the teacher asking them a question, I still decided to categorize this element as a student-initiated activity. The reason for this is that they chose to raise their hands to signal that they wanted to answer. The two categories where the teacher is the one initiating the oral participation is categorized as such because it is the teacher that is choosing to invite a student to speak or choosing to ask a question to a specific student without being given an indication that the student desired to speak.

The final step in this categorization was to separate the different reactions that were linked to the students raising their hands. Within the category of “raised hand” there were three

different activities. The first of these was the category “no speaking” that meant that the student did not speak in any way, they did not speak uninvited nor were they invited to speak, they simply put their hands back down. The second category is the one where the teacher invited the student who raised their hand to speak. This category is called “invited to speak”, and I only counted the instances where the students spoke as a response to this. The final subcategory of “hand raised” is the one called “spoke uninvited”. This means that the student who raised their hand spoke without the teacher inviting them to do so.

This procedure refers to the typical data used in quantitative studies, the survey. This study, on the other hand, uses these methods with observation. Using the codes previously explained, I counted every instance of each code in each lesson and added the numbers of each activity. I was then able to properly count and put into numbers how often each of these activities occurred for each gender, making the difference very clear. Christofferesen and Johannesen (2010) stated that quantitative data needs to be simplified, for example by univariate analysis: , “the simplest form of statistical analysis is a study of how units divide into one trait or the values into one variable. This is referred to as univariate analysis – *uni* from latin *unus*, meaning one –, where you count how many units have marked the different answers (values) in the variable” (p. 141, my translation). This is what I did to the large number of video-recorded observation data in my master’s study through the categorization previously explained and illustrated in Figure 3E.

3.4 RESEARCH CREDIBILITY

Cohen, Morrison and Manion (2011) argue that, “the research community and those using the findings have a right to expect that research is conducted rigorously, scrupulously and in an ethically defensible manner” (p. 73). In order to assure that such considerations are adhered to by the researcher, transparency is of importance. This section aims to do just that. In order to fully maintain all participants’ rights, I will first elaborate on the aspects of validity, reliability, and research ethics.

3.4.1 VALIDITY

Validity is often explained as trustworthiness and is closely linked to transparency in research. Here, I aim to elaborate on the validity in this research project, and what measures I took in order to increase validity. Johnson (2013) explained that “research validity refers to the correctness or truthfulness of the inferences that are made from the results of the study”

(p. 279). Similarly, Postholm and Jacobsen (2016) explained validity as “whether or not we have coverage of our interpretations of findings and results” (p. 126, my translation). These definitions emphasise transparency as key in order to determine validity. Through explaining the method of data collection and analysis, I have aimed to thoroughly explain every step of the research. In this section, I will consider the matter of validity in quantitative research. There are two different types of validity to consider in this study; internal validity, often referred to as causal validity, and external validity, often referred to as generalizability.

INTERNAL VALIDITY

The first validity issue I want to address within quantitative research is internal validity, which is about whether or not we have coverage to say that something is causal, meaning that there is a cause and effect (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2016).

Although it is tempting to draw a conclusion on what causes boys and girls to participate differently when observing the responses from the teacher, these variables appear to be covariant, but might not be causal. There is no telling whether the teacher responds the way they do due to the students’ participation or if the students participate differently due to the teacher’s responses, nor is there a way to determine whether these aspects are affected by other elements. Some possibilities regarding this matter will be considered in light of previous research and theory in the discussion in Chapter 5. In order to fully study the causality of this aspect, I would encourage others to explore the topic in future research.

EXTERNAL VALIDITY

The second variation of validity is what Postholm and Jacobsen (2016) described as external validity, “external validity is about whether or not we can generalize findings to a group we have not researched” (p. 128, my translation). Transferring conclusions or findings from the researched group unto most groups is, according to Postholm and Jacobsen (2016), not something that is typically satisfactory in most research. My study has elements supporting a level of generalizability. The population chosen for this study was lower secondary school students in 9th and 10th grade in English classrooms in Norway. Because the research is conducted on the carefully sampled data material in the LISE project that was sampled from a variety of schools in the country, this could indeed be considered generalizable. The fact that all the video recorded English lessons that included the teaching of authentic texts was indeed

observed and analysed increase the external validity of this study and supports its claims to be somewhat generalizable. However, as Johnson (2013) explains:

most studies cannot randomly sample from the populations of individuals, settings, times, outcomes, and treatment variations because of the expense, time, and effort involved as well as the fact that the populations of outcomes and treatment variations are probably not known and cannot, therefore, be adequately sampled. Therefore, all studies contain characteristics that threaten their external validity (p. 291)

Therefore, I cannot claim that this study is generalizable, but I will argue that it is transferable to similar situations.

3.4.2 RELIABILITY

Reliability is often connected to repeatability. Tufte (2011) explains that, “reliability can be tested through repeating the research multiple times, that multiple researchers go through the same data material and similar actions” (p.82, my translation). This means that the research has been conducted in such a way that one can rely on the results. When a study is reliable, the criteria for the different codes have been thoroughly examined and determined, the data has been thoroughly examined and categorized and the process has been conducted and elaborated in such a way that it is possible to repeat the process with the same outcome (2011), which I have tried to show above, by making my procedures transparent. Tufte (2011) also writes that, “reliability is about whether the research is conducted in such a way that one avoids random registering of data” (p. 82, my translation). Ensuring that the data are correctly gathered, coded and analysed has been of great importance when I conducted my coding and categorization, and ensures reliability in the study. Tufte (2011) emphasises that “the most important guaranty of good reliability is that the data collection is planned and conducted in a solid way” (p. 83, my translation), which I have taken care to do, as described in detail above. Postholm and Jacobsen (2016) define reliability in much the same way: “reliability is about if we can trust the researcher to have done a proper job with the research. This, of course, implies that there should be no sloppiness in the data collection, registering, and transcribing, analysis or presentation of findings” (p. 129, my translation). I argue that my careful observation of the sampled lessons though several steps ensures reliability in line with research reliability (Postholm & Jakobsen, 2016; Tufte, 2011). In addition, the fact that the codes were created and revised together with my supervisors, strengthened the reliability.

By using the software InqScribe, I was able to increase the speed of the videos. This could be considered a threat to the reliability, possibly contributing to some segments or activities being ignored or overlooked in the observation. However, the speed I observed these videos in was not great enough for the audio to be inaudible. The conversations and utterances were still audible, and the fast-forward effect was only used on the sections that did not include the relevant activities, for instance when students were working individually and silently. Through the previous rounds of observation, I also had some knowledge of which sections I could use the fast-forward effect on. Whenever any uncertainties occurred, I used the button on the foot pedal to rewind and observe the segment multiple times. Through this procedure, I minimized the threats the fast-forward function could have posed. In order to ensure that the observations were indeed correct, I often observed segments and entire video recorded lessons multiple times. These steps were taken for the sole purpose of ensuring that my analysis of the data material was indeed reliable and correct.

3.4.3 SECONDARY DATA USE

Since this master's study was conducted on previously collected data material from the LISE project, meaning that it is based on secondary data (Dalland, 2011). This means that I have not been a part of collecting the data material, and thus, have not had the opportunity to influence the data collection. The use of secondary data in qualitative data is often less reliable and accepted than that of quantitative data, according to Dalland (2011), who writes:

In a quantitative perspective, data exists independently from the researcher, and can therefore be re-used by others. This perspective differs from that of qualitative research tradition, where the interaction between the researcher and the informant is considered as central for the interpretation of the data (p. 450, my translation).

She also explains that being able to re-use data collected by others gave her the opportunity to use data material that she would not have been able to collect on her own. (p. 454, my translation). This is a vital part of why I chose to base my research on the video material of the LISE project. Collecting data from two years and a widespread and large-scale amount of schools from three different counties would not have been possible for me to do for this master's study. Through using this data material, I was able to thoroughly sift through a vast amount of data material. Dalland, Klette and Svenkerud (2020) explain how "the use of video data enables us to watch, code, and interpret recordings a number of times. Thus, video data

can be re-analyzed and recoded for different purposes” (p. 53), which in turn explains how I re-analysed and recoded the video material from the LISE project in order to examine the characteristics of the girls’ and boys’ oral participation in the authentic text based lessons in the material, as well as the teachers’ characteristics in such situations.

3.4.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The ethical considerations in this master’s study has been of great importance to consider. Research regarding education often include teenagers and young adults, therefore, ethical considerations need to be carefully attended to. The LISE research team gathered consent from parents, teachers and students. The data material is carefully protected in the secure TLVlab at the University of Oslo, and in order to gain access one needs permission and to sign a non-disclosure agreement. The data can only be observed in the TLVlab, where a student ID and code is used to enter the lab. These procedures ensure that the ethical consideration of anonymity for the participants of this research project is protected. All schools, classes and specific lessons have been coded for protection, and so have the names of participants. Teachers are referred to by pseudonyms, while students are referred to as Student 1, 2, etc. When taking notes of the video recorded lessons and when I created the seating plan illustrations of the classrooms, I did not note down any names or identifiable features, therefore, the original notes for this master’s study are also anonymizing the participants. These measures ensure that the participants’ rights and anonymity are protected. Because this master’s study is a part of the larger LISE project, searching for permission to conduct the data collection had already been done and accepted, and this master’s study has therefore been granted ethical approval. These ethical considerations have not been an obstacle during my study.

4.0 FINDINGS

Through this master's study, I have aimed to examine how girls and boys participate orally in lessons regarding authentic texts in English as an L2 in Norwegian lower secondary school grades 9 and 10, and what role the teacher plays in the oral discussions of these texts. This chapter aims to elaborate and illustrate what I discovered through this research.

Firstly, the chapter elaborates on the girls' oral participation (4.1), next, it elaborates on the boys' oral participation (4.2), then, the teacher's role in these situations will be examined (4.3), followed by a comparison of the boys' and the girls' participation (4.4), and, finally, the three main findings will be synthesised and presented (4.5). These are: (a) the boys are far more orally active, and the number of activities counted are close to double that of the girls, (b) although the boys speak far more than the girls when considering only the number of instances of their participation, the girls and boys use approximately the same percentage of time on the different activities, and (c) the number of teacher-initiated activities are larger for the boys than for the girls. This shows that though the characteristics of boys' and girls' participation in these English lessons are somewhat similar, the number of instances the boys speak far outweigh those of the girls.

4.1 THE GIRLS' ORAL PARTICIPATION

As previously explained, separating and identifying each student in the different classrooms across lessons (grade 9), as well as identifying the same students in the second round of data collection a year later (grade 10) was an incredibly time consuming and difficult task, and not necessarily relevant for the research question in this master's study. Therefore, I counted the number of boys and girls in every lesson, instead of identifying each student individually. This is also necessary in order to retrieve the correct numbers for this study. With this in mind, I counted a total of 263 girls in the relevant English lessons. These girls are the ones that could be clearly observed in these video-recorded lessons. The number of oral participation among the girls are indeed very interesting, and wildly different from that of the boys. Figure 4A depicts the different activities of the girls in this study.

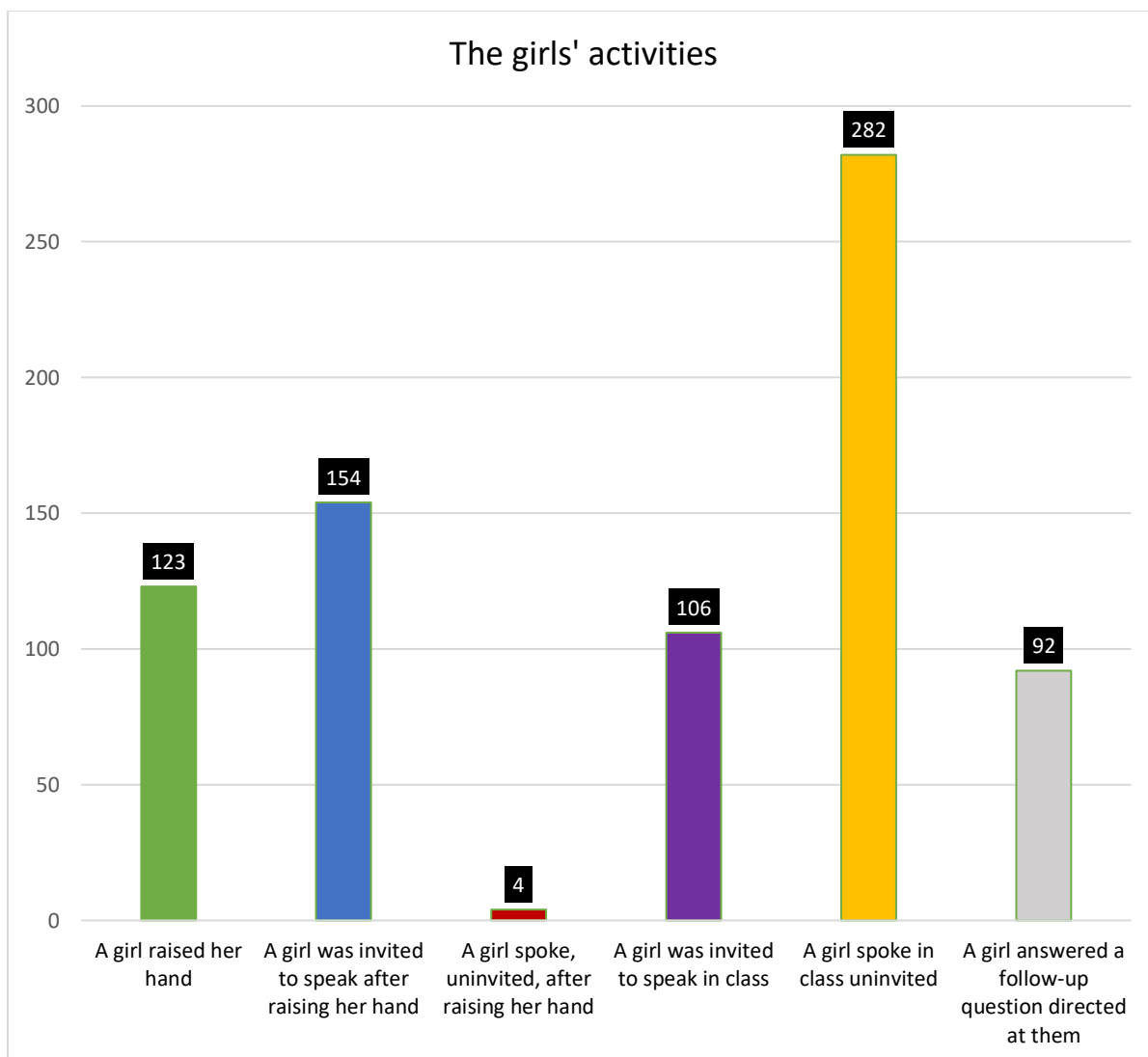


Figure 4A. The girls' activities across 32 observed English lessons

Figure 4A shows that these activities make up a total of 761 instances of participation for the girls. The most frequent activity was when a girl spoke in class uninvited, which occurred 37% of the time (282 instances). The second most frequent activity was when a girl was invited to speak after raising her hand, which occurred 20% of the time (154 instances). Next, were the activities of a girl raising her hand (16% of the time, 123 instances), when a girl indeed was invited to speak in class (14% of the time, 106 instances), and when a girl answered a follow-up question directed at them (12% of the time, 92 instances). The least frequent activity was when a girl spoke uninvited, after raising her hand (1% of the time, 4 instances). In the following, I will elaborate on each of these activities, not in the order of frequency, but in the order presented in Figure 4A, which is the common order of these activities in the classroom.

4.1.1 GIRLS RAISING THEIR HANDS

What first struck me in the video recorded material, was the relatively few number of times the girls voluntarily raised their hands in these English lessons. The 263 girls raised their hands 281 times all together across the 32 different lessons I observed. Indeed, on average, this means that each girl raised her hand 1.1 times throughout all these lessons. Of these 281 times, there were 123 instances where they raised their hands without any oral outcome. This means, as previously explained, that the students either put their hands back down without being called on, spoke without being called on, or without any other oral outcome. Of these 281 times of their hand being raised, 154 were instances where the girls were invited to speak in class, and four were instances where the girls spoke uninvited after raising their hands.

The green bar in Figure 4A illustrates the number of times the girls raised their hands with no oral outcome (16%). The blue bar illustrates the number of times the girls were invited to speak in class after raising their hands, resulting in oral activity (20%). The red column illustrates the number of times the girls spoke uninvited, after having raised their hands (1%), also, resulting in oral activity. This means that of all the instances where the girls did in fact raise their hands, 158 of them resulted in oral activity (21%), and that 123 of them did not.

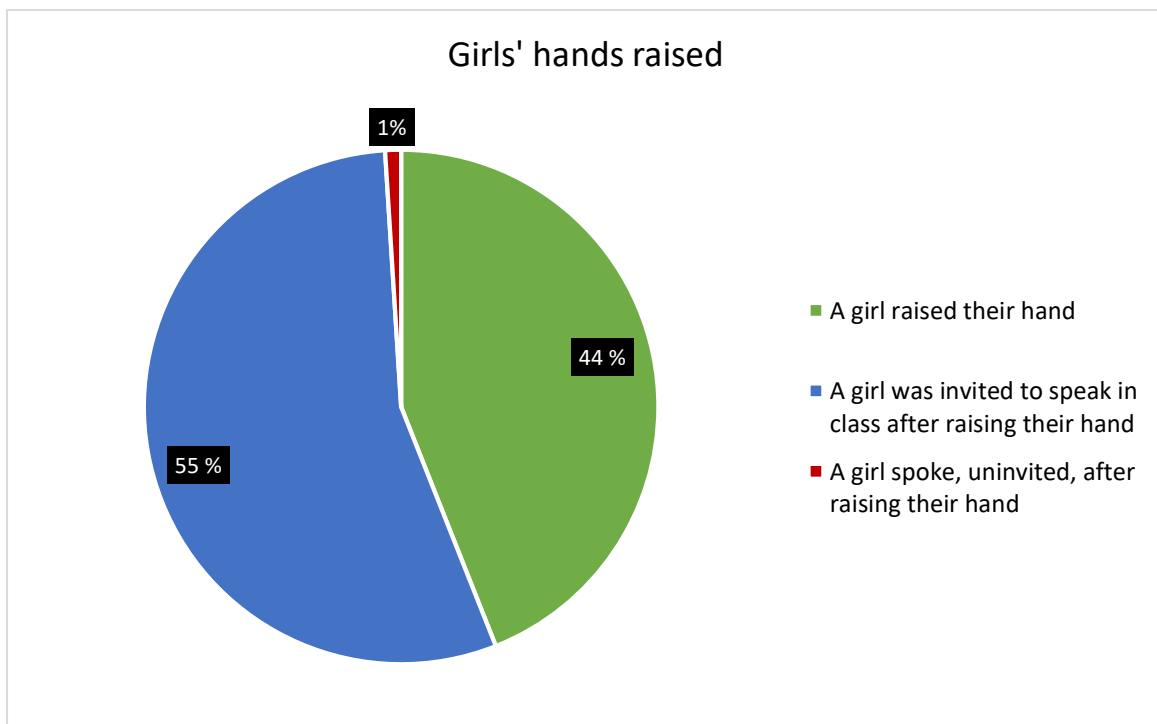


Figure 4B. Girls' hands raised across 32 observed English lessons

To summarize, Figure 4B illustrates how the 154 instances where the girls were indeed invited to speak in class after raising their hands make up 55% of all the times the girls raised

their hands (red and blue), while 44% of the activities involving the girls raising their hands (green), did in fact not result in any oral activity.

4.1.2 GIRLS BEING INVITED TO SPEAK

In the previous section, the girls being invited to speak were considered in relation to the number of times they raised their hands, whereas this section focuses on the girls who were invited to speak, also without having raised their hands. There are two activities that will be addressed in this section. The first activity concerns the girls being invited to speak in class *without* raising their hands, and the second activity is the girls being invited to speak in class *after* raising their hands. As illustrated in Figure 4A, there were 154 instances where the girls were invited to speak in class after raising their hands (blue), 106 instances where they were simply invited to speak (purple), and 92 instances where they answered a follow-up question (grey). This means that the girls were invited to speak in one of these two ways a total of 352 times, which make up 46% of the girls' observed activities in these lessons.

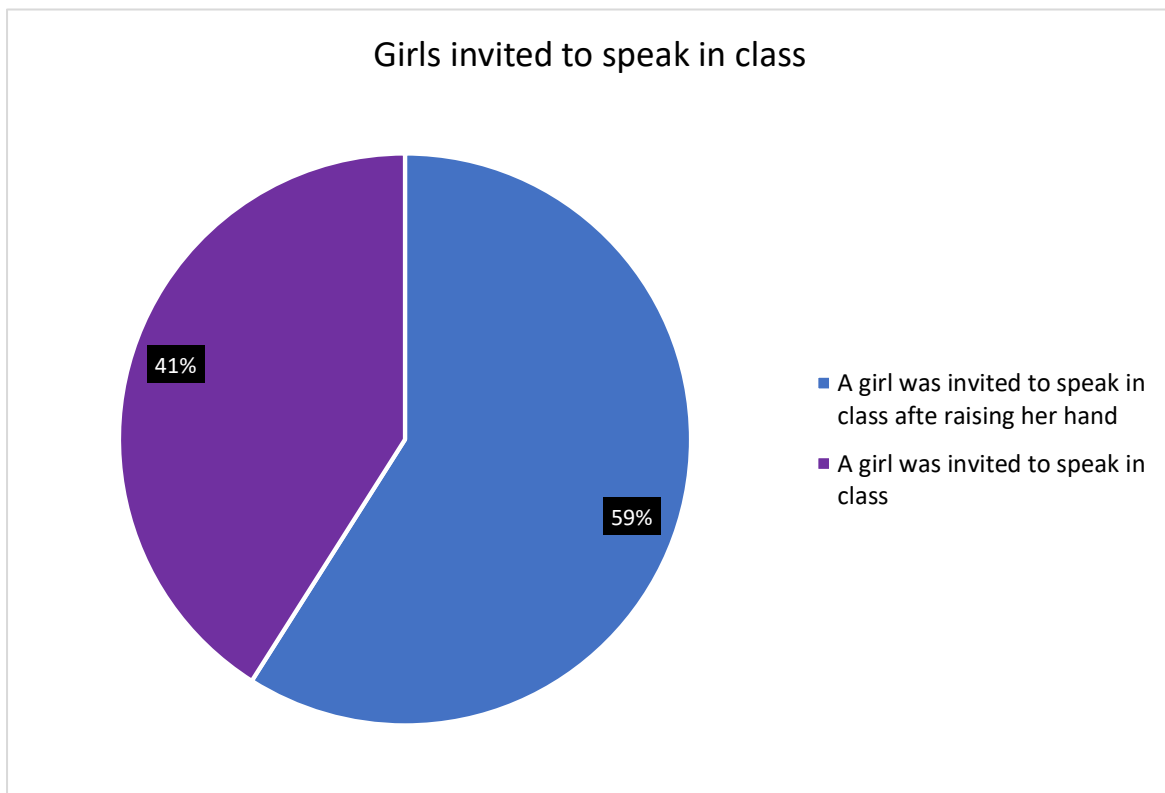


Figure 4C. Girls invited to speak in class across 32 observed English lessons

The percentages illustrated in the pie chart in Figure 4C, illustrates that when looking only at

the 260 times the girls were invited to speak in class, there were 154 instances that were student initiated, amounted to 59% of all instances where they were invited to speak in class, and that the 106 instances where the girls were invited to speak in class without having raised their hands amounted to 41 %. When looking at this pie chart, it becomes apparent that there were in fact almost as many instances where the girls initiated the oral participations themselves, as there were instances where the teacher initiated the girls' oral participation.

4.1.3 GIRLS SPOKE UNINVITED

This section focuses on the instances where the girls spoke uninvited during the 32 video-recorded English lessons. This has been considered through the aspect of the girls speaking, uninvited, after raising their hands (red), and the instances where they simply spoke in class uninvited (yellow). As shown in Figure 4A, the girls spoke uninvited, after raising their hands a total of 4 times. The same diagram shows that girls spoke without being invited – and without raising their hands – a total of 282 times. This number includes group work and work in pairs, which is where I observed most of this activity, regardless of gender. .

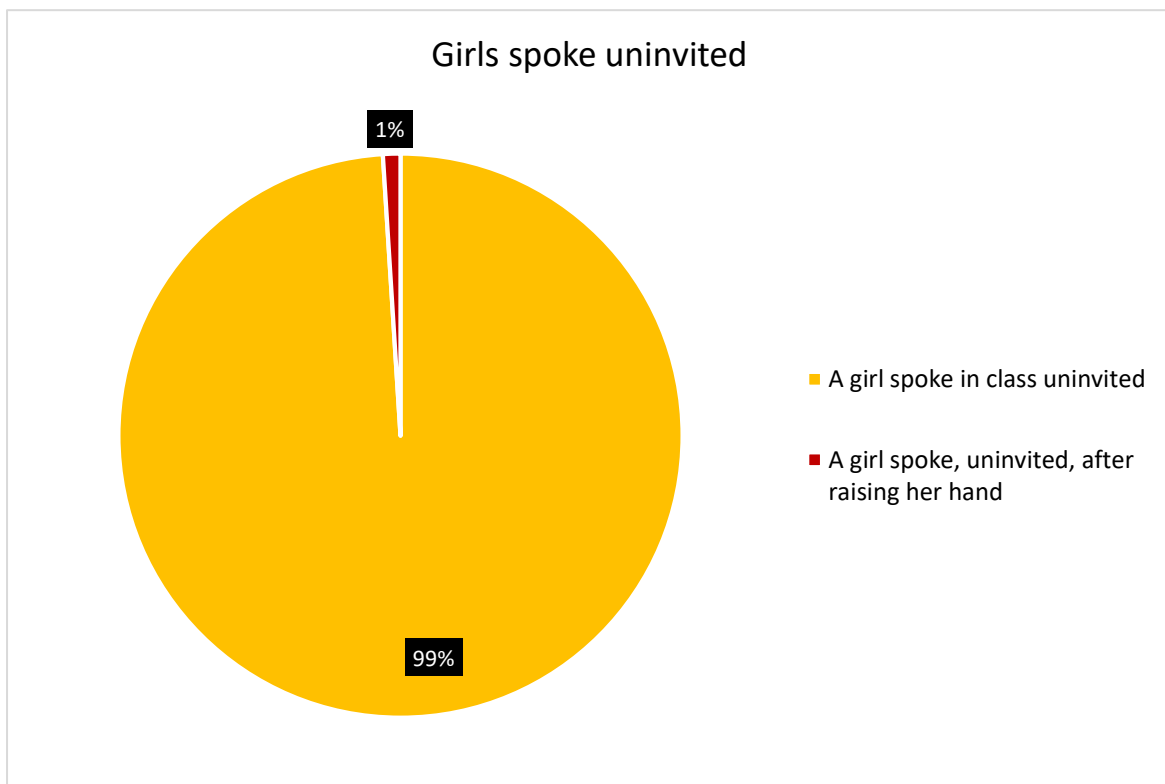


Figure 4D. Girls spoke uninvited across 32 English lessons

Indeed, as illustrated in the pie chart in Figure 4D, when speaking uninvited in class, the girls typically spoke during pair and group work (99%), while they very seldom spoke uninvited, after raising their hands (1%).

4.1.4 NO ORAL PARTICIPATION AMONG GIRLS

Finally, in this section, I will examine the number of girls who did not speak at all during the 32 observed English lessons. This means the girls who did not participate orally in any of the activities I have analysed above. This finding does not necessarily mean that the girls did not speak in other lessons or during different topics, themes or educational settings than those where authentic texts were being discussed. Due to the seating plans that I drew of the classrooms (see Figure 3D in the methods chapter), I was able to identify students who did not speak during the 32 analysed English lessons. These are the girls who did not raise their hands, were not invited to speak in class after raising their hands, or who did not speak uninvited after raising their hands; and girls who were not invited to speak in class without raising their hands, girls who did not speak in class uninvited, and did not answer a follow-up question directed at them. These make up 101 girls across all the classrooms.

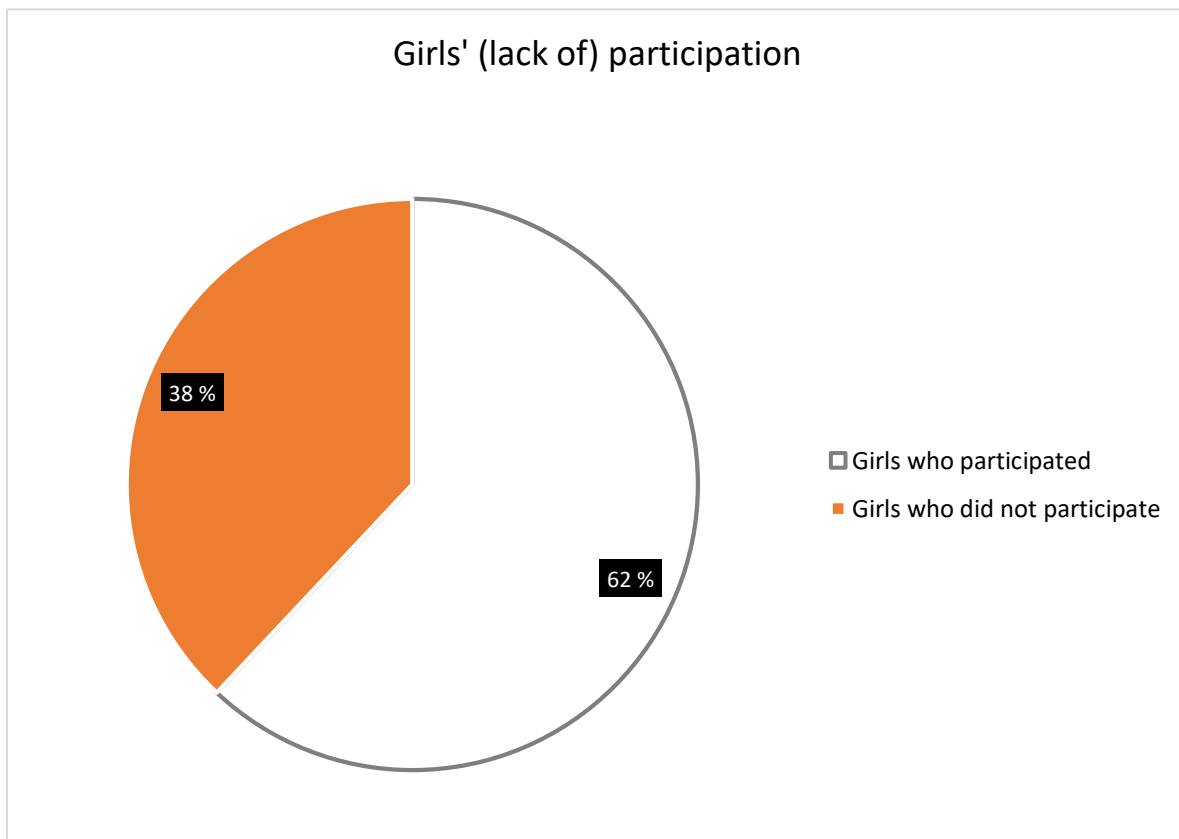


Figure 4E. Overview of girls' participation, and lack thereof, during 32 observed English lessons

Figure 4E illustrates that of the 263 girls in these seven classes in grades 9 and 10, 162 girls participated in one way or another (62%), whereas 101 girls (38%) did not participate orally or indicate that they wanted to through raising their hands.

4.2 THE BOYS' ORAL PARTICIPATION

While the previous section focused on how the girls participated orally in the observed videos, this section will examine the boys' participation. I counted a total of 292 boys in the relevant English lessons. Firstly, the overall numbers of all the boys' activities will be illustrated in order to get an overview of the ways in which they characteristically participated in the classroom. Second, this section will elaborate on the numbers and findings regarding the same categories as for girls; namely for boys' hands raised, boys being invited to speak, then, it will elaborate on the categories for speaking uninvited, and finally, it will explore how many boys did not participate orally in the discussions about authentic texts. The total amount of instances of the different activities for the boys was 1,388 – almost twice as many as for the girls. Figure 4F illustrates the characteristics of the boys' participation in the classroom:

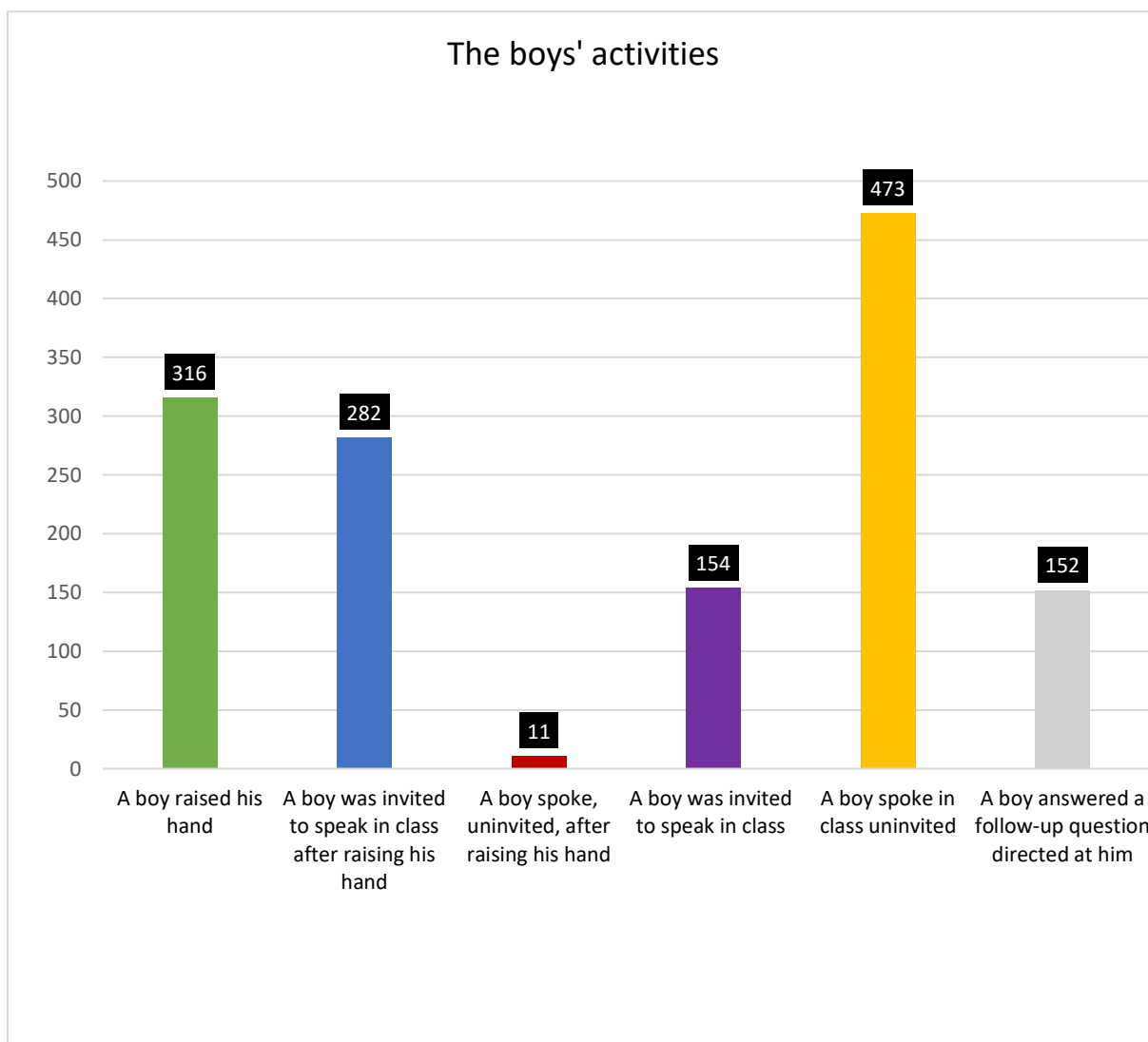


Figure 4F. The boys' activities across 32 observed English lessons

Figure 4F shows that the activities of the boys illustrated through numbers. In order to properly consider the characteristics, the percentages of these different activities must be considered. The most frequent activity was when a boy spoke in class uninvited, which occurred 34% of the time (473 instances). The second most frequent activity was when a boy raised his hand, which occurred 23% of the time (316 instances). Next, were the activities of a boy being invited to speak after raising his hand (20% of the time, 282 instances), when a boy indeed was invited to speak in class (11% of the time, 154 instances), and when a boy answered a follow-up question directed at them (11% of the time, 152 instances). The least frequent activity was when a boy spoke uninvited, after raising his hand (1% of the time, 11 instances). In the following, I will elaborate on each of these activities, in the order presented in Figure 4F, as I also did for the girls.

4.2.1 BOYS RAISING THEIR HANDS

As depicted in Figure 4F, the boys raised their hands 316 times without it amounting to any oral participation, meaning that they simply put their hands back down without speaking (23% of the boys' activities). They were also invited to speak in class after raising their hands a total of 282 times, which amounts to 20%. They spoke, uninvited, after raising their hands 11 times, amounting to 1 % of the activities. The number of times the boys raised their hands, regardless of whether they were invited to speak in class or not, was a total of 609 times. Of these, 293 were instances where the boys spoke, meaning that it resulted in an oral activity. These instances amounted to 48% of the times where the boys raised their hands. Of these 48%, 2% were instances where the boys spoke, uninvited after raising their hands, meaning that the other 46% were instances where they were invited to speak in class after raising their hands. This is illustrated in Figure 4G.

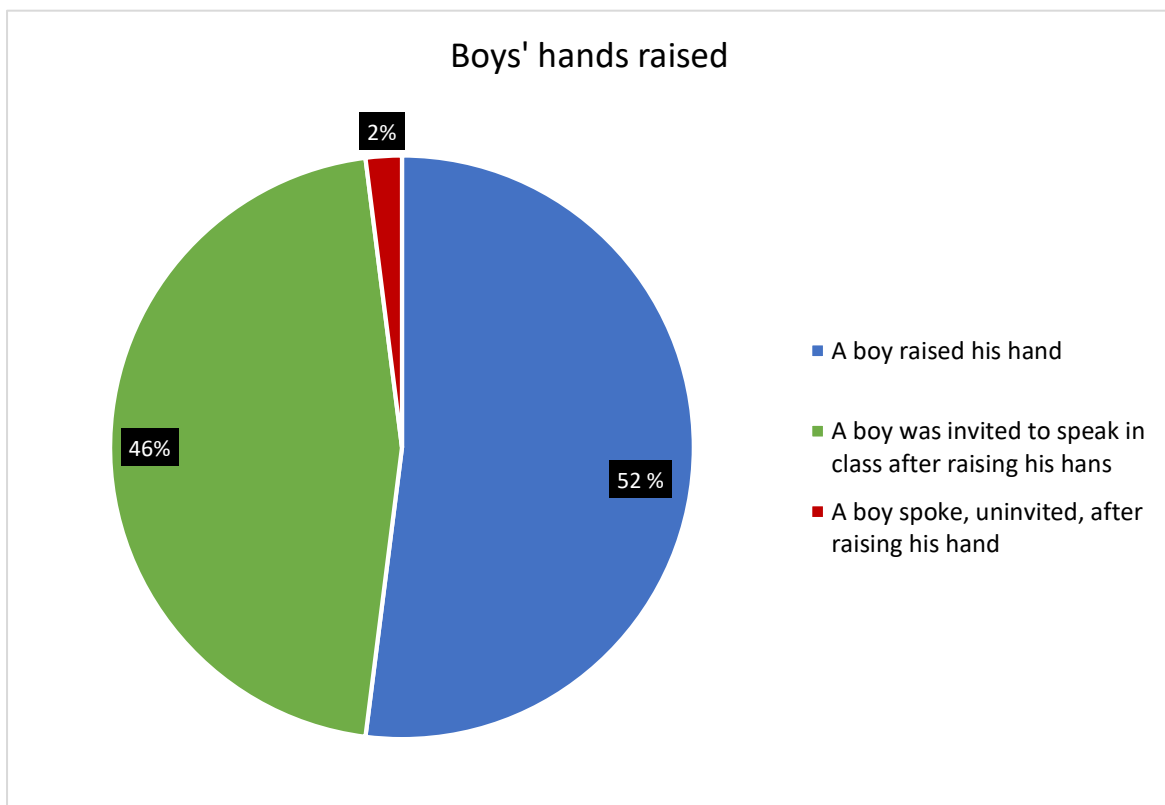


Figure 4G. Boys' hands raised across 32 observed English lessons

4.2.2 BOYS BEING INVITED TO SPEAK

The number of times the boys were invited to speak in class after raising their hands was explained and illustrated in the previous section. Here, I will also include the number of times the boys were simply invited to speak in class, *without* raising their hands. The second activity is the boys being invited to speak in class *after* raising their hands. . The boys were invited to speak in class after raising their hands a total of 282 times (blue) and simply invited to speak in class without having raised their hands a total of 154 times (purple). This means that the boys were in fact invited to speak 436 times during the English lessons that have been analysed. This means that the number of times the boys were invited to speak amounted to 31% of the boys' activities in these lessons.

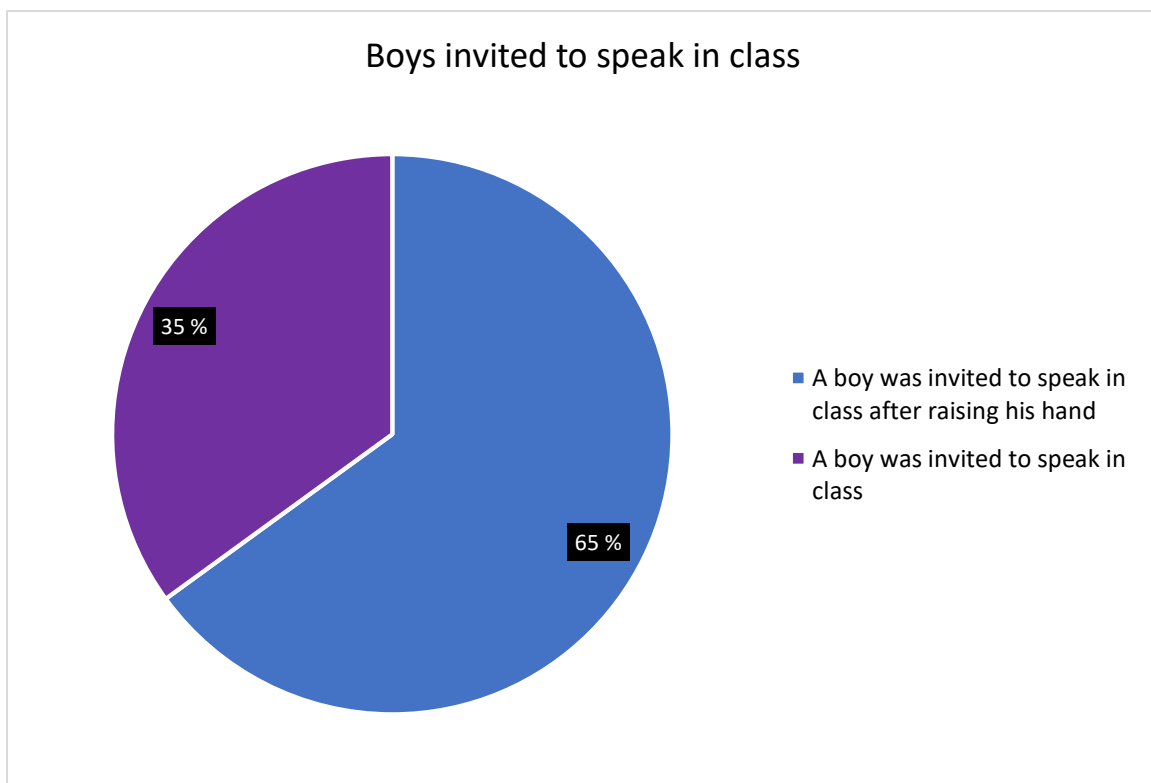


Figure 4H. Boys invited to speak in class across 32 observed English lessons

The percentages illustrated in the pie chart in Figure 4H, shows that when looking only at the 436 times the boys were invited to speak in class, there were 282 instances that were student initiated, amounting to 65% of all instances where they were invited to speak in class, This difference is illustrated in the pie chart in Figure 4H. As we can see, the difference is clear. This is also rather different than the numbers regarding the same matter for the girls, which will be illustrated and elaborated on later.

4.2.3 BOYS SPOKE UNINVITED

The number of times the boys spoke uninvited during the 32 video-recorded English lessons are shown in Figure 4F. This shows that the boys spoke in class uninvited 473 times and that they spoke uninvited, without raising their hands, 11 times. Speaking in class uninvited is indeed the oral activity in which the boys participated the most in the observed English lessons,

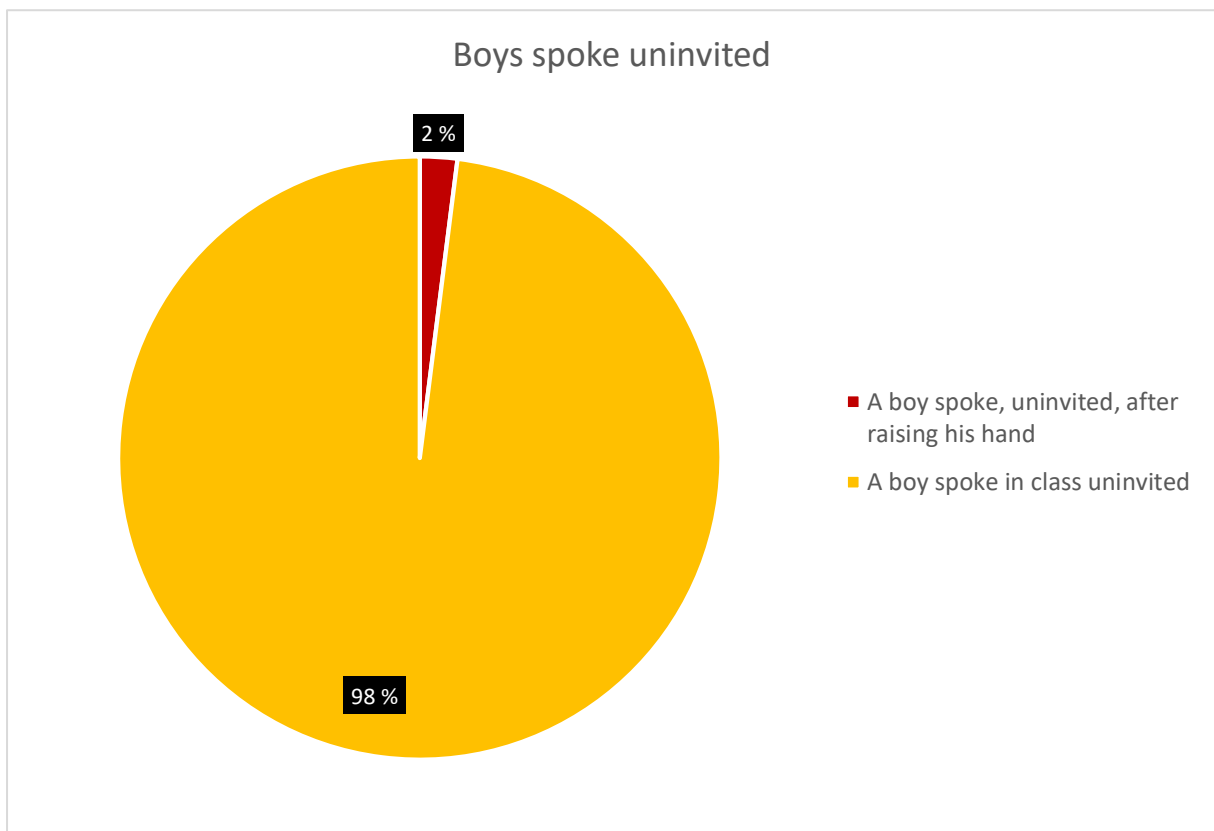


Figure 4I. Boys spoke uninvited across 32 English lessons

Figure 4I shows that of all the instances where the boys spoke uninvited, only 2% were after they had raised their hands, and 98% were instances where they simply spoke in class uninvited.

4.2.4 NO ORAL PARTICIPATION AMONG BOYS

Similar to the girls, some of the boys did not participate orally in the lessons that were observed. These boys did not raise their hands, did not speak, uninvited, after raising their hands, were not invited to speak in class whether raising their hands or not, did not speak in class uninvited, and did not answer any follow-up questions. Of the 292 boys counted in these classrooms across grades 9 and 10, 82 did not do any of the activities.

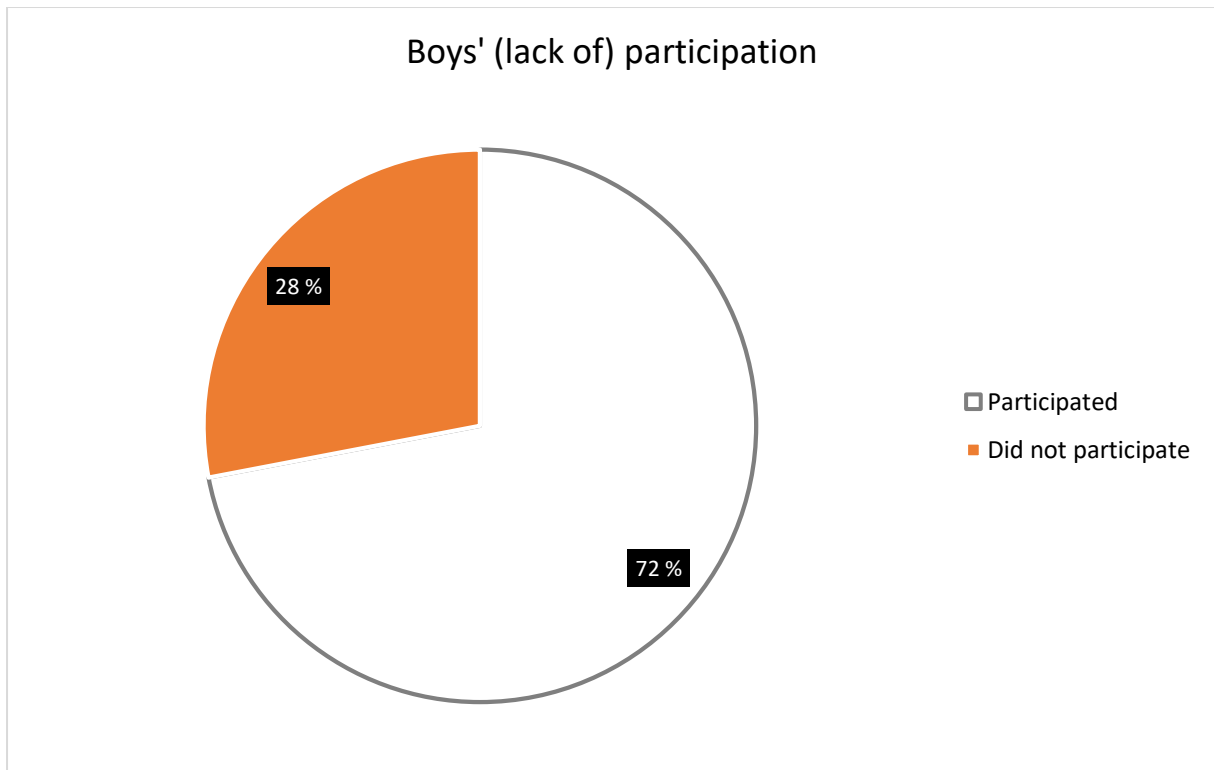


Figure 4J. Overview of boys' participation, and lack thereof, during 32 observed English lessons

Thus, there were 210 boys who participated orally in these lessons. This means that 28% of the boys did in fact not participate, whereas 72% did. These percentages are illustrated in Figure 4J.

4.3 THE TEACHER'S ROLE

A vital element of this master's study was the teacher's role in how the boys and girls participated in the English lessons. This will be explored in the following section. For comparison, the total number of students in the 32 observed English lessons, were 555. Of these, 292 were boys (53%) and 263 girls (47%), indicating an almost equal distribution across genders. This finding suggests that one might expect the students' opportunities to participate in these lessons to be equal for girls and boys as well. However, the findings show that this is not the case. The three main categories that will be elaborated on in this section are those that are directly connected to the teacher: (1) a student is invited to speak after raising their hand, (2) a student is invited to speak in class, and (3) a student answers a

follow-up question directed at them. These categories are of importance because they illustrate the teachers' actions in these classroom situations.

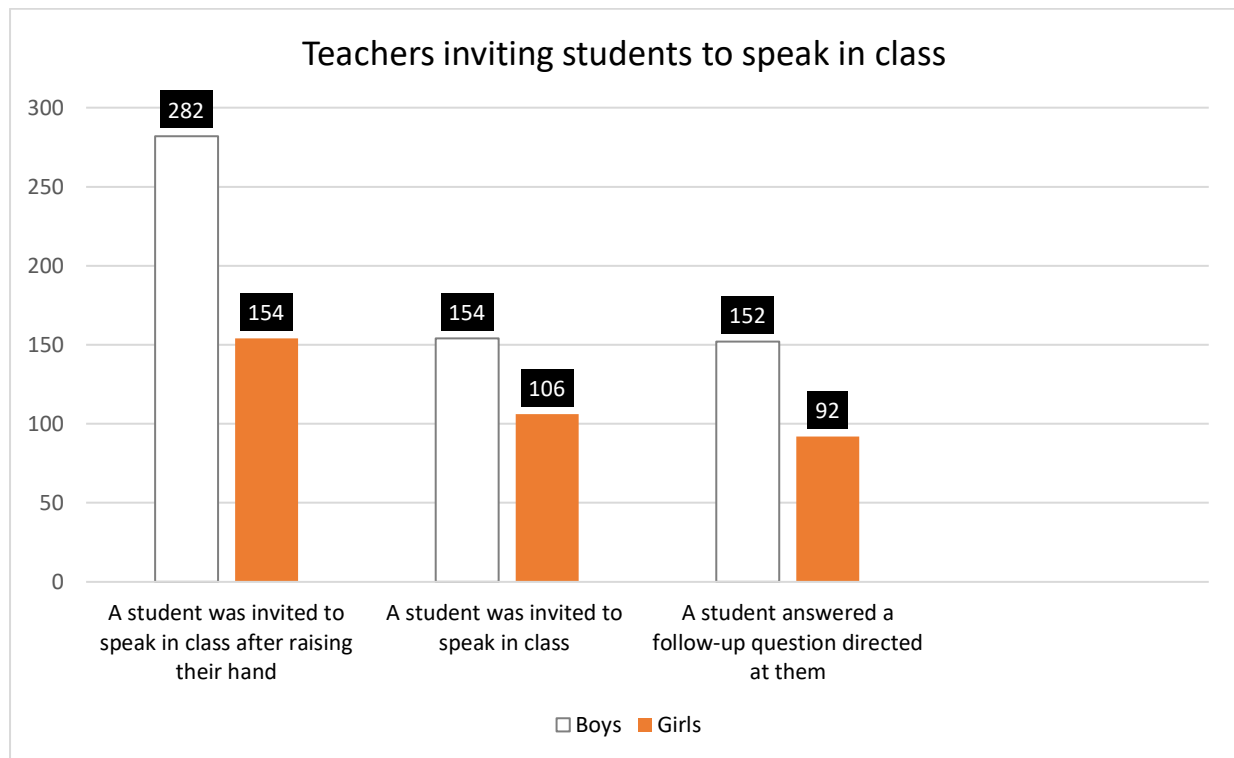


Figure 4K. Teachers inviting their students to speak, and students answer a follow-up question directed at them during 32 observed English lessons

4.3.1 INVITATION TO SPEAK AND HAND RAISED

There are several interesting aspects concerning the teachers' roles during the observed English lessons. First, the boys were invited to speak in class after raising their hands a total of 282 times. The girls, however, were invited to speak in class after raising their hands, a total of 154 times. When looking at these numbers it appears as if the teachers chose boys over girls. However, when looking at the percentages of the different activities, some interesting findings appear. The percentage of times the boys are invited to speak in class after raising their hands as opposed to not being invited to speak in class when they raise their hands is somewhat lower than that of the girls. While the girls were being invited to speak in class after raising their hands 55% of the time, the boys were being invited to speak after raising their hands 46% of the time. In other words, although the boys were invited to speak after raising their hands twice as often as the girls were, the percentages are fairly similar. There are only 9 percentage points between the genders. Even though the boys spoke almost twice as much as the girls did, they also initiated the participation twice as often. In fact, the

boys spoke 1,072 times, while the girls spoke 638 times. In addition to this, the boys were invited to speak without having raised their hands 48 more times than the girls were. When relating the number of times the students were invited to speak to the number of girls and boys, the number was 0,40 times per girl, and 0,53 times per boy. This means that the boys were indeed invited to speak more often than the girls were.

It is important to mention that in seven instances where the students were invited to speak in class were given by another student. This happened four times after a student raised their hand, and three times they were simply invited to speak without having raised their hands. These instances occurred in two lessons with the same topic. This situation was initiated by the teacher telling the students to invite other students to speak. It was the same female teacher in both lessons.

4.3.2 FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

The previous section elaborated on the teacher`s role in inviting the students to speak in class, either after raising their hands or not. This section will explore the findings regarding follow-up questions directed at the students. The boys, who are indeed those who speak the most in the observed English lessons, were also the ones being asked the most follow-up questions. The boys answered a follow-up question directed at them 152 times. The girls, on the other hand, answered a follow-up question 92 times. This means that the boys answered a follow-up question directed at them 62% of the total amount of this activity. The girls` numbers in this activity amounts to 38%. As mentioned above, the girls answered a follow-up question directed at them 12% of the time, whereas the boys answered a follow-up question directed at them 11% of the time.

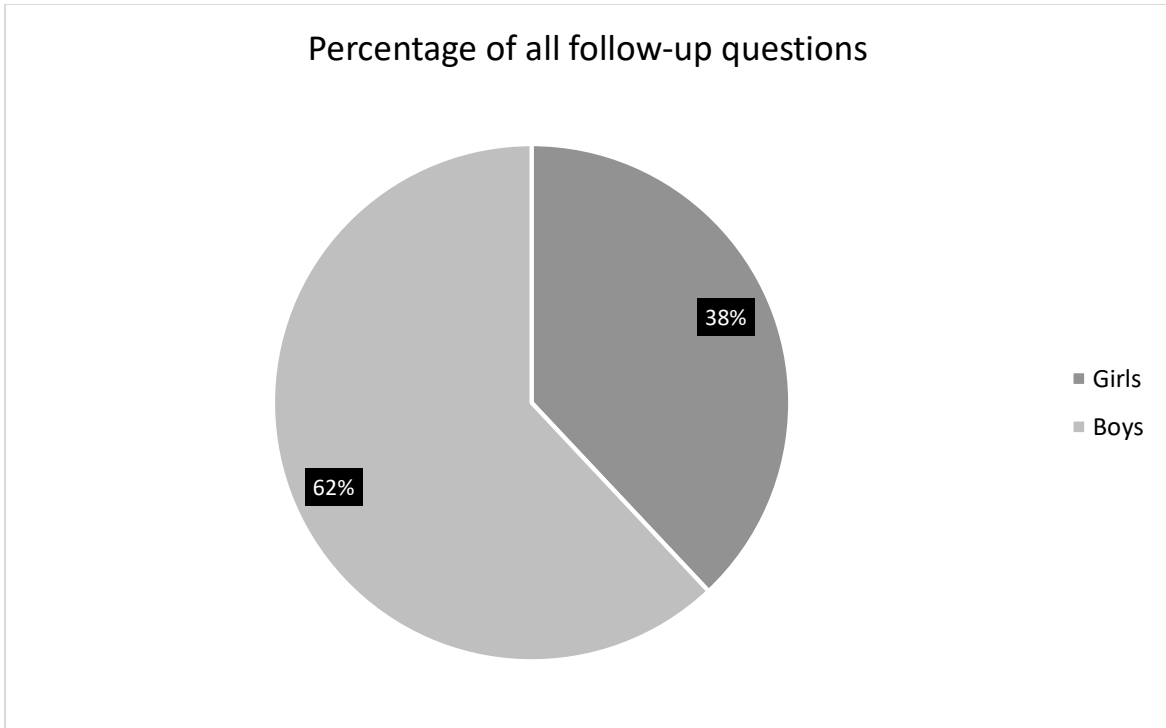


Figure 4L. The girls and boys who answered follow-up questions directed at them during 32 English lessons

This means a difference of 1 percentage point, meaning a rather marginal difference. It appears as though the boys and girls answered approximately the same percentage of follow-up questions directed at them, as illustrated in the pie chart in Figure 4L.

4.4 THE GIRLS AND BOYS COMPARED

When combining the diagram illustrating the girls` activities in section 4.1 and the boys` oral activities in section 4.2, the large difference in number becomes quite apparent. Below is a diagram that combines the specific numbers for the different activities for both the boys (white bars) and the girls (orange bars). At first glance at Figure 4M, it becomes quite obvious that the boys speak a substantial amount more than the girls do:

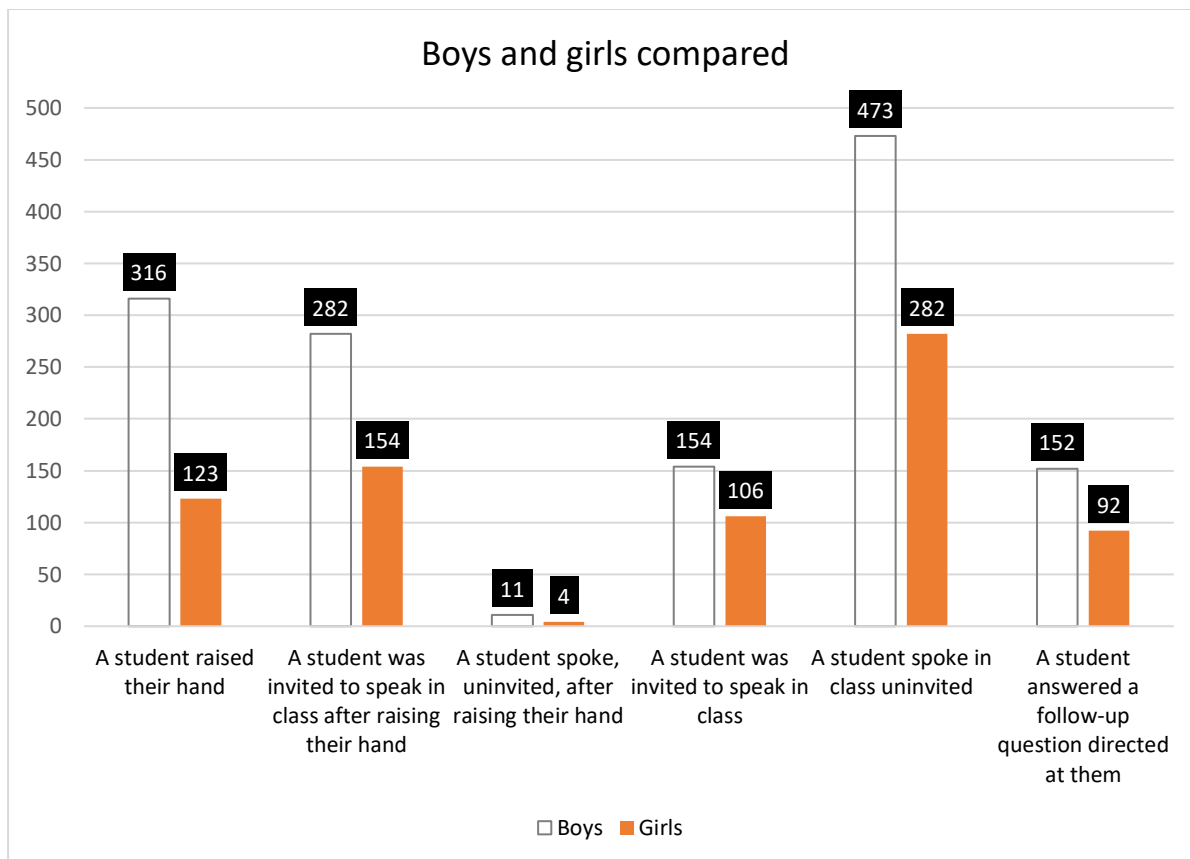


Figure 4M. Boys and girls compared during 32 observed English lessons

The difference is in fact so large that the number of times the activities were noted for the boys are almost twice as much as that of the girls. The different numbers of the activities, as previously explained, amounted to 1,388 instances for the boys, and 761 for the girls. These numbers are derived from adding all instances for each category for the boys and all instances for each category for the girls. When comparing these numbers, a great difference between the genders appear, concerning participation in groups or pairs in lessons where authentic texts were being discussed. This difference is summarized in the pie chart in Figure 4N:

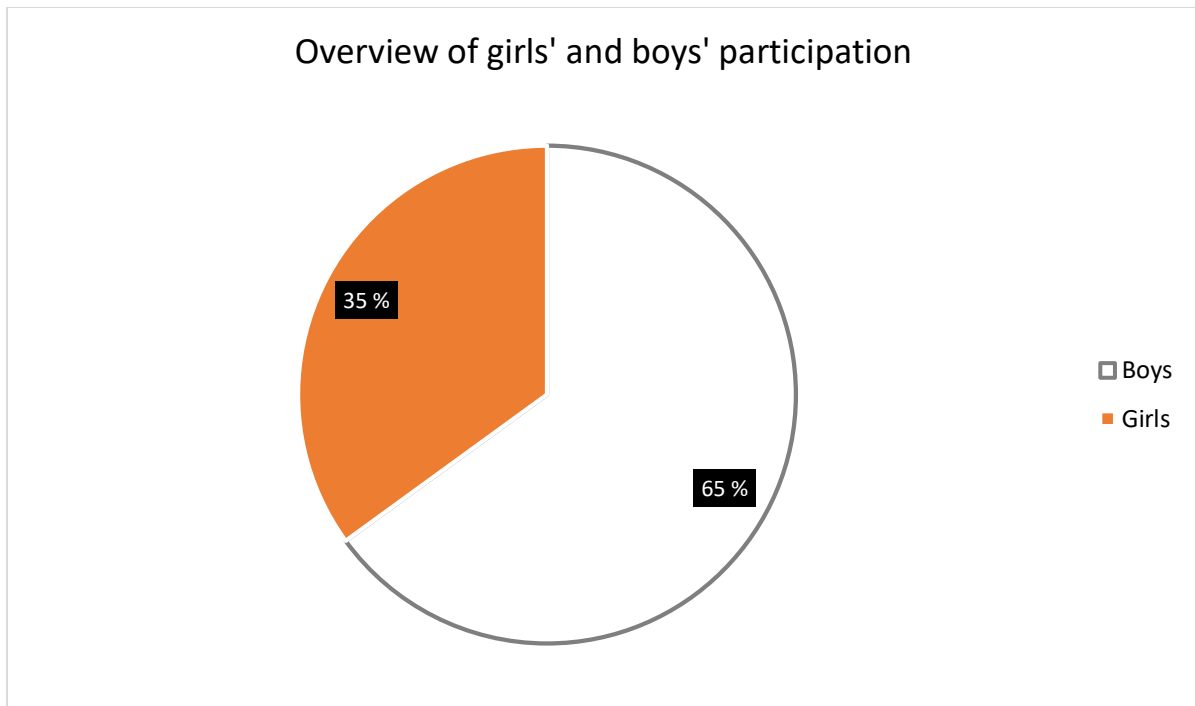


Figure 4N. Overview of girls' and boys' participation in 32 observed English lessons

Figure 4N illustrates that the boys' participation amounts to 65% of the observed activities, whereas the girls' participation amounts to 35%. This is a difference of 30 percentage points.

When looking at how often these genders raised their hands, as shown in Figure 4M we see that the boys raised their hands with no oral outcome more than twice as many times as the girls did, 193 more times, in fact. The boys raised their hands 316 times, while the girls raised their hands 123 times in total. This means that of the total number of times a student, no matter the gender, raised their hand without there being any oral outcome, the boys make up 72%, and the girls 28%. Here, we see that there is a difference between the genders comprising 44 percentage points. This is very interesting when considering the difference in the percentage of times the genders were invited to speak after raising their hands when compared to the number of times they raised them in total. The girls were invited to speak in class 56% of the times they raised their hands while the boys were invited to speak in class 47% of the times they raised their hands. This is a difference of 9 percentage points. The

difference is illustrated in FIGURE 40.

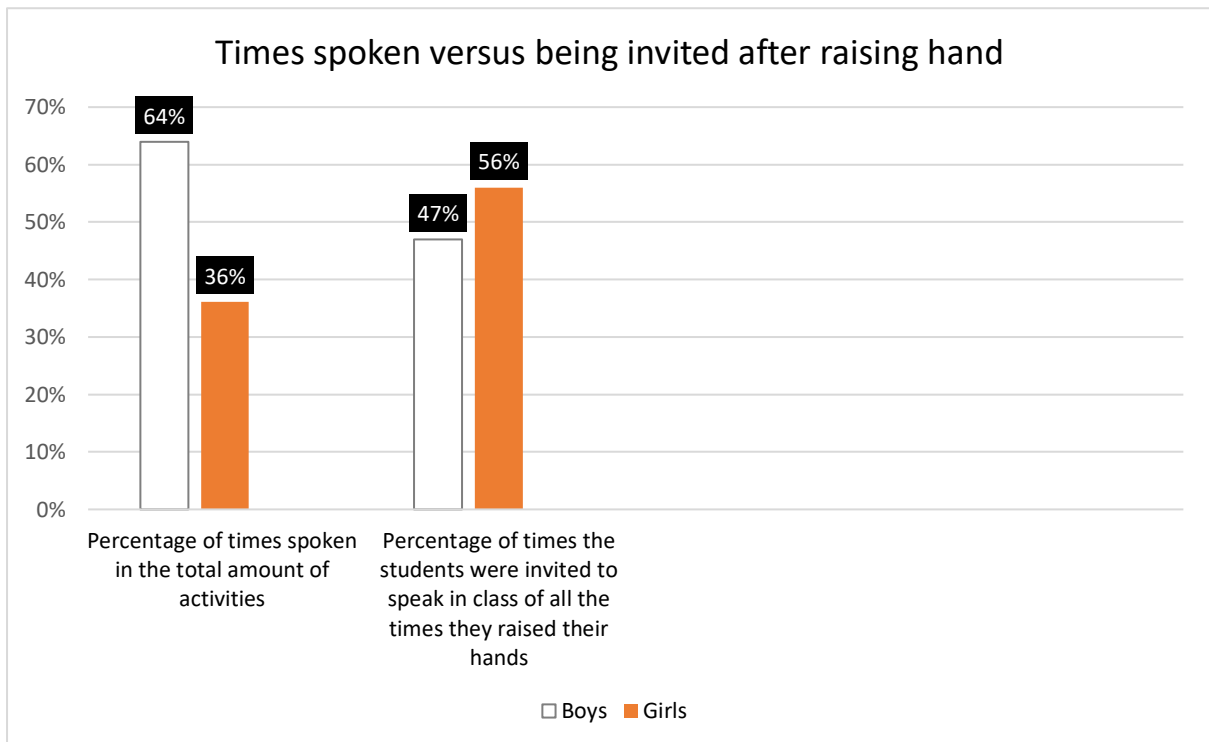


Figure 40. Percentage of times the students spoke and percentage of time they were invited to speak in class considering all instances where they raised their hands during 32 English lessons

Figure 40 illustrates how these numbers can be considered from different perspectives. The fact that the boys speak so much more overall than the girls did, does not automatically mean that the percentage of times they are invited to speak after raising their hands is lower, in fact, the percentage of times this happens is, as illustrated, higher for the girls. These differences are important nuances to consider when looking at these findings.

4.5 SUMMARY: MAIN FINDINGS

To summarize, there are three main findings in this master's study. These three are the ones related to my research question: In what ways do girls and boys participate orally in lessons regarding authentic texts in English as an L2 in Norwegian lower secondary schools, and what role does the teacher play in their participation. The three main findings that respond to this question are the following:

1. The boys are far more active, and the number of activities counted are close to double that of the girls.

2. Though the boys participate far more than the girls when considering only the numbers, the girls and boys participate relatively similarly in the different activities considering percentages.
3. The number of teacher-initiated activities are far larger for the boys than for the girls.

MAIN FINDING 1

The ways in which I recorded the girls' and boys' participation in the 32 observed English lessons are as follows, this time ranked by frequency:

1. A student raised their hand
2. A student spoke in class uninvited
3. A student was invited to speak in class after raising their hand
4. A student answered a follow-up question directed at them
5. A student was invited to speak in class
6. A student spoke, uninvited, after raising their hand

As previously mentioned, the boys had a far greater participation in each activity. They had 1,388 instances of participation, meaning that they were responsible for 65% of all the activities, and that they had 627 more instances than the girls did. The category with the largest difference is, "a student raised their hand", where the boys raised their hands 193 more times than the girls did. The category with the second largest difference is, "a student spoke in class uninvited", where the boys spoke 191 more times than the girls did. The category with the third largest difference is, "a student was invited to speak after raising their hand", where the boys spoke uninvited for 128 more times than the girls did. In fourth place is, "a student answered a follow-up question directed at them", where the boys responded to 60 more follow-up questions than the girls did. The fifth category when considering difference in numbers is, "a student was invited to speak in class", where the boys were invited to speak 48 more times than the girls were. The final category is also the smallest one, "a student spoke, uninvited, after having raised their hand", where the boys spoke 7 more times than the girls. This last category, however, only amounted to 15 instances with both the numbers for the boys and girls added together. Looking at these numbers, the first finding becomes very clear; the boys spoke far more than the girls in the 32 observed English lessons regarding authentic texts in lower secondary school, in 9th and 10th grade. In fact, the boys participated more frequently in every observed activity in these English lessons, as shown in the pie chart in Figure 4P.

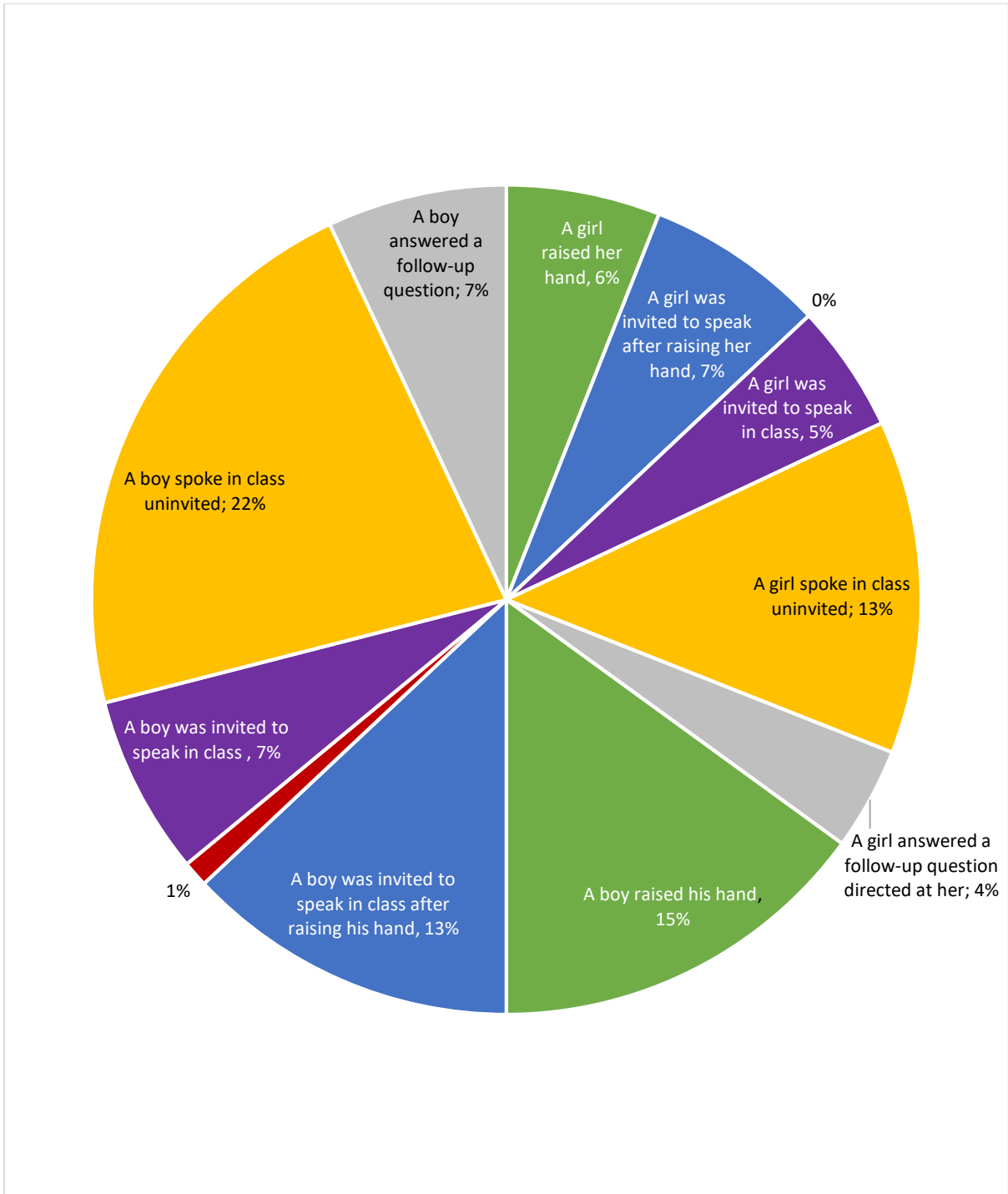


Figure 4P. Comparing participation in 32 English lessons for girls and boys

Figure 4P illustrates the percentages spent on each activity separated by gender. The percentage is zero for the activity labelled as “a girl spoke, uninvited, after raising her hand”. The four instances of this activity for the girls amounted to 0.2% and has therefore been rounded down to 0%. As for the bright red section labelled as “a boy spoke, uninvited, after raising his hand”, the 11 instances of this activity amounted to 0.5 percent, and has therefore

been rounded up to 1%. The remaining activities are kept in the same colours for boys and girls for ease of comparison.

MAIN FINDING 2

The second main finding is directly linked to the characteristics of the girls' and boys' participation. As is illustrated by the two pie charts below, in Figure 4Q, the percentages representing the genders for each activity are fairly similar.

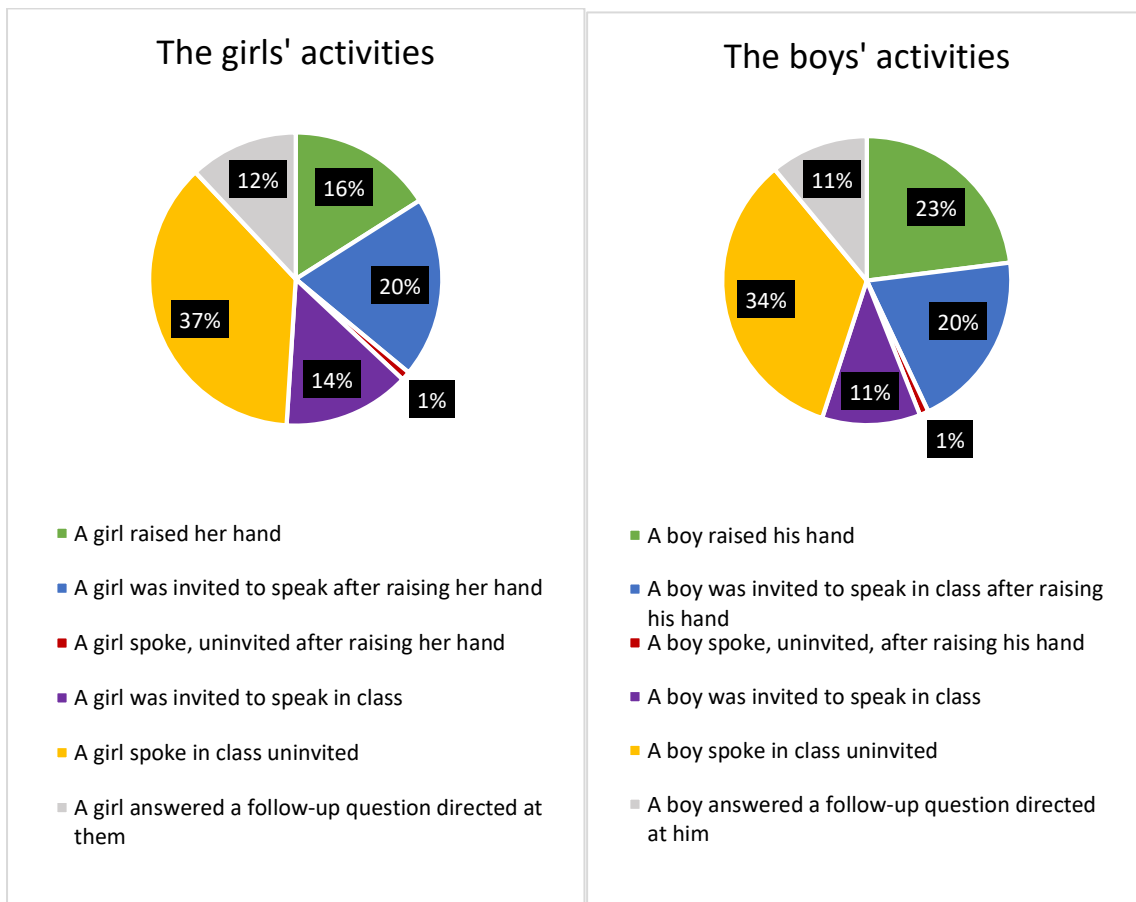


Figure 4Q. Comparison of girls' and boys' activities

These pie charts demonstrate the percentage of their total participation for girls and boys for the different activities. The girls raised their hands 16% of the time, while the boys raised their hands 23% of the time. The girls were invited to speak after raising their hands 20% of the time, and so were the boys. The girls spoke, uninvited after raising their hands 1% of the time, and so did the boys. The girls were invited to speak in class 14% of the time, compared to 11% for the boys. The girls spoke in class, uninvited, 37% of the time, while the boys did so 34% of the time. The girls answered a follow-up question directed at them 12% of the

time, compared to 11% for the boys. As one can see, these percentages are rather similar for each category, suggesting that the boys' and girls' characteristics for their participation in the 32 observed English lessons were fairly similar.

MAIN FINDING 3

The third main finding in this master's study is that as in every activity to be observed and analysed in these English lessons, the numbers regarding the boys are larger than those of the girls, even in the teacher-initiated activities. The teacher-initiated activities amount to 24% of all the activities and are found in the codes, "a student was invited to speak in class" and "a student answered a follow-up question". This finding means that there were 504 counted instances of these activities. Of these, 61% were instances where the teacher initiated oral communication with the boys, compared to 39% with the girls. The boys were invited to speak 154 times, compared to 106 times for the girls. The boys answered a follow-up question directed at them 152 times, while the girls answer these 92 times. The percentages of the teacher initiated interaction are illustrated in Figure 4R.

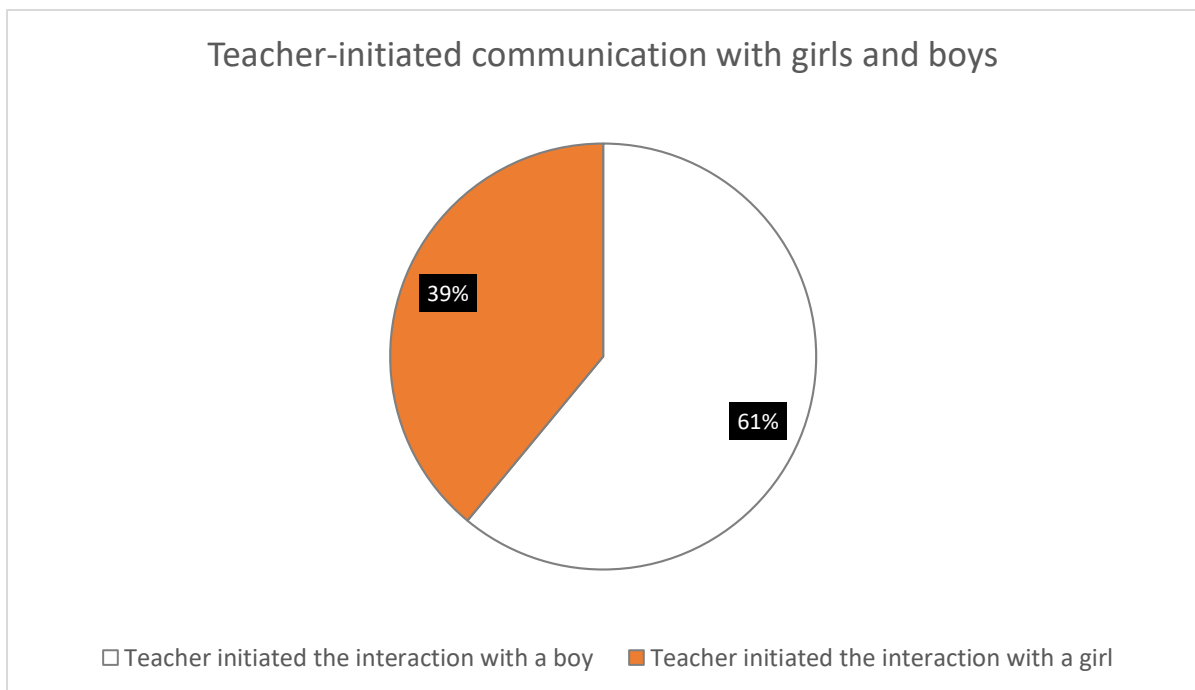


Figure 4R. Teacher-initiated communication with girls and boys in 32 observed English lessons

What becomes apparent in this third finding is that the teachers initiated more communication with the boys than they did with the girls in the observed English lessons in this master's study. The boys also initiated quite a lot more participation than the girls did, and they spoke far more. In the following chapter, these findings will be discussed in light of the literature and previous research.

5.0 DISCUSSION

The following chapter will discuss the findings presented in Chapter 4 in light of the theoretical framework and prior research presented in Chapter 2. The first element that will be examined in this chapter is that of sociocultural theory and student participation in classroom interaction (5.1). This section will examine the different percentages of participation for the girls and the boys in light of the communicational value emphasised in this theoretical framework. This section will also consider the non-participating girls and boys. In the next section (5.2), I will examine how these findings compare to the findings in prior research and arguments of gender researchers presented in Chapter 2. The final section of this chapter (5.3) will examine the teachers' initiation of students' participation in English lessons, and consider recent studies showing that the boys seem to be superseding the girls in English proficiency in Norway.

5.1 BOYS' AND GIRLS' PARTICIPATION IN ENGLISH LESSONS AND LACK THEREOF

As is presented in Chapter 4, the boys did in fact participate far more than the girls in the observed English lessons, and in interactions with the teacher. Considering how Vygotsky's (1986) sociocultural theory suggests the importance of learning through interacting and communicating with these experts in the Zone of Proximal Development (section 2.2), this perspective can be vital for the language development of the girls; specifically in terms of oral participation in English lessons. The English language plays a large role in Norway today, and as Brevik and Rindal (2019) argue, societal factors and the high proficiency among Norwegian adolescents indicate that English functions as a second language in Norway despite not officially holding such a status. The girls' oral role in these vital interactional aspects of a language that in many ways functions as a second language is illustrated in Figure 4N (Chapter 4). This figure shows that in these situations, the boys participated in 65% of all observed instances, while the girls participated only in 35% of all these instances. As is presented in chapter two (2.2), Lantolf (2000) explains how sociocultural theory recognises human consciousness as a way of controlling our genetically determined capacities. Within sociocultural theory considers this control to be learnt through interaction with others; specifically, as mediated processes are learnt through human interaction. Considering this vital element of acquiring the mediated means, it is of great

interest that the female participants in the observed English lessons participated in one way or another so much less than the male participants in these lessons. This finding illustrates that what is considered a vital element of learning and development is mostly directed at the boys in these classrooms. Acquiring these mediated means (i.e. the opportunity to participate in oral English interaction) through interacting with the experts (i.e. teachers) is also interesting in light of the student's Zone of Proximal Development, and is indeed important for the development of a second-language learner. The lessons observed in these classrooms, focused on pair, group or whole class situations, meaning that students' English language development through the more expert others (i.e. teachers) organization of the Zone of Proximal Development was not the only element to be considered. Students interacted with one another as well, meaning that also their learning mediated through their peers was also considered. This development through interacting with both teachers and peers is a vital element of learning and development within the framework of sociocultural theory.

Considering that the number of instances of participation in all the activities observed in the seven classrooms across two school years were 1,388 for the boys and 761 for the girls, it would appear as though the boys received far more of these means for English language development than the girls did. This is in many ways confirmed when considering the percentages of the boys and girls who did not participate in any way in the 32 English lessons. Of all the boys observed in the 32 English lessons there were 28% who did not participate, as illustrated in figure 4J (section 4.2.4). Of all the girls observed in these lessons, 38% did not participate in any way, as is illustrated in figure 4E (section 4.1.5). This means that there were more girls who did not partake in this interactional development through the Zone of Proximal Development in the observed English lessons than there were boys, considering the percentages. Among the girls and boys who participated, the boys participated more than twice as often as the girls did.

5.2 GENDER GAP

Harriet Bjerrum Nielsen is a leading expert in gender research in the Norwegian educational system. In her more recent research (Nielsen, 2009), she explains how the girls are performing well and achieving good results not only in a societal aspect, but more specifically in the setting of the Norwegian classrooms. She also confirms these findings in her later literature regarding differences in the classroom, considering new perspectives on

gender, class and ethnicity (2014). Nielsen explain that the girls are the ones who perform better, receive better results and receive the most attention. This is, as she explains (2014) a contrast to the male dominated classrooms of the 70s and 80. Her arguments that the girls are performing better in school are compatible with the results from the National tests in Norway, showing that within reading, the girls far outperform the boys (UDIR,2020). These statistics show five mastery levels representing the different levels of proficiency within reading for ninth grade students. What is shown in this illustration is that there are far higher percentages of the girls in the two highest mastery levels, level four and five, than there are boys. It also shows that there are a higher percentage of boys in the three lower mastery levels, level one, two and three, than there are girls. There are 3,7% girls and 8,2% boys in mastery level one, 7,2% girls and 11,2% boys in mastery level two, 33,2 % girls and 38,4% boys in mastery level three, 32,4% girls and 27,1% boys in mastery level four and, finally, 23,5% girls and 15,1% boys in mastery level five. This difference in proficiency shows us that the girls are in fact a year further ahead in the development of reading proficiency than the boys are (UDIR, 2020).

Interestingly enough this is not compatible with the Swedish experience of Öhrn, another expert within the field, where the boys are the dominant voices and seek and claim more attention, both academically and non-academically. As a consequence of the boys' domination, the girls take less space and only speak academically in Öhrn's research (1990). She has observed this in lower schools and vocational schools in Sweden. Elisabet Öhrn's (1990) research showed some very different results to those of Nielsen. Her research (1990) found that the boys were the far dominant voices in the classrooms, as opposed to Nielsen's findings that the girls were receiving the most attention. Öhrn's findings are confirmed in the more recent research from Asp-Onsjö and Öhrn (2015). While Nielsen researched the Norwegian educational setting, Öhrn (1990) and Öhrn and Asp-Onsjö's (2015) researched the Swedish educational setting. There has not been a lot of research on this in Norwegian classrooms in more recent time, and there has not been any research regarding this in the English subject until Ahmadian researched this aspect in her master's thesis in 2018.

Ahmadian (2018) researched the boys and girls in the vocational classrooms in vocational Norwegian upper secondary schools, continuing Öhrn's prior research. Ahmadian's research is the first of its kind, and through it, some very interesting findings surfaced. She discovered a similar pattern to that of Öhrn's Swedish research in the Norwegian vocational classrooms. Ahmadian researched three different vocational programs, one female dominated, one male

dominated and one approximately gender equal class. The female dominated program she observed was *Health, childhood and youth development class*. The male dominated program she observed was *Electricity and electronics class*. The approximately gender equal class she observed was a *Service and transport class*. She researched these three classes in order to observe what effect the gender of the dominant group in the classroom had on the oral participation of the girls and boys. Ahmadian's findings supported those of Öhrn's (1990) and illustrated that the boys were the dominant voices and that the girls were in fact the academic voices. She also found that regardless of this, the boys spoke approximately twice as much as the girls did. Another interesting element found in Ahmadian's (2018) research is that even in the female dominated classrooms, the boys are in fact the dominant voices. In the *Health, childhood and youth development class* she observed, the girls were the dominant gender, and there were only two boys in the classroom. Despite the fact that there were far less boys in the classroom, the boys were still the dominant voice. Ahmadian's findings align with the national test results in English proficiency at UDIR (2020).

Somewhat surprisingly the National test results in English show that the girls are not more proficient than the boys. In fact, in English, boys and girls perform almost equally, with the boys performing slightly better than the girls do. The national tests in English proficiency for eighth and ninth grade in lower secondary schools in all of Norway shows us that there are more boys at mastery level 5 and mastery level 4 than there are girls at these same levels (UDIR 2020). The statistics of English proficiency in grade eight shows us that 8,6% girls and 8,2% boys performed in mastery level one, 20,0% girls and 16,9% boys are performed in mastery level two, 43,6% girls and 41,2% boys performed in mastery level three, 17,6% girls and 20,8% boys performed in mastery level four, and, finally, that 10,3% girls and 12,9% boys performed in mastery level five. As with the mastery levels previously explained for the reading proficiency, mastery level one is the lowest performance of proficiency while mastery level five is the highest performance of proficiency. This is quite different from the previously explained statistics regarding reading proficiency where the girls far outperformed the boys to the point where they were a year ahead of them. These statistics illustrate that the boys are more proficient in English in Norwegian lower secondary schools than the girls are.

Comparing these statistics and the previous research to my findings, the picture painted by Öhrn and Ahmadian is confirmed. My findings derived from researching six different schools over two school years, where 22 of the lessons were led by female teachers and 10 of the lessons were led by male teachers. What is uniquely interesting with this master's study is

that it researches lower secondary schools in Norway, as opposed to upper secondary schools. These classrooms contain roughly the same number of girls and boys, meaning that the researched classrooms are fairly close to gender equal. These are considered fairly ordinary classrooms. As is explained in my findings (4.0), the number of instances for every activity observed in the 32 lessons were significantly higher for the boys than they were for the girls. My findings show that the boys both initiate oral interaction and are on the receiving end of the teacher's initiation of oral participation far more often than the girls are. As elaborated in the findings (4.0) the boys speak close to twice as often as the girls. While this confirms Öhrn and Ahmadian's findings that regardless of types of talk (academically and non-academically), the boys spoke approximately twice as often as the girls, it also illustrates an interesting finding regarding these types of talk: The boys speak approximately twice as often as the girls even when only the academic interaction is considered. This master's study focused only on academic classroom talk, meaning that the personal and non-academic interactions are removed from the equation. Even in these situations, the results are the same; the boys are undoubtedly the dominant voices of the classroom. Considering the importance of interactional development through the Zone of Proximal Development these findings are vital. The observed lessons were ordinary, gender equal, classrooms, and therefore we should be allowed to critically ask if this will negatively affect the girls' academic development and their ability to have a voice in the classroom.

5.3 TEACHER INVITATION

As mentioned in the previous section, the boys not only initiated the oral participation more often than the girls did but were also invited to speak more often than the girls. Figure 4K (4.3) illustrates the number of times the teachers asked the boys and girls to speak in class after they had raised their hands, the number of times the teachers invited the boys and girls to speak in class, and the number of times the boys and girls answered a follow-up question directed at them. As one can see there is a rather large difference between the genders in this illustration. The boys were invited to speak in class after raising their hands 128 more times than the girls were. They were also invited to speak in class 48 more times than the girls, and they answered a follow-up question directed at them 60 more times than the girls. These patterns are compatible with Öhrn's argument claiming that the boys not only seek more attention and ask more questions, but that the boys' interests are being considered in the educational setting. The boys are not only initiating their oral participation more than that of

the girls, they are also being chosen when the teachers are the ones initiating the oral participation.

One particularly interesting aspect of this is the importance of dialogic teaching presented in chapter 2. The dialogic teaching focuses on the thought-provoking questions and the questions that invite a student to elaborate on their opinions and statements. These are vital elements for mediating knowledge and is considered high-quality teaching and learning. One of the elements in dialogic teaching is that of follow-up questions inviting the students to further elaborate on their previous statements and opinions. In the observed segments, the students being asked a follow-up question answered it, and a category for non-answered follow-up questions were not needed. Of all the follow-up questions being answered by the student asked, a stunning 62% were the boys' answers, while only 38% were the girls'.

Considering the substantial effect such dialogic teaching is believed to have on mediation and acquiring of new knowledge, this is a shocking find. The boys are being chosen for this effective type of teaching 24 percentage points more than the girls. This could have an impact on the statistics of the English proficiency level in lower secondary schools in Norway referred to previously in this chapter (5.2).

It is obvious in figure 4K that the boys were invited to speak in one way or the other far more often than the girls. These findings validate those of Ahmadian (2018) and Öhrn (1990) and do not necessarily agree with Nielsen's (2014) argument that the girls are demanding a larger role in the classrooms. They also validate the argument that the educational system mirrors a society with an asymmetric gender norm where the male part of society is considered more powerful than the female part of society. As is elaborated in chapter four (4.3.1), the number of times the boys were invited to speak divided on the number of boys counted in the sections, 292, were 0.53. The number of times the girls in these 32 lessons were invited to speak divided on the number of girls counted in the observation, 263, were 0.40. This illustrates that the boys were in fact invited to speak in class by the teacher quite a lot more often per student than the girls were, and that there indeed are grounds to claim that the boys' interests are the ones being considered in the observed English lessons.

5.4 THE VALUE OF ENGLISH INTERACTION

As mentioned, a sociocultural perspective on interaction with experts (here, teachers), novices and peers (here, students) is of great value to any learner of a second language.

Rojas-Drummond and Mercer (2003), researched the characteristics of teachers whose students performed well and teachers whose students did not, and found that the students who performed above average were in fact taught in a way that is compatible with Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory. This finding indicated that the students were taught through social interaction, and that their zone of proximal development was targeted in this teaching. The students were taught procedures for problem solving and guided to understanding through question-answer sequences. This procedure could be linked to follow-up questions in the English lessons I observed, highlighting its value in the educational setting. The fact that Rojas-Drummond and Mercer's (2003) study, such sequences were linked to the teachers whose students performed particularly well, indicates that such methods of teaching are indeed effective. Considering that these sequences were fairly similar to the follow-up questions observed in the 32 English lessons in this master's study, it is of great interest that the boys were in fact on the receiving end of 62% of the follow-up questions being posed by the teachers in these classrooms.

It is very interesting that the boys spoke so much more than the girls did, that they were invited to speak so much more than the girls, and that the boys were asked follow-up questions more frequently than were the girls, when considering that this type of interaction seems to be a characteristic of teachers whose students demonstrate particularly good results (Rojas-Drummond & Mercer, 2003). English today is considered an important language of communication for adolescents both in and outside of school (Brevik, 2019; Brevik & Rindal, 2019) and there is great focus on using English as a lingua franca internationally and to understand other cultures (Brevik & Rindal, 2019). The percentage of girls who do not participate orally in these academic discourses regarding authentic texts in any way (38%) and boys (28%), is therefore of great interest. The importance of these observations in the 32 English lessons make the gender gap in oral participation between the girls and boys extremely interesting. In the following chapter, I present the conclusion of this master's study.

6.0 CONCLUSION

In the previous chapters, I have introduced the research aim and its relevance (Chapter 1), presented the theoretical framework and prior research relevant to this master's study (Chapter 2), explained the methodological process of my research (Chapter 3), and the findings that resulted from this research (Chapter 4), and discussed the findings in light of the theoretical framework and prior research (Chapter 5). This final chapter will conclude on some important aspects that have been discovered through this study.

In this master thesis, I investigated the research question: *What are the characteristics of girls' and boys' participation in English lessons in seven lower secondary classrooms, when authentic texts are being discussed, and what characterizes the teacher's role in these situations?* My findings indicate that the boys speak far more than the girls in English lessons regarding text, and the teachers also invite the boys to speak more often than they invite the girls in these settings. As a result, the boys do in fact speak far more than the girls do in these academic-only segments of 32 observed video-recorded English lessons in lower secondary schools in Norway.

Through this study, some overall aspects of students' opportunities to participate in oral discussions about text in the English classroom have become clear. The first thing that became apparent was the overwhelming difference between the girls and the boys, where the boys participated in some way or another almost twice as often as the girls did. These findings align with prior research from Öhrn (Asp-Onsjö & Öhrn, 2015; Öhrn, 1990) and Ahmadian (2018), who both found that the boys were the dominant voices in the classroom, speaking significantly more than the girls in the same classes. In my study, there is a clear gender asymmetry also amongst the pairs, groups and whole class during all the authentic texts discourses in six English classes across 9th and 10th grade in lower secondary schools in Norway. This is extremely interesting because of the gender equality of such classrooms, and in many ways, these are considered the ordinary classrooms. One could ask if this rather great difference of interaction could have a vital say in the development of English proficiency, and the development in a second language.

The importance of the interactions between a learner and more expert others is a vital element in Vygotsky's sociocultural theory. As emphasised by Rojas-Drummond and Mercer (2003) and Mercer and Littleton (2007), the communication and interactional approach of teachers

appeared to greatly affect students' proficiency level. The large gender asymmetry that I discovered through my study is therefore concerning, considering the importance of interaction with the teacher, and, perhaps specifically the follow-up questions, for the development of the learners, this large difference between the girls and the boys in the Norwegian classrooms pegs the question of whether the genders are affected by these different amounts of participation.

The second aspect that became clear is that the boys and girls have typically the same types of classroom interaction, meaning that the characteristics of their initiatives to participate in textual discussions are roughly the same, although there are some minor differences in the percentages of each activity. This indicates that they participate in much the same ways in the academic discourse.

The third aspect is that the teachers typically focus on the boys when the teachers are the ones initiating the interaction. As Öhrn (1990) argued, the boys are the ones who appear mainly to be considered in the educational system. They are the dominant presence in these classrooms and therefore, their interests are being considered more so than the girls'. This, Öhrn (1990) argues, is a mirror of the societal context and aligns with Nielsen's (2014) elaboration on her research from the 1980s and 1990s. Due to this, the girls receive fewer opportunities to talk (Öhrn, 1990). This claim is supported by Ahmadian's (2018) research which illustrated, for the first time, that the same pattern of gender asymmetry was in fact present in the vocational programs in the Norwegian schools. She researched male-dominated, female-dominated and gender-equal classrooms, and found that the boys were in fact the dominant voices in all three classrooms. This is a contrast to Nielsen's (2015) argument, which claims that the boys are withdrawing and becoming shyer in the female-dominated classrooms. Ahmadian (2018) and Öhrn (1990) also found that the girls were the academic voices while the boys were the dominant voices. What is interesting regarding the findings of this master's study is that the boys spoke approximately twice as much in the academic discourse only. All other aspects of the classroom talk had been eliminated from this research. The boys' high level of participation is partly self-initiated, and partly teacher initiated. In addition to indicating a desire to speak more often than the girls, the boys were in fact also singled out to speak by the teachers more often than the girls were.

Since my research proves that there is in fact a gender inequality in Norwegian classrooms, I want to emphasise that there is a need for more research on this field. The gender asymmetry that surfaced through this master's thesis could be vital for the girls' development and is therefore essential to continue researching in order to even out these inequalities. I suggest further research into this same aspect in fictional-only segments and non-fictional-only segments in order to explore if this has an effect on the participation. Another aspect that should be researched further is the teachers' opinions regarding the gender asymmetry.

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